This program handbook provides background information for volunteers about public speaking on behalf of Compassion & Choices and the end-of-life options movement. After reviewing this document, readers with compelling end-of-life experiences will have a better idea of how to turn their stories into advocacy tools. This handbook can prepare you for basic presentations at the community level. Volunteers interested in approved formal speaking and storytelling opportunities will need to complete additional training and other requirements with Compassion & Choices. Please review the details about different levels of involvement for volunteers, and the corresponding requirements for each on pages 3–6. This handbook is designed to accompany the Volunteer Action Network Webinar Training: Public Speaking & Storytelling video; please use them together.
COMPASSION & CHOICES (C&C) IS THE NATION’S OLDEST, LARGEST AND MOST ACTIVE ORGANIZATION WORKING TO IMPROVE CARE AND EXPAND OPTIONS FOR THE END OF LIFE. OUR WORK IS POWERED BY THE CRITICAL EFFORTS OF THOUSANDS OF VOLUNTEERS LIKE YOU ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

SECTION I: Volunteer Action Network

About the Volunteer Action Network

The Compassion & Choices National Volunteer Program designed the Volunteer Action Network to support volunteer advocates in action and growth states. The Volunteer Action Network offers volunteers the opportunity to work on five main program areas, or tracks:

- Medical Aid in Dying
- Federal Policy
- Public Speaking & Storytelling
- Truth in Treatment
- Access Campaign

Responsibilities and Expectations

Compassion & Choices’ volunteers are ambassadors for the organization; in this role, we ask that your advocacy efforts align with our stated positions about medical aid in dying and end-of-life care. This ensures organizational consistency and accurate communication of fundamental concepts. Compassion & Choices’ volunteers are also encouraged to proactively seek out opportunities to further your education on the issues we work on.

Goals for Volunteer Public Speaking & Storytelling

- Raise awareness about end-of-life issues and care
- Educate communities and individuals about the practice and implementation of medical aid in dying
- Encourage people to begin thinking and talking about their end-of-life preferences
- Build support for authorization of medical aid in dying in the states where it is not currently authorized
- Expand access to medical aid in dying in the states where it is currently authorized
SECTION II: About Public Speaking & Storytelling

End-of-life experiences can be among the most significant moments in our lives and the lives of our families, yet we spend very little time talking about how to prepare for this inevitable part of life.

Compassion & Choices works to improve care and expand end-of-life options for people nationwide, and we have learned that one of the best ways to engage individuals, families and communities is through in-person presentations and by sharing deeply personal stories of end-of-life experiences. While video and handouts are helpful tools, there is no substitute for a personal presentation by a passionate and knowledgeable supporter like you!

Public Speaking and Storytelling represent two different programmatic volunteer opportunities at Compassion & Choices.

Public speaking involves delivering live remarks to an audience and serving as a spokesperson for issues related to medical aid in dying and the end of life. Storytelling involves capturing (on video, in writing, and occasionally in person) a personal story about an end-of-life experience and using that story to advocate for medical aid in dying and other care options in legislative hearings, social media and mainstream media to illustrate and humanize end-of-life issues.
SECTION III: Public Speaking

Volunteer Community Speakers vs. Approved Formal Speakers

For those volunteers interested in speaking on behalf of Compassion & Choices and the end-of-life care movement, we invite you to begin as a volunteer community speaker as indicated below. Over time, and with mastery of the issues, select community speakers may be invited to become approved formal speakers for Compassion & Choices.

Volunteer Community Speakers:

» Volunteer community speakers are invited to familiarize themselves with Compassion & Choices’ materials and resources, and give basic presentations about end-of-life care at appropriate local community venues (public library, Rotary Club, elder care facility, etc.).

» Community speakers are asked to generate their own speaking opportunities through local outreach and are required to review the training materials on page 9 of this handbook before reaching out to identify potential speaking opportunities.

» Also, community speakers are expected to consult with their Action Team leader or the Compassion & Choices National Speakers Bureau should they identify a local opportunity of greater significance (major conference, medical school, media appearance).

The end-of-life options movement is continually growing and changing, and our materials are updated regularly. It is critical that all speakers stay up-to-date on the latest developments in end-of-life care and options — review the Compassion & Choices’ website before any speaking engagements to make sure your information is accurate and current. Additionally, all speakers are expected to keep consistent with Compassion & Choices policies and positions.
Approved Formal Speakers:

» Approved formal speakers are invited to pursue speaking opportunities on their own, but they will also be considered by Compassion & Choices as an available local speaker for any opportunities that come through our staff and offices.

» In addition to reviewing the training materials on page 9 of this handbook, approved formal speakers must complete additional training, including a webinar, and sign a confidentiality agreement and media policy with Compassion & Choices.

