End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Mrs. Jane Guz

I have grave reservations regarding the Bill detailed above. My father died of cancer when I was ten and my mother when I was 26 but I have the comfort of knowing that everything possible was done for them and had utmost confidence in the medical teams caring for them.

Our society runs away from death and had it not been for the efforts of Dame Cicely Saunders and her Hospice movement, many of the improvements in palliative care would not have been made. Non-terminal patients have also benefitted from the increase in skill in dealing with pain. What other insights might we lose if this Bill goes ahead?

I believe the Bill could lead to pressure for vulnerable people, who may feel they are a burden, at the very time when they should feel supported. At this time of increasing strain on resources, it is important that no-one should be made to feel their life is of less value, yet evidence in the Netherlands shows that many elderly people are afraid their lives may be ended without their consent.

The wording of the Bill, (for example 'intolerable') is vague. Dame Cicely Saunders has spoken of a patient who wished for death, but once in the Hospice and receiving proper support, she changed her mind. She was able to die with dignity, saying 'at least the children are a few months older,' and her family saw her leaving this life in peace, not bitterness.

The British Medical Association does not support assisted suicide and the safeguards cannot take into account all the possible scenarios that may happen.

Please safeguard the vulnerable, the sick and elderly. Please do not make Scotland a society where economic values outweigh human values.

Mrs. Jane Guz

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