



compassion & choices

Support. Educate. Advocate. Choice & Care at the End of Life

*My Life. My Death. My Choice.*

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**Compassion & Choices Urges Seven Principles  
for “Patient-Centered Care” to  
Guide Health Care Reform,  
Improve end-of-life care & expand choice**

*Autonomy, Informed Consent, Self-Determination Should Drive  
Health Care at End of Life*

Compassion & Choices, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to improving care and patients’ choices at the end of life, today released its Seven Principles for Patient-Centered End-of-Life Care and urged that they guide health care reform. “As individuals face the end of life, and try to navigate the health care system, their own values and choices should be paramount. Our seven principles – focus, self-determination, autonomy, personal beliefs, informed consent, balance, and notice - are designed to guide health care providers and policy-makers to place patients’ values at the center of end-of-life care,” said Compassion & Choices President Barbara Coombs Lee. “End of life care should focus on the patient’s life and current experience. Too often death is seen as a failure of treatment, not a natural event. During this time, having choices can relieve hopelessness. Our Seven Principles can help guide lawmakers and policy experts to remember what’s important, and make sure our health care system and its providers are putting the patient first.”

- 1. Focus.** End of life care should focus on the patient’s life and current experience.
- 2. Self-determination.** Individuals vary in their tolerance for pain and suffering.

**3. Autonomy.** Decisions about end-of-life care begin and end with the autonomous patient.

**4. Personal Beliefs.** Patients should feel empowered to make decisions based on their own deeply held values and beliefs, without fear of moral condemnation or political interference.

**5. Informed Consent.** Patients must have comprehensive, candid information in order to make valid decisions and give informed consent.

**6. Balance.** Patients should feel empowered to make decisions based on their own assessment of the balance between quantity and quality of life.

**7. Notice.** Patients must have early, forthright and complete notice of health care providers' institutional or personal policies or beliefs that could impact their treatment wishes at the end of life.

“Individuals vary in their tolerance for pain and suffering. Only patients can determine whether they are suffering, or are suffering too much. They should receive state-of-the-art comfort care accordingly,” said Coombs Lee.

Our Patient-Centered Principles are available here:

[http://www.compassionandchoices.org/care/Patient\\_Principles](http://www.compassionandchoices.org/care/Patient_Principles)

You can download the full-color brochure here:

<http://www.compassionandchoices.org/documents/PatientCenteredPrinciples.pdf>

For more information please visit [www.compassionandchoices.org](http://www.compassionandchoices.org)

*[Compassion & Choices](http://www.compassionandchoices.org) is a nonprofit organization, improves care and expand choice at the end of life.  
We [support](#), [educate](#) and [advocate](#).*

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