» Approved formal speakers will be provided with additional presentation materials, including an enhanced slideshow, upon completion of the additional requirements.

If you are interested in becoming an approved formal speaker, please contact your Action Team leader to assess the need in your area. If you do not have an Action Team leader, please contact the National Volunteer Program at volunteer@CompassionAndChoices.org.

Community Speaking vs. Formal Speaking

As a volunteer for Compassion & Choices we rely on your active participation in activities like public speaking. Because we are a large organization with many moving parts and we work in a dynamic and fast-changing issue landscape, we have created two different levels of participation for public speaking.

Once you complete the training requirements outlined in this handbook on page 9, you are encouraged to reach out to community organizations like the ones in the “Community Speaking Settings” column below to arrange for presentations or speaking opportunities. If you are interested in more formal public speaking on behalf of Compassion & Choices, such as those in the “Formal Speaking Settings” column, you will need to complete additional training and other requirements.

Community Speaking Settings:

» Community centers/groups
» Local public library
» Workplace events
» Rotary/Lyons clubs
» Elder-care facilities
» Retirement homes
» Churches and places of worship
Important: Compassion & Choices’ Media Policy

All volunteers undertaking public speaking opportunities, whether informally within your community or as formally requested by Compassion & Choices, are expected to adhere to Compassion & Choices’ policy on interaction with the media:

» Any and all media inquiries must be referred to Compassion & Choices’ Communications Department (see page 11)
» Do not provide comment directly to representatives of the media unless the Compassion & Choices Communications Department asks you to do so
» Make sure your remarks are consistent with Compassion & Choices’ policies and positions
» Do not freelance

Formal Speaking Settings*:
» State government settings
» Universities
» Professional conferences
» Medical schools
» City council meetings
» Media interviews (even local)
» Union meetings
» Speaking engagements with more than 50 people in attendance
» Speaking engagements intended for medical professionals

*require additional training/approval

House parties
Local action groups
SECTION IV: Storytelling

Poignant end-of-life stories like those of Brittany Maynard or Miguel Carrasquillo can inspire people to action in ways that data or statistics cannot. Compassion & Choices has developed a campaign to collect stories and personal experiences from people and their loved ones who are confronting the end of life. Yours could be the story that inspires the next leap in our movement. We are especially looking for people with life-threatening illnesses who want to help break the cycle of “one-size-fits-all” healthcare.

Of course, personal stories are a valuable part of public speaking and should be included wherever appropriate. But for those with especially poignant stories — often of loved ones who have passed away from a difficult illness — your story can be a powerful tool to engage communities and raise awareness.

Compassion & Choices’ Storytelling Program seeks to capture on video or through other media the powerful personal stories of those who have shared in the end-of-life experience of a loved one or participated in end-of-life care directly.

If you believe you have a story that could benefit the end-of-life care movement, please contact our Storytelling Program to share your story: CompassionAndChoices.org/submit-your-story.

Please note that stories may be shared on our website, on social media, or in an op-ed. A small number of participants will be invited to share their story on video.
SECTION V: Volunteer Activities

Compassion & Choices’ public speaking & storytelling track channels the energy, knowledge and experiences of our supporters and advocates to raise visibility and awareness around end-of-life issues, including medical aid in dying. We need volunteers throughout the country to:

» Plan and deliver presentations to local community groups and venues
» Share stories for use in legislative testimony or for publication online
» Stay up-to-date on all the developments with end-of-life care and medical aid in dying

Our work happens at the federal, state and local levels, often with the leadership of our vast network of committed volunteers. Together we SUPPORT, EDUCATE and ADVOCATE.

Here Is What We Need You to Do in Your Community on Behalf of the Movement:

» Plan and deliver presentations on end-of-life issues and medical aid in dying to local community organizations. Use our Public Speaking Toolkit to get started.
» Get some practice giving your presentation to a friendly audience by hosting a house party in support of Compassion & Choices
» Share your stories online
» Share news and information on social media

Find specialized toolkits for the activities above in the Volunteer Resource Center, and see the Quarterly Action Bulletin for the latest Compassion & Choices’ public speaking & storytelling actions at CompassionAndChoices.org/volunteer-resource-center.
All volunteers working with Compassion & Choices must use the same up-to-date and accurate information in their advocacy, and should review and/or complete the following training resources, which can be found on the Volunteer Resource Center webpage at CompassAndChoices.org/volunteer-resource-center.

Overview of Public Speaking & Storytelling
The Volunteer Action Network Webinar Training: Public Speaking & Storytelling video will review the basic information you need to begin speaking locally on behalf of Compassion & Choices, including appropriate topics, venues and settings.

Public Speaking Toolkit
This brief handbook offers go-to resources that will help you prepare for your presentation. Review it in detail, and then look it over before each speaking engagement to keep best practices top of mind.

