

## **Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill**

### **British Medical Association**

The British Medical Association (BMA) is an independent trade union and voluntary professional association representing over 153,000 doctors and medical students working in all branches of medicine across the UK. The BMA represents doctors who hold a wide range of views on the issue of assisted dying. This issue has been debated at our annual conference (annual representative meeting) and whilst these debates reflect the wide range of opinions on the subject, the weight of opinion has consistently been to oppose assisted dying in all forms.

The Association has clear and consistent policy, established at its representatives meeting in 2006 to oppose all forms of assisted suicide and euthanasia. The policy is as follows.

The BMA:

- Oppose all forms of assisted dying;
- Supports the current legal framework, which allows compassionate and ethical care for the dying; and
- Supports the establishment of a comprehensive, high quality palliative care service available to all, to enable patients to die with dignity.

The Association therefore supports the provision of high quality person-centred palliative care for those individuals facing the effects of terminal illnesses and conditions but is concerned that giving them a legal right to end their lives with physician assistance, even where that assistance is limited to assessment, verification and prescribing, could alter the ethos within which medical care is provided.

Given that the BMA's current position is that it does not support a change in the law to permit assisted dying, it is not appropriate for us to comment further on the principles of the Bill at this stage.

**Dr Brian Keighley**  
**Chairman of BMA Scotland**