

# Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

Doctors have urged the British Medical Association (BMA) to maintain its opposition to assisted suicide, as it launches a poll asking members' views.

More than 50 doctors signed a letter to The Times, saying "the existing law ensures that doctors continue to uphold their duty of care, avoiding the inherent risks to sick and vulnerable patients that physician-assisted suicide would bring".

The BMA said the results would not dictate policy but would be discussed at its annual conference in June.

## **'Disturbing'**

The signatories said "the picture is disturbing" in countries where assisted suicide is legal.

Their letter noted that, in Canada, the government has consulted on expanding assisted suicide "to the mentally ill, 'mature minors' and individuals whose deaths are not imminent".

"Meanwhile, Canadian hospices are facing pressure to provide assisted death or risk losing their funding".

The doctors warned that the public's trust in the medical profession may lead to patients equating assisted suicide with good quality palliative care.

## **Unfair**

The poll asks members if the BMA should support, oppose or take a neutral position on assisted suicide.

The decision by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) to end its opposition to assisted suicide is currently facing a legal challenge.

Over 40 per cent of doctors voted to remain opposed, but the RCP said it would take a neutral stance unless a supra-majority of 60 per cent backed either support or opposition.

Dr David Randall, who launched the challenge, said a preliminary ruling in his favour "vindicates our decision to challenge this unfair poll".

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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