

British Medical Association
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Margo MacDonald
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Scotland National Office

**By email - margo.macdonald.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

19 December 2008

Dear Margo MacDonald

Re: consultation on The Proposed End of Choices (Scotland) Bill

The British Medical Association (BMA) represents doctors throughout the UK and, on sensitive and emotive issues such as assisted dying, doctors have a diversity of views. Nevertheless, the BMA has clear policy established by its representative meeting in 2006 on the subject of physician assisted suicide. The policy is as follows:

The British Medical Association:

- (i) believes that the ongoing improvement in palliative care allows patients to die with dignity;
- (ii) insists that physician-assisted suicide should not be made legal in the UK;
- (iii) insists that voluntary euthanasia should not be made legal in the UK;
- (iv) insists that non-voluntary euthanasia should not be made legal in the UK;
- (v) insists that if euthanasia were legalised there should be a clear demarcation between those doctors who would be involved in it and those who would not.

The Association has considerable sympathy with individuals facing the effects of a degenerative condition but is concerned that emphasising their autonomy to end their lives with assistance could alter the ethos within which medical care is provided.

We are unable, therefore, to respond to the questions in your consultation about how a law could be drafted to permit physician assisted suicide.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Martin Woodrow'.

Martin Woodrow
BMA Scottish Secretary

Scottish Secretary: Martin Woodrow
Chief Executive/Secretary: Tony Bourne

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