

## SUBMISSION to the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Submitted by Dr Wilhelm Joseph Smithies

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017

To whom it may concern

I do not support changing State laws to provide for voluntary euthanasia or physician-assisted dying.

As a medical professional, I am committed to preserving life and believe that physician-assisted dying is against the Hippocratic Oath which I swore when I became a doctor 22 years ago. I do believe that we should provide excellent palliative care to ensure that our patients have a dignified death.

I am not certain, from my experience, that all guardians have the patient's best interests at heart. If a guardian is allowed to make this decision on behalf of their ward, I feel this could be abused.

I am also concerned that if this legislation is passed, I may be placed in a position where I am expected to refer a patient to a clinician who will assist them to die. This I find morally and ethically reprehensible.

I have recently experienced the passing of my father-in-law from leukaemia. Though he did experience some suffering at the end, this was kept to a minimum by good palliative care.

During those last few weeks of his life, the courage and strength that he showed has been an incredible example to our whole family, especially my young daughters. He also had the opportunity to say his farewells to each one of us and to inspire us for the future. The last few hours I spent with him has had a deep impact on my life. I would not wish for anyone to miss out on that opportunity.

In summary, I feel euthanasia is unethical, is open to abuse and deprives individuals of opportunities to share in the dying process which helps us to prepare for our own deaths.

I am prepared to appear before the Committee in person to present my case if you require me to do so.

Yours sincerely

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