

Friday, Feb 24, 2017

Oakland University to host discussion on physician-assisted suicide

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature considered adopting legislation that would allow physicians to perform assisted suicide for terminally ill patients. Now, Oakland University is preparing to host a panel discussion about the so-called “**Death with Dignity Act**.”

The discussion, which is sponsored by OU’s Department of Political Science, the Religious Studies program, and the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, will take place from 5:30-7 p.m. on Monday, March 13 in Room 203 in O’Dowd Hall.

“This issue struck us as important to create an event around for at least a couple of reasons,” said **David Dulio**, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Political Science Department. “First, it’s an issue that allows many different perspectives and disciplines to come together to have a constructive conversation.

“Second, it’s one that we hope many in the community will be interested in hearing more about and engaging in that conversation.”



Oakland University is preparing to host a panel discussion about the so-called “Death with Dignity Act,” which would allow physicians to perform assisted suicide for terminally ill patients. (Photo courtesy Shutterstock)

Sponsored by Reps. Tom **Cochran** (D-Mason) and Sam **Singh** (D-East Lansing), House Bill No. 5802 – also known as the Death with Dignity Act – would regulate physician assistance for patient-requested life-ending medication. It would also require safeguards for determining if the patient has a terminal disease, receives adequate counseling, and make a voluntary request for medication.

“Death is all too often a taboo subject in American culture,” said Charles Mabee, Ph.D., director of Christianity studies. “If we are to mature a society, it is crucial that we open this subject up to intelligent discussion and dialogue. In my mind, this panel is a step in the direction of ‘normalizing’ the experience of death as an essential ingredient of the overall experience of what it really means to live.”

In addition to Mabee, panelists at the March 13 event will include:

- State Rep. Tom Cochran (D-Mason)
- Jason Negri, assistant director of the Patients Rights Council
- **Amy DeBaets**, Ph.D., assistant professor of medical humanities and clinical bioethics at Oakland University’s William Beaumont School of Medicine
- **Jason Wasserman**, Ph.D., associate professor of biomedical sciences at Oakland University’s William Beaumont School of Medicine

The discussion will be moderated by **Jay Meehan**, Ph.D, a professor of sociology and criminal justice in the university’s College of Arts and Sciences. It is open to all OU students, faculty and staff, as well as the general public.

To learn more about House Bill No. 5802, visit the Michigan Legislature’s **website**.

For more information about the event, contact the Political Science Department at 248-370-2452.