

Doctors Go to Court to Fight California Law

At approximately 11:30 a.m. EST Friday morning, attorneys for Life Legal Defense Foundation will have a hearing in a Riverside, California, courtroom to challenge that state's assisted suicide law known as the *End of Life Option Act*.

Life Legal is representing six physicians as well as the American Academy of Medical Ethics. They will be arguing that the law takes away "essential" legal protections for some patients who have been diagnosed with a life-ending illness.

They issued the following statement ahead of Friday's hearing:

The End of Life Option Act deprives people who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness of essential legal protections. The act does not require even a basic psychological evaluation prior to obtaining a prescription for lethal drugs, even though most people experience depression or anxiety when diagnosed with a life-threatening illness.

In fact, patients who are institutionalized in state-run mental hospitals can request a so-called "aid-in-dying" prescription and then be released for the sole purpose of committing suicide. The law does not permit the use of the word suicide. Instead, we must use the euphemism "assisted dying."

Death certificates will not indicate that patients died of a self-administered dose of barbiturates taken with the intent to cause their own death, making it nearly impossible to know whether they were coerced or forced to take the drugs.

The judge is expected to make a decision on the matter by 6 p.m. EST Friday. {eoa}