

## World Medical Association Declaration on Terminal Illness

Adopted by the 35th World Medical Assembly Venice, Italy, October 1983

1. The duty of the physician is to heal and, where possible, relieve suffering and act to protect the best interests of his patients.
2. There shall be no exception to this principle even in the case of incurable disease or malformation.
3. This principle does not preclude application of the following rules:
  1. The physician may relieve suffering of a terminally ill patient by withholding treatment with the consent of the patient or his immediate family if unable to express his will.

Withholding of treatment does not free the physician from his obligation to assist the dying person and give him the necessary medicaments to mitigate the terminal phase of his illness.

2. The physician shall refrain from employing any extraordinary means which would prove of no benefit for the patient.
3. The physician may, when the patient cannot reverse the final process of cessation of vital functions, apply such artificial means as are necessary to keep organs active for transplantation provided he acts in accordance with the laws of the country or by virtue of a formal consent given by the responsible person and provided the certification of death or the irreversibility of vital activity had been made by physicians unconnected with the transplantation and the patient receiving treatment. These artificial means shall not be paid for by the donor or his relatives. Physicians treating the donor shall be totally independent of those treating the recipient and of the recipient himself.