



## Chapter

### Meetings:

- Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:00-8:30p.m.
- Contact Nicole Nevey, Secretary, for information on the location at [Nicole.nevey@gmail.com](mailto:Nicole.nevey@gmail.com)

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## Death With Dignity Act: 5 years later

In the wake of the Brittany Maynard story that went viral this fall, this is an important opportunity for social workers and other health care professionals to revisit Washington State's Death with Dignity Act (DWDA).

For social workers in healthcare there are several important things to keep in mind:

**Language matters.** As the law is written, "Actions taken in accordance with this chapter do not, for any purpose, constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing, or homicide, under the law" (Ch. 70.245 RCW). The preferred terminology has been stated to be "aid in dying" or "physician aid in dying." Additionally, the DWDA did not legalize assisted suicide, which remains a Class C felony in Washington. Some patients and family members of patients who have fought hard to continue living have expressed that the term "suicide" is offensive.

**This is an emotionally charged topic.** Be aware of your own feelings and reactions to your patient's request, and get support from colleagues and supervisors.

**Know your organization's policy and what is defined as "participation."** Most facilities in Washington do not allow patients to take medication "on site." However this does not necessarily mean that physicians cannot participate by writing the prescription or acting as the consulting physician, or that pharmacists are prohibited from filling prescriptions for life-ending medication.

**The option of using the DWDA does not preclude the use of good hospice and palliative care.** 86% of participants were enrolled in hospice services and good palliative care remains the goal with every patient. The role of hospice is the same whether a patient chooses to use the DWDA or not.

**As with hospice, many of those who wish to access the DWDA initiate the process too late.** The minimum amount of time it takes for someone to obtain the medication is 15 days, but in actual practice it usually takes at least three to four weeks.

**Ask questions.** Gather information. Get support. Many of the larger hospital systems in Western Washington have social workers or other staff designated to support patients through the process. Informational materials, physician education, and experienced volunteer support can also be obtained from Compassion & Choices of Washington ([www.compassionwa.org](http://www.compassionwa.org)).

After more than five years in practice, the Death with Dignity Act in Washington State is one of several end-of-life choices available to dying Washingtonians. With increasing national attention and an aging cohort of self-sufficient baby-boomers, as social workers it is our job (and our responsibility as per our code of ethics) to assist our patients in exploring all of their end-of-life options and provide emotional support across a continuum of care, including in cases where aid-in-dying is requested.

## Education Conference and Vendor Fair: March 24, 2015

Mark your calendar for the 2015 Education Conference and Vendor Fair, which will take place on Tuesday, March 24 from 3:00-7:00PM at the Mountaineer's Club (7700 Sand Point Way NE in Seattle).

Featured speakers include Selena Bolotin, MSW, from Qualis Health presenting "Assessing Rehospitalization Risk, and Then What?" and



Brian Giddens, MSW, from the University of Washington Medical Center presenting "Ethics in Care Transitions." The con-

ference will fulfill 2.5 CEUs.

Confirmed major sponsors for the conference as of December 2 are: **Bayview Retirement, Careage, Chateau Retirement, Choice Advisory, Era Living, Extendicare, A Helping**

**Hand, and Kindred.** We thank these vendors for their considerable support of the conference.

*"The course  
improv(ed)  
professional practice" -  
"Working with  
Autobiographical  
Memory": excellent  
reviews*

## 'Working with Autobiographical Memory': excellent reviews

SSWLHC-WA sponsored a CEU session presented by Mary Weatherly, MSW, on October 4, 2014 that received excellent reviews from participants.

The session, which offered three CEUs, included information on the different types of memory, biases in memory retrieval, how cultural factors bias memory, helping clients

reduce bias, and understanding one's own memory biases.

Participants overwhelmingly evaluated the various elements of the presentation as "good" or "excellent", particularly in areas of the course improving professional practice and that they would recommend the course to other social workers.

The session, which was offered on a Saturday, aimed to meet member's requests to hold CEU opportunities outside of traditional work hours. It was held at AMR headquarters in Tukwila.

Members who are interested in volunteering on future CEU planning should contact Education Chair Carol Charles at [carolc6@uw.edu](mailto:carolc6@uw.edu).

## "Circle of Life" awarded to Yakima Hospital



The Circle of Life award, co-sponsored by NASW, recognizes staff in hospitals, hospices, health-care systems and

long-term care facilities dedicated to improving palliative and end-of-life care. Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital in Yakima, WA was one

of the 2014 recipients of the Circle of Life Award.

