

CANADA

C O U R S U P É R I E U R E

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**PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC**

DISTRICT DE TROIS-RIVIÈRES

No. : 400-17-002642-110

**GINETTE LEBLANC,**  
demanderesse

c.

**PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL DU CANADA,**  
défendeur

et

**PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL DU QUÉBEC,**  
mis-en-cause

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**AFFIDAVIT OF KENNETH R. STEVENS, JR., MD**

THE UNDERSIGNED, being duly sworn under oath, states:

1. I am a doctor in Oregon USA where physician-assisted suicide is legal. I am also a Professor Emeritus and a former Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, Oregon. I have treated thousands of patients with cancer.
2. In Oregon, our assisted suicide law applies to patients predicted to have less than six months to live. I write to clarify for the court that this does not necessarily mean that patients are dying.
3. In 2000, I had a cancer patient named Jeanette Hall. Another doctor had given her a terminal diagnosis of six months to a year to live, which was based on her not being treated for cancer. I understand that he had referred her to me.

4. At our first meeting, Jeanette told me plainly that she did not want to be treated and that was going to "do" our law, *i.e.*, kill herself with a lethal dose of barbiturates. It was very much a settled decision.

5. I, personally, did not and do not believe in assisted suicide. I also believed that her cancer was treatable and that her prospects were good. She was not, however, interested in treatment. She had made up her mind, but she continued to see me.

6. On the third or fourth visit, I asked her about her family and learned that she had a son. I asked her how he would feel if she went through with her plan. Shortly after that, she agreed to be treated and she is still alive today. Indeed, she is thrilled to be alive. It's been twelve years.

7. For Jeanette, the mere presence of legal assisted suicide had steered her to suicide.

8. Today, for patients under the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid), there is also a financial incentive to commit suicide: The Plan covers the cost. The Plan's "Statements of Intent for the April 1, 2012 Prioritized List of Health Services," states:

It is the intent of the [Oregon Health Services] Commission that services under ORS 127.800-127.897 (Oregon Death with Dignity Act) be covered for those that wish to avail themselves to those services.

Attached hereto at page SI-1.

9. Under the Oregon Health Plan, there is also a financial incentive towards suicide because the Plan will not necessarily pay for a patient's treatment. For example, patients with cancer are denied treatment if they have a "less than 24 months median survival with treatment" and fit other criteria. This is the Plan's "Guideline Note 12." (Attached hereto at page GN-4).

10. The term, "less than 24 months median survival with treatment," means that statistically half the patients receiving treatment will live less than 24 months (two years) and the other half will live longer than two years.

11. Some of the patients living longer than two years will likely live far longer than two years, as much as five, ten or twenty years depending on the type of cancer. This is because there are always some people who beat the odds.

12. All such persons who fit within "Guideline Note 12" will nonetheless be denied treatment. Their suicides under Oregon's assisted suicide act will be covered.

13. I also write to clarify a difference between physician-assisted suicide and end-of-life palliative care in which dying patients receive medication for the intended purpose of relieving pain, which may incidentally hasten death. This is the principle of double effect. This is not physician-assisted suicide in which death is intended for patients who may or may not be dying anytime soon.

14. The Oregon Health Plan is a government health plan administered by the State of Oregon. If assisted suicide is legalized in Canada, your government health plan could follow a similar pattern. If so, the plan will pay for a patient to die, but not to live.

SWORN BEFORE ME at *Sherwood*  
Oregon, USA  
on *September 18,* 2012

NAME: *Jessica Borge*

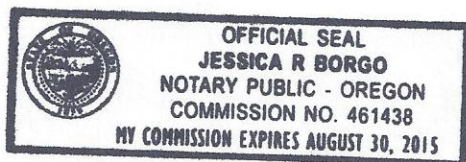
A notary in and for the  
State of Oregon

ADDRESS: *16100 SW Tualatin - Sherwood Rd*

EXPIRY OF COMMISSION: *Aug, 30, 2015*

PLACE SEAL HERE: *Jessica Borge*

*Ken Stevens MD*  
Ken Stevens, MD



#### STATEMENT OF INTENT 1: PALLIATIVE CARE

It is the intent of the Commission that palliative care services be covered for patients with a life-threatening illness or severe advanced illness expected to progress toward dying, regardless of the goals for medical treatment and with services available according to the patient's expected length of life (see examples below).

Palliative care is comprehensive, specialized care ideally provided by an interdisciplinary team (which may include but is not limited to physicians, nurses, social workers, etc.) where care is particularly focused on alleviating suffering and promoting quality of life. Such interdisciplinary care should include assessment, care planning, and care coordination, emotional and psychosocial counseling for patients and families, assistance accessing services from other needed community resources, and should reflect the patient and family's values and goals.

