Southeast VSED End-of-Life Choice Conference
April 6, 2017 - Charlotte NC  UNC Charlotte Uptown Conference Center

The ethical, legal, and clinical challenges of the VSED choice for compassionate end-of-life care

The Southeast regional conference brings together leading voices from bioethics, clinical-medicine, law, and public policy. