

- Declaration of Geneva
- The Hippocratic Oath does indeed contain a passage that has been held to be incompatible with euthanasia, and even assisted dying: "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury or wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course." However, this is largely of academic interest today. The AMA has for many years subscribed to the World Medical Association's Declaration of Geneva (1948), sometimes called the modern Hippocratic Oath, which contains the following statement: I WILL MAINTAIN the utmost respect for human life." I suspect the question of "Hippocratic Oaths, ancient and modern" was on Michael Gannon's mind because the AMA has just (this month) adopted the latest amendments to the WMA's Declaration of Geneva, as ratified in Chicago in October this year. The above statement is now immediately preceded by the following new statement: "I WILL RESPECT the autonomy and dignity of my patient." Gannon does not seem to have realised it, but this new statement is a significant qualification of the injunction to maintain the utmost respect for human life. It seems to me that we should be stressing this new injunction to respect the autonomy and dignity of the patient. When a dying patient who is experiencing unbearable pain and suffering that the doctor is powerless to alleviate, requests assistance to accelerate death, the abandonment of that patient to their unbearable pain and suffering on their way to certain death, is compatible with neither respect for the autonomy and dignity of the patient, nor with respect for their life.



The Royal Australian
College of
General Practitioners

Oath of Fellowship

of

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

In acknowledging the privilege of practising medicine through general practice,
and in accepting the fellowship of this College, I make this solemn declaration
in the presence of my family, friends, colleagues and teachers.

In caring for my patients I undertake to use my knowledge
and skill to the best of my ability.

I will actively seek to maintain my skills and abilities throughout my
professional life, to practise within those abilities and to contribute,
wherever possible, to the advancement of the science of general practice.

I will continue the teaching ethos which has supported my own training,
and regularly review the quality of my patient care.

I will seek to enhance the quality of my patients' lives, maintain their dignity,
support their carers and treat all people equitably.

I will treat my colleagues and all who contribute to the wellbeing of my patients
with courtesy and demonstrate respect for their individual expertise.

I will at all times strive to be worthy of my patients' respect and never abuse
their trust or confidence. My clinical decisions will be based on the best possible
outcomes for my patients and will not be influenced by personal gain.

I extend these commitments beyond individuals to the
health and wellbeing of all people.

May these affirmations guide and inspire me in practising the art
and science of medicine as a general practitioner.