

# One-Third of Colorado Hospitals Refuse to Allow Doctors to Kill Patients in Assisted Suicide

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Hospitals and clinics throughout Colorado are refusing to comply with Proposition 106, Colorado's newly passed legalization of doctor-prescribed suicide, [StatNews](#) reported.

Medical, disability rights, pro-life and religious groups all campaigned against the deadly measure. The Archdiocese of Denver, Colorado actively campaigned against the initiative, a parallel of Oregon's doctor-prescribed suicide law, spending upward of \$1.6 million in their effort to protect lives, the report states.

However, in November, the suicide measure passed in the [polls](#) by a two-thirds to one-third vote, and "victory" was declared within an hour of polls closing, the report continued.

"We are deeply disappointed and concerned about Colorado legalizing doctor-assisted suicide," Jeff Hunt, Vice President of Public Policy at Colorado Christian University, told the [Denver Post](#). "The fight is not over."

Indeed the fight isn't over on the ground, for several of the largest healthcare systems in the state.

Centura Health, the largest hospital system in the Centennial State operated by a partnership between Catholic Health Initiatives and the Adventist Health System, stated it would "opt out" of performing assisted suicides, according to StatNews.

SCL Health, Colorado's second largest hospital system and rooted in the Catholic faith, issued a statement that patients requesting physician assistance in suicide "will be offered an opportunity to transfer to another facility of the patient's choice."

HealthONE, which is not affiliated with any religious groups, also said it will not allow doctor-prescribed suicides in its eight hospitals, according to the report.

The Colorado legislation permits doctors, nurses and pharmacists to decline participation in assisted suicide, euthanasia and similar practices, based on an individual's conscience, the report continued.

It is noted by StatNews that one third of Colorado's acute care hospital beds are under the umbrella of various Catholic-based health systems.

UCHealth and Kaiser Permanente allow physician-assisted suicide in their practices and clinics as permitted by state law, the report continued.

"This is a historic day for all Coloradans, and an especially tremendous victory for terminally ill adults who worry about horrific suffering in their final days," said Barbara Coombs Lee, Compassion and Choices

Action Network President in a statement reported by [9News](#).

"We are delighted the significant investment paid off and are proud to have lent the expertise and resources to empower the voters of Colorado. We congratulate Colorado for becoming the sixth state where more people have peace of

mind at the end of life and fewer suffer unnecessarily."

However, Alan Rastrelli, medical director for Divine Mercy Supportive Care, a non-profit hospice service, expressed different sentiments in an editorial in the [Denver Post](#).

"The harm of physician-assisted suicide to patients and the healing profession of medicine was lamented in 400 BC by the Greek philosopher and physician Hippocrates when he wrote: 'The regimen I adopt shall be for the benefit of my patients ... and not for their hurt or for any wrong. I will give no deadly drug to any, though it be asked of me, nor will I counsel such,'" Rastrelli wrote.

He continued: "The healing profession, with hospice and palliative care, is entrusted with the sacred privilege of assisting their patients compassionately through the dying process, ensuring that patients have the comfort and dignity they deserve. With 'intensive caring' we strive to ease their suffering, their fear of death — and their fear of living."

Rastrelli emphasized that care, not killing, is the answer to help people who are suffering.

"Patients can *choose* to forgo life-sustaining interventions that may excessively burden them or prolong the dying process," he wrote. "They can *choose* to allow a natural death in the comfort of their home, surrounded by loving caregivers. This is the difference between blowing out the candle vs. allowing it to flicker out on its own. Physicians and nurses are to help the patients as their life is ending, not end their life by an unethical act."

