

# 60 REASONS TO SUPPORT NEW YORK'S MEDICAL AID IN DYING ACT

## Carol Holochwost

Both her mother and mother-in-law did not die in accordance with their values.

Southampton, New York



### Reason #33

***Because even excellent hospice care can't alleviate all suffering.***

**M**y mother did not have the death she wanted: a peaceful end to her life in her own home.

Instead, she died in ICU, intensive care, hooked to a respirator, feeding tube, all kinds of tubes. Her arms wrapped in sheets because they were oozing so much fluid.

Not able to speak. Not able to move. Her wrists tied to the bed.

When asked if she needed more pain medication, she could only bat her eyes in a plea for more. She suffered. Her death was tragic, horrific, and shockingly inhumane.

When my husband and I left the hospital room the night she died, we turned to each other and made a solemn promise to never let that happen to either one of us.

But how could I actually keep that promise? That question, more than 20 years ago, began my involvement in the movement to legalize medical aid in dying. It's been a long road to get here.

After having lost my mother to a tragic end, when my husband's mother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer we thought, we're prepared, we've been through this. We can do better.

We moved her into her home with hospice and they were wonderful. But, morphine is not a magic wand. Despite the best palliative care, cancer ravages the body. Even a simple touch can be excruciating.

In her last days, she confided to us that she was ready to go. She knew she was nearing the end, and we wished she had the means and the medicine to peacefully end her life and hasten the dying process.

But it wasn't available to her. Instead, in her last hours, she too suffered. She cried, "the bees are stinging my legs!" But there were no bees. Just suffering.

And then came the death rattle, the sound of her struggling to breathe while her lungs filled with fluid. That is a sound I will never forget.

She didn't have the gentle end she wished for. But she could have had the New York Medical Aid in Dying Act been in place.

This is my personal story, but over the years I've heard countless similar stories from friends and neighbors desperately wanting medical aid in dying as an option.

Choosing medical aid in dying is a deeply personal decision. No one truly knows if they would choose it for themselves until their time comes. It is my hope that it will be a choice that is available for all who need it.

This issue transcends politics because it is simply about alleviating needless human suffering.

I am asking you today to please support this legislation and pass the New York Medical Aid in Dying Act. Make choice and compassion part of your legacy as lawmakers.

To join our mission, email Amanda Cavanaugh at [acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org).

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