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[Health & Medicine](#), [Euthanasia](#)



Lina Morales Ms. Kinsey ENG 102 2: 00PM 1 October 2012 Effects of the Death with Dignity Act A terminally ill elderly looking ghostly pale looks into one's eyes and all one can see is the despair of their hopeless life and the excruciating pain they are going through, just begging for the afterlife. As they reach out for the hand of a close loved one, their icy cold touch sends a shiver down their spine, creating a sense of shame for keeping their elder dangling by a thread as opposed to letting them finally rest in peace. These types of scenarios have been allowed to end because of the legalization of Euthanasia in Oregon. Individuals suffering had been able to let go of their painful life as they desire. In November 8, 1994 euthanasia was legalized though the Death with Dignity Act passed in Oregon. While many individuals perceive euthanasia as murder, others see it as a way to liberate a person from pain. This event has had numerous effects including autonomy, quality of life, and a different option for the health care to budget. Euthanasia not only gives the patient the opportunity to stop their suffering, it also gives them autonomy. According to Thomas Preston, professor of medicine, a retired cardiologist and a former board member of Compassion in Dying " society must protect the right of terminally ill patients to choose euthanasia. " (Euthanasia 53) By euthanasia being legal, we have been unconsciously giving the patient the autonomy of whether they want to continue living or not. We as human beings can only perceive the outside of a person, however, we could never really know what they may be going through or suffering. Sometimes, individuals are so self-centered that would prefer to have their loved ones alive and in pain than giving them the freedom to choose between life and death. After all, each person is the owner of his or

her life and should be able to decide what is best for them. Faye Girsh, the headquarter of the right-to-die organization in Denver, Colorado, estates: " while Americans consider themselves free to live the lives they choose, most don't realize that this freedom ends when it comes to selecting peaceful death over a life filled with unbearable pain and suffering. " (Terminal 61)

The Dye with Dignity Act passed on November 8, 1994 permits an individual choose whether or not they want to commit PAS (Physician Assisted Suicide) as long as the request comes from a mentally competent, terminally ill patient and this request must be voluntary. Euthanasia also knows as Physician Assisted Suicide gives the patient autonomy over his/her own lives. Catholic religion which is pretty strong against euthanasia has come to realize that individuals should not have to stay alive just because God gave us life, but also the quality of the life that is being lived. According to a catholic priest Dr. Hans Kung: " Though many religious opponents to the right to die cite God's authority, nowhere did God ordain that life must be maintained in the direst of circumstances, such as extreme suffering, vegetative states, or the artificial prolonging of life in opposition to an individual's will. There are cases where the desire to die is a reasoned decision that must be respected. Strong safeguards are necessary to prevent abuse, but legalizing assisted suicide is humane and in keeping with the will of a compassionate God. " (Right 15). There is no reason to keep an ill individual suffering from intolerable pain alive if his or her wish is to put an end to his or her life. He also makes a point by saying that God did not say to prolong life if it is not the individual's will. In a personal interview to a Catholic Priest, he talks about his feelings about euthanasia and his reasons.

According to Dr. David Myers a priest and lawyer, when I asked him whether he thought the effects of euthanasia have been positive or negative his answer was: " you have to weigh the quality of life vs. the right of life... I support Physician Assisted Suicide, however there is a difference whether the doctor decides you do not have much chances to live and kills you and the type of where you decide you want to die and ask for assistance, that is the one I am for and believe has had positive effects, the one where you decide" (Myers) There is two types of PAS (Physician Assisted Suicide) that people might get confused as he explained, however the one that relates to euthanasia as in the Death with Dignity Act is the one where the patient decides whether or not he or she wants to put an end to their life. After all, the main goal of the Death with Dignity Act was to give the patient the choice and freedom to decide, as long as they were terminally ill, mentally competent, after two physicians confirm the diagnosis and prognosis, and if necessary a mental health professional to answer concerns the doctors may have. Euthanasia not only has had positive effects, it has had some negative ones also. According to Rita Marker the director of the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide providing drugs for suicide is cheaper than providing drugs to prolong life and " continuing to legalize assisted suicide will lead our society down a deadly path to cost containment. (Right 50). In other words, health plans will rely on suicide rather than buying the medicine which can be (most of the time) more expensive. This has already shown in Oregon, a state where Assisted Suicide is legal. Barbara Wagner was diagnosed with cancer which " had been in remission for two years". The doctor prescribed her with medication that

would most likely slow the growth of the cancer having as a result a prolongation of her existence. This medicine was covered by her "health care" which relieved her. Unfortunately after a period of time she was notified that the health care would no longer provide the medication for her but, "it would cover assisted suicide." (Right 50-51). The Death with Dignity Act was passed to help people have the freedom of choice all the way to the end of their lives. However, this case is unfair and understandable at the same time. Unfair because this person want to fight to continue living and the health care will not cover it anymore. Yet, it is still understandable because health care would not always be able to cover the whole cost of certain medicine, this case just gave an option Barbara Wagner wanted to avoid. Euthanasia has had both positive and negative effects since the Death with Dignity Act was passed in November 8, 1994 in Oregon. Euthanasia gives the patient autonomy, freedom to decide over the quality of life they want to live. However, it has also given the health care the option of making decision based on budget. Works Cited Euthanasia Opposing View Points. Bonnie Szumski, 2006. Print. Myers, David. Personal interview. 12 Sept. 2012 Terminal Illness Opposing Viewpoints. David L. Bender, 2001. Print. The Right to Die. Christine Nasso, 2010. Print.