

Submission into the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021

Submission No.: 72

Submitted by: Thomas O'Grady

Publication: Making the submission and your name public

Position: I/We support the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill but recommend some changes to it.

Comments in relation to: Conscientious objection by either individuals or entities

Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

I respect the rights of any medical practitioner to have a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying on moral, religious or ethical grounds. I also commend provisions in this bill mandating that a medical practitioner with a conscientious objection to voluntary assisted dying must refer the patient to other practitioners or services that may be willing to assist them. In my reading of the bill it would seem that there is no penalty for a medical practitioner whom objects to providing voluntary assisted dying and subsequently refuses to refer patients to a practitioner or service that may be able to assist them. Therefore I request that a penalty be added to the bill for medical practitioners that refuses to patients to services that may be able to assist them.

Furthermore, while this may be outside the scope of the legislation itself, I believe that voluntary assisted dying consultations must be available over tele-health services, especially for individuals living in small, regional, and remote communities. It is possible that in small communities there may be a limited number of qualified medical practitioners willing to assist. If a medical practitioner in such a community were to exercise their right to a conscientious objection, significant travel may be required for an individual seeking to consult with an alternative medical practitioner. Therefore it is crucial that voluntary assisted dying consultations be widely available through tele-health or other such arrangements.