

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- K08

Source Christian Institute

The husband of a disabled woman has challenged growing calls for vulnerable people to be denied life-saving treatment as the NHS grapples with COVID-19.

Merv Kenwood called BBC Radio 4's Any Answers? to say the "immediate sense of 'well we will forfeit these people's lives' is just so very, very wrong. People want to live."

It comes after a GP surgery in Wales wrote to patients with serious health problems asking them to sign a 'Do Not Resuscitate' form. It later apologised.

Trade-off

The radio discussion followed an earlier debate on the show's sister programme, Any Questions?

Our absolute responsibility is the protection of life

It was sparked by a caller asking if "the trade-off" for trying to save the lives of the elderly was "really worth it, when it will cripple the younger generation's lives for decades".

Panellist Nadhim Zahawi MP said there was no 'trade-off' to consider. "Our absolute responsibility is the protection of life", he said.

Gift of life

Other panellists agreed. Silkie Carlo, the Director of civil liberties group Big Brother Watch, said "the right to life is the most important human right."

"And it's really times like these that make you value what a gift life is", adding "I hope that if there is one thing that we can take forward, it is compassion for everyone in society, young and old".

it's really times like these that make you value what a gift life is

Professor of palliative medicine and Crossbench Peer Baroness Finlay noted that difficult decisions on allocation of resources always have to be made, but said it was not on grounds of age or disability but 'whether the treatment is needed, available and patients have the capacity to benefit from it'.

'Heartless and immoral'

Callers to Any Answers? were quick to back the panellists support for protecting life.

Chris said: "The issue is should we sacrifice our elderly and vulnerable to save the young from the economic effects of COVID-19? And put that way round, it's a heartless and immoral question".

Another added, "our values dictate that with our wealthy society, ample resources, we support the vulnerable to the best of our ability".

They want to live

Calling into Any Answers? the following week, Merv Kenwood said the "current push" to get vulnerable people to sign 'Do Not Resuscitate' forms put "a lot of unfair and at times discriminatory pressure on vulnerable people" – including his disabled wife.

Asked by presenter Anita Anand what he would say to the Prime Minister and other decision makers, Mr Kenwood replied: "Please do not brush away the lives of these many, many

vulnerable, elderly, disabled people on the assumption that they are happy to not want to live”.

Last month a GP surgery in south Wales was forced to apologise after it told patients that people deemed to have “significant life-limiting illnesses” were “unlikely to be offered hospital admission should they become unwell and certainly will not be offered a ventilator bed”. It also indicated that CPR would not be performed.

Elizabeth John, one of the patients who received the letter and has an incurable form of cancer, said the letter was like a “death warrant” and made her feel “worthless”.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

If you do not wish to received these bulletins please let me know by email

<http://ksc188.weebly.com/publications.html>

Please feel free forward to others you feel may be interested in the contents of this bulletin.