Some examples of palliative care services that should be available to patients with a life-threatening/limiting illness,

- A) without regard to a patient's expected length of life:
  - Inpatient palliative care consultation; and,
  - Outpatient palliative care consultation, office visits.
- B) with an expected median survival of less than one year, as supported by the best available published evidence:
  - Home-based palliative care services (to be defined by DMAP), with the expectation that the patient will move to home hospice care.
- C) with an expected median survival of six months or less, as supported by peer-reviewed literature:
  - Home hospice care, where the primary goal of care is quality of life (hospice services to be defined by DMAP).

It is the intent of the Commission that certain palliative care treatments be covered when these treatments carry the primary goal to alleviate symptoms and improve quality of life, without intending to alter the trajectory of the underlying disease.

Some examples of covered palliative care treatments include:

- A) Radiation therapy for painful bone metastases with the intent to relieve pain and improve quality of life.
- B) Surgical decompression for malignant bowel obstruction.
- C) Medication therapy such as chemotherapy with low toxicity/low side effect agents with the goal to decrease pain from bulky disease or other identified complications. Cost of chemotherapy and alternative medication(s) should also be considered.
- D) Medical equipment and supplies (such as non-motorized wheelchairs, walkers, bandages, and catheters) determined to be medically appropriate for completion of basic activities of daily living, for management of symptomatic complications or as required for symptom control.
- E) Acupuncture with intent to relieve nausea.

Cancer treatment with intent to palliate is not a covered service when the same palliation can be achieved with pain medications or other non-chemotherapy agents.

It is NOT the intent of the Commission that coverage for palliative care encompasses those treatments that seek to prolong life despite substantial burdens of treatment and limited chance of benefit. See Guideline Note 12: TREATMENT OF CANCER WITH LITTLE OR NO BENEFIT PROVIDED NEAR THE END OF LIFE.

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT 2: DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

It is the intent of the Commission that services under ORS 127.800-127.897 (Oregon Death with Dignity Act) be covered for those that wish to avail themselves to those services. Such services include but are not limited to attending physician visits, consulting physician confirmation, mental health evaluation and counseling, and prescription medications.

#### STATEMENT OF INTENT 3: INTEGRATED CARE

Recognizing that many individuals with mental health disorders receive care predominantly from mental health care providers, and recognizing that integrating mental and physical health services for such individuals promotes patient-centered care, the Health Evidence Review Commission endorses the incorporation of chronic disease health management support within mental health service systems. Although such supports are not part of the mental health benefit package, mental health organizations (MHOs) that elect to provide these services may report them using psychiatric rehabilitation codes which pair with mental health diagnoses. If MHOs choose to provide tobacco cessation supports, they should report these services using 99407 for individual counseling and S9453 for classes.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 9, WIRELESS CAPSULE ENDOSCOPY (CONT'D)**

- b) Suspected Crohn's disease: upper and lower endoscopy, small bowel follow through
- 2) Radiological evidence of lack of stricture
- 3) Only covered once during any episode of illness
- 4) FDA approved devices must be used
- 5) Patency capsule should not be used prior to procedure

**GUIDELINE NOTE 10, CENTRAL SEROUS RETINOPATHY AND PARS PLANITIS**

*Line 413*

Central serous retinopathy (362.41) is included on this line only for treatment when the condition has been present for 3 months or longer. Pars planitis (363.21) should only be treated in patients with 20/40 or worse vision..

**GUIDELINE NOTE 11, COLONY STIMULATING FACTOR (CSF) GUIDELINES**

*Lines 79,102,103,105,123-125,131,144,159,165,166,168,170,181,197,198,206-208,218,220,221,228,229,231,243,249,252,275-278,280,287,292,310-312,314,320,339-341,356,459,622*

- A) CSF are not indicated for primary prophylaxis of febrile neutropenia unless the primary chemotherapeutic regimen is known to produce febrile neutropenia at least 20% of the time. CSF should be considered when the primary chemotherapeutic regimen is known to produce febrile neutropenia 10-20% of the time; however, if the risk is due to the chemotherapy regimen, other alternatives such as the use of less myelosuppressive chemotherapy or dose reduction should be explored in this situation.
- B) For secondary prophylaxis, dose reduction should be considered the primary therapeutic option after an episode of severe or febrile neutropenia except in the setting of curable tumors (e.g., germ cell), as no disease free or overall survival benefits have been documented using dose maintenance and CSF.
- C) CSF are not indicated in patients who are acutely neutropenic but afebrile.
- D) CSF are not indicated in the treatment of febrile neutropenia except in patients who received prophylactic filgrastim or sargramostim or in high risk patients who did not receive prophylactic CSF. High risk patients include those age >65 years or with sepsis, severe neutropenia with absolute neutrophil count <100/mcl, neutropenia expected to be more than 10 days in duration, pneumonia, invasive fungal infection, other clinically documented infections, hospitalization at time of fever, or prior episode of febrile neutropenia.
- E) CSF are not indicated to increase chemotherapy dose-intensity or schedule, except in cases where improved outcome from such increased intensity has been documented in a clinical trial.
- F) CSF (other than pegfilgrastim) are indicated in the setting of autologous progenitor cell transplantation, to mobilize peripheral blood progenitor cells, and after their infusion.
- G) CSF are NOT indicated in patients receiving concomitant chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
- H) There is no evidence of clinical benefit in the routine, continuous use of CSF in myelodysplastic syndromes. CSF may be indicated for some patients with severe neutropenia and recurrent infections, but should be used only if significant response is documented.
- I) CSF is indicated for treatment of cyclic, congenital and idiopathic neutropenia.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 12, TREATMENT OF CANCER WITH LITTLE OR NO BENEFIT PROVIDED NEAR THE END OF LIFE**

