

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE HENRY A. WAXMAN
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
HEARING ON “IMPROVING CARE AT THE END OF LIFE WITH COMPLEMENTARY
MEDICINE”
OCTOBER 19, 1999

Mr. Chairman, individuals who are at the end of their lives deserve the same level of attention and care as do individuals who have longer life expectancies. Our country is a world leader in medical research and technology, and with every day we achieve advances in treatments for terminal diseases. Nevertheless, many people in this country are not able to obtain the quality of life and care that they and their families should expect in the last stages of their lives.

Many people have been working to increase our understanding of steps that policymakers, health professionals, volunteers, family members, and others can take to help improve the quality of life for individuals at the end of their lives. Today’s hearing provides an opportunity to continue this effort.

Some of today’s witnesses are caregivers who will share their personal experiences and insights regarding end of life care. We will also hear from government representatives about ongoing efforts by the Veterans Health Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the Health Care Financing Administration to research and support end of life care. This discussion will provide valuable insights regarding the status of end-of-life care in this country, and efforts and initiatives we should continue to explore. I join my colleagues in welcoming these witnesses and look forward to their testimony.

I also want to note that two of the witnesses, Mr. Dannion Brinkley and Mrs. Carolene Marks, are from my home state of California. I want to welcome you and thank you for making the trip to be with us today.

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