Video Training Resources
Compassion & Choices has produced a suite of short videos to familiarize volunteers with the issues, our work and key messages. Any volunteers doing public speaking for Compassion & Choices should review these key video assets.
SECTION VII: Resources for Volunteers

Compassion & Choices has developed a suite of Volunteer Action Network resources to support volunteers across the country. Familiarize yourself with the resources below — and look for even more on our website CompassAndChoices.org/volunteer-resource-center — to get started today!

Informational Resources for Public Speaking & Storytelling

» Compassion & Choices Storytelling Program
» Public Speaking Toolkit
» Compassion & Choices Public Speaking 101 Video
» TEDx Talk: The Brittany Effect – Transforming the Death with Dignity Movement / Barbara Coombs Lee

General Advocacy Resources From Compassion & Choices

» House Party Host Handbook
» Lobbying Toolkit
» Petitions, Tabling and Canvassing Toolkit

Other Resources

» “How to Die in Oregon” Home Screening Kit
» Compassion & Choices Online Magazine
» Compassion & Choices Newsroom
Ongoing Support and Assistance for Volunteers

Compassion & Choices is committed to building a strong base of volunteers to support improved care and expanded choice at the end of life for all Americans. In order to accomplish this, we need our volunteers to work as independently as possible — that’s why we have created this suite of DIY resources:

» Program handbooks and webinar training videos for each of the five program tracks provide an overview of the topics and helpful resources with timely actions you can take

» The Quarterly Action Bulletin published by the National Volunteer Program is sent to volunteers to guide their work in support of the end-of-life options movement

» Periodic e-alerts to keep volunteers involved in nationally relevant advocacy efforts

» Brown-bag seminars (live and recorded) provide continued opportunities for learning and skills-building

» Volunteer Action Center for additional online toolkits and resources

If you have been assigned to an Action Team, your Action Team leader is your primary resource for information, support and direction. Your Action Team leader has information about local goals and objectives for your area, and can provide additional training and information as needed.

If you live in a state without an Action Team and are interested in leading local volunteer efforts, please contact Compassion & Choices National Volunteer Program at: volunteer@CompassionAndChoices.org
SECTION VIII:
Frequently Asked Questions

What Is Compassion & Choices?
Compassion & Choices is the nation’s oldest, largest and most active nonprofit working to improve care and expand options for the end of life. For more than 30 years we have worked to change attitudes, practices and policies so that everyone can access the information and options they need for more control and comfort at the end of life.

What Is Medical Aid in Dying?
Medical aid in dying is the preferred term for the practice in which a mentally capable, terminally ill adult with less than six months to live may request medication from their doctor for self-administration to bring about a peaceful death if their suffering becomes unbearable. Many do not take the medication, but simply having it on hand — even just the option — relieves anxiety.

What Is the Basic Gist of What We Are Working For?
All people should have the ability, in consultation with their families, spiritual advisors and doctors, to make the end-of-life decisions that are right for them. When in the final stages of a terminal disease this should include the option to request a prescription from their doctor to die peacefully if suffering becomes unbearable.

Is It OK If I Give an Interview to a Media Outlet?
No. Compassion & Choices’ volunteers should never participate in a media interview without prior discussion and authorization from the Compassion & Choices Communications team. Compassion & Choices tries whenever possible to feature local volunteers in media coverage. So if you are approached by the media, even for a short quote or a simple question, direct them to the Compassion & Choices Communications team. Contact our Communications team through your Action Team leader or staff volunteer manager. Please note our Media Policy on page 6.
What Kinds of Speaking Engagements Can I Pursue on My Own?

Volunteer community speakers are encouraged to pursue speaking opportunities at local community organizations and centers. Local elder care facilities and public libraries are good examples, as are local resource fairs or other community events (see page 5). You can also consider hosting or participating in a Compassion & Choices house party — see our House Party Host Handbook for more information!

Which Speaking Engagements Should I Refer to Compassion & Choices?

Any speaking engagement that will draw audiences from outside your community or that is intended for medical professionals should be referred to Compassion & Choices’ staff. Other examples include any event at a medical school, a national conference that is coming to your area (like an association of faith leaders or hospice professionals) or other formal institutional events.

How Should I Refer a More Formal Speaking Opportunity That I Find Locally?

If, during your local outreach, you discover a speaking opportunity that should be referred to Compassion & Choices’ staff, please fill out the speaker request form on the Compassion & Choices’ website or ask the event host to do so: CompassionAndChoices.org/speakers. Compassion & Choices’ staff will review the request promptly and consider the best speakers for the opportunity.
Compassion & Choices is the nation’s oldest, largest and most active nonprofit working to improve care and expand options for the end of life. We:

**Support** patients and families
**Educate** the public and professionals
**Advocate** across the nation