*Lines 102,103,123-125,144,159,165,166,170,181,197,198,207,208,218,220,221,228,229,231,243,249,252,275-278,280,287,292,310-312,320,339-341,356,459,586,622*

This guideline only applies to patients with advanced cancer who have less than 24 months median survival with treatment.

All patients receiving end of life care, either with the intent to prolong survival or with the intent to palliate symptoms, should have/be engaged with palliative care providers (for example, have a palliative care consult or be enrolled in a palliative care program).

Treatment with intent to prolong survival is not a covered service for patients with any of the following:

- Median survival of less than 6 months with or without treatment, as supported by the best available published evidence
- Median survival with treatment of 6-12 months when the treatment is expected to improve median survival by less than 50%, as supported by the best available published evidence
- Median survival with treatment of more than 12 months when the treatment is expected to improve median survival by less than 30%, as supported by the best available published evidence
- Poor prognosis with treatment, due to limited physical reserve or the ability to withstand treatment regimen, as indicated by low performance status.

Unpublished evidence may be taken into consideration in the case of rare cancers which are universally fatal within six months without treatment.

The Health Evidence Review Commission is reluctant to place a strict \$/QALY (quality adjusted life-year) or \$/LYS (life-year saved) requirement on end-of-life treatments, as such measurements are only approximations and cannot take into account all of the merits of an individual case. However, cost must be taken into consideration when considering treatment options near the end of life. For example, in no instance can it be justified to spend \$100,000 in public resources to increase an individual's expected survival by three months when hundreds of thousands of Oregonians are without any form of health insurance.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 12, TREATMENT OF CANCER WITH LITTLE OR NO BENEFIT PROVIDED NEAR THE END OF LIFE (CONT'D)**

Treatment with the goal to palliate is addressed in Statement of Intent 1, Palliative Care.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 13, MINIMALLY INVASIVE CORONARY ARTERY BYPASS SURGERY**

*Lines 76,195*

Minimally invasive coronary artery bypass surgery indicated only for single vessel disease.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 14, SECOND BONE MARROW TRANSPLANTS**

*Lines 79,103,105,125,131,166,170,198,206,231,280,314*

Second bone marrow transplants are not covered except for tandem autologous transplants for multiple myeloma.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 15, HETEROTOPIC BONE FORMATION**

*Lines 89,384*

Radiation treatment is indicated only in those at high risk of heterotopic bone formation: those with a history of prior heterotopic bone formation, ankylosing spondylitis or hypertrophic osteoarthritis.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 16, CYSTIC FIBROSIS CARRIER SCREENING**

*Lines 1,3,4*

Cystic fibrosis carrier testing is covered for 1) non-pregnant adults if indicated in the genetic testing algorithm or 2) pregnant women.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 17, PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE**

*Line 58*

Dental cleaning and fluoride treatments are limited to once per 12 months for adults and twice per 12 months for children up to age 19 (D1110, D1120, D1203, D1204, D1206). More frequent dental cleanings and/or fluoride treatments may be required for certain higher risk populations.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 18, VENTRICULAR ASSIST DEVICES**

*Lines 108,279*

Ventricular assist devices are covered only in the following circumstances:

- A) as a bridge to cardiac transplant;
- B) as treatment for pulmonary hypertension when pulmonary hypertension is the only contraindication to cardiac transplant and the anticipated outcome is cardiac transplant; or,
- C) as a bridge to recovery.

Ventricular assist devices are not covered for destination therapy.

Ventricular assist devices are covered for cardiomyopathy only when the intention is bridge to cardiac transplant.

**GUIDELINE NOTE 19, PET SCAN GUIDELINES**

*Lines 125,144,165,166,170,182,207,208,220,221,243,276,278,292,312,339*

PET Scans are covered for diagnosis of the following cancers only:

- Solitary pulmonary nodules and non-small cell lung cancer
- Evaluation of cervical lymph node metastases when CT or MRI do not demonstrate an obvious primary tumor.

For diagnosis, PET is covered only when it will avoid an invasive diagnostic procedure, or will assist in determining the optimal anatomic location to perform an invasive diagnostic procedure.

PET scans are covered for the initial staging of the following cancers:

- Cervical cancer only when initial MRI or CT is negative for extra-pelvic metastasis
- Head and neck cancer when initial MRI or CT is equivocal