The hospital collaborated with

community agencies to create a variety of palliative and hospice options to serve rural Yakima County, and to do so in a culturally and linguistically-appropriate manner.

New services include Transitions, an outpatient, home-based palliative care program. It is staffed by a social worker and volunteers who collaborate with other disciplines, including community physicians.

## Letter from chapter President Rachel Dieleman



In early November, I had the privilege to make my way to Salt Lake City for the SSWLHC's national conference. I met some wonderful folks from the great Pacific Northwest as well as other social workers from across the country. It's quite something to be surrounded by so many strong, compassionate, thoughtful, and inspiring people who understand social work and speak your language. I don't know about you, but though I love being a medical social worker, there are times that I have felt lonely as a social worker in the health care arena. It seems that our discipline is one that everyone wants to have on their team, but know-

ing what we do and what we can bring is not always understood. And we do so much! Hearing our colleagues across the country share their stories about the work that they are doing, from work in medical clinics to acute care centers, as well as social work professors talking about their efforts to prepare our future colleagues for work, was a gift. We can be proud to be a part of such a great profession.

This was also a wonderful reminder of the opportunities we have to learn from one another and to take advantage of the resources we can find in one another. We don't need to travel very far to find one another and I hope that we find new ways to connect so that we can continue to build our profession and make a difference for our patients and clients.

If any of you were able to attend the SSWLHC-WA Annual Legislative event, you were

able to hear about what our friends and allies are doing to represent us and our work in Olympia. We have opportunities to speak up in advocating for those we serve. Cassie reminded us that legislators want to hear from us. They want to hear our ideas and thoughts about how to make access to care better, how to support the needs of our patients who have chronic mental illness, how to address concerns of homelessness, and so much more. I hope that you'll consider taking the time to brainstorm ideas with your colleagues and maybe put those ideas in writing and send them forward. Advocacy is at the heart of so much of what we do and I think we can all agree that having legislation in place to back up our work will make a difference. Let's continue to work together to advocate for our patients, clients, their families, and for the work that we do each day.

*"It seems that our discipline is one that everyone wants to have on their team" -*

*Letter from Chapter President Rachel Dieleman*

## Linda Brandeis receives Hyman J. Weiner Award



Linda Brandeis, MSW, received

the 2014 Hyman J. Weiner Award at the national SSWLHC conference in Salt Lake City. Ms. Brandeis's health care experience includes outpatient clinics to inpatient services. She is currently a social worker with the VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

"You have demonstrated excellence in teaching social work professionals and students over the course of your career.

Your many contributions have strengthened our profession and are an inspiration to health care social workers everywhere," stated Ms. Brandeis's award letter.

This award honors an individual who typifies Hyman J. Weiner's outstanding qualities as a teacher, scholar, advocate, change agent and humorous and compassionate person.

## Join the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care's Washington Chapter, or renew your membership!

Dues are a bargain: \$40 for one year or \$75 for two years, and students can join for \$25.

Your chapter is stronger than ever and includes the following benefits:

- Quarterly newsletters
- Yearly Membership Roster
- Networking and consultation
- Reduced-cost seminars with CEUs
- Social health policy leadership
- Annual MSW student scholarship
- Website: [www.sswlhc-wa.org](http://www.sswlhc-wa.org)
- Listserv through Google Groups

Join or renew at [www.sswlhc-wa.org/membership](http://www.sswlhc-wa.org/membership).



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### Taking Action: 2015 Legislation Affecting Access and Delivery of Health Care

The SSWLHC put on the Annual Legislative Update titled Taking Action: 2015 Legislation Affecting Access and Delivery of Health Care. The event was held at the Horizon House Sky Lounge on Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. The event had a pretty good turnout for a dark and cold Wednesday evening. Many members gathered early to mingle as they enjoyed the spread of refreshments and snacks offered.

The first keynote speaker was Cassie Sauer, MSW, the Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Government Affairs for the Washington State Hospital Association. She led a well

prepared and engaging presentation to help understand recent legislating changes that will impact health care in

our state. She directly related this to Social work and identified implications for social workers practicing in health care settings.

The second speaker was Sarah Weinberg, M.D., who is a board certified pediatrician who also worked as the director of a local neighborhood clinic serving the underinsured. She is currently the VP of



Health Care for All Washington and discussed a grass roots initiative to go beyond the ACA to provide universal health care for all.

Attendees received 2 CEUs for their time at the informative event. Special thanks to Chancy Grace, Kathleen Fellbaum and other chapter members who donated their time to organize this event.