



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 7, 2023

## Oregon Open for Suicide Tourism

If you're looking to kill yourself, Oregon is the place to go. The first state to pass an assisted-suicide law is now also the first to allow suicide tourism from other states — and it probably won't be the last.

The [Daily Mail](#) reports: "Oregon has become America's first 'death tourism' destination, where terminally ill people from Texas and other states that have outlawed assisted suicide have started traveling to get their hands on a deadly cocktail of drugs to end their lives."

In 1997, the Beaver State passed a law allowing terminally ill patients with fewer than six months to live to obtain fatal drugs from their doctors, though the patients were required to administer the drugs themselves. The law's proponents argued that it had strict safeguards to prevent its abuse, such as requiring a close relationship between the patient and the doctor prescribing the poison and restricting its application to Oregon residents.

"But Oregon permits doctor-shopping," bioethics attorney Wesley Smith wrote in [a LifeNews.com article](#). "And suicide prescribers don't even need to practice in the specialty that treats the patient's underlying medical condition."

Not surprisingly, Oregon's assisted-suicide rates have steadily increased over the years. "In 2021, the most recent year for which data are available, doctors prescribed 383 fatal drug doses and 238 people ended their lives," wrote the *Mail*.

Even that wasn't enough killing for euthanasia activists. Portland's Dr. Nicholas Gideonse, a major advocate and practitioner of assisted suicide, sued the state in 2021, claiming that the law's residency requirement was unconstitutional because it prevented him from prescribing death for patients from neighboring Washington state who could not find a doctor in their home state, which also allows assisted suicide, willing to help them off themselves.

"The restriction on residency ... was a barrier or aspect of the initial law that was understandable at the time, in terms of Oregon being the first in this area, but as the care has become more standardized, it presented an obstacle to my patients," Gideonse told [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#).

Within four months, state health officials settled the case by agreeing to lift the residency rule. While that provision has not yet been codified, the Democrat-dominated legislature is expected to pass a repeal bill soon.



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Once suicide tourism became even tenuously legal, Gideonse wasted no time before inviting out-of-staters to his death practice, penned the *Mail*:

In recent weeks, however, it has emerged that Dr. Gideonse has also opened up procedures to far-flung non-residents, including those living in states that prohibit suicide assistance, according to his comments as a panelist with The Completed Life Initiative.

After the lawsuit wrapped up, Dr. Gideonse has communicated with terminally ill patients from states that prohibit medically-assisted suicides to assess whether they met Oregon's criteria and to advise them on how they could relocate there for hospice care, he said.

Gideonse mentioned having had "material" conversations with patients from Texas and "one of the Carolinas." Should these patients actually take advantage of Gideonse's ghoulish services, they could well be putting those who assist them in traveling to Portland in legal jeopardy back in their home states.

Beyond that, reported the *Mail*, "For critics, Oregon's nascent 'death tourism' industry, and efforts to create another in Vermont, show how the U.S. is on a slippery slope to following in Canada's footsteps — where lax rules have allowed people with so little as hearing loss to be euthanized." (Vermont already permits doctors to prescribe suicide drugs with [nothing more than a Zoom consultation](#).)

Never fear, say assisted-suicide cheerleaders. "These U.S. laws simply don't compare to euthanasia laws in Canada," Compassion & Choices' Corinne Carey told the *Mail*. "The U.S. model is notable for its reliance on safeguards," said Death with Dignity's Dr. Peg Sandeen.

But, as Gideonse's remarks indicate, "when assisted-suicide mongers promise strict guidelines to protect against abuse, rest assured, it's nothing but a con," Smith observed for [National Review](#). "It won't take long before these same advocates denigrate the very 'protections' *they promoted* as 'barriers' or 'obstacles' to a good death." (Emphasis in original.)

"In the end," he declared, "there is no such thing as just 'a little assisted suicide.' The ultimate destination is death on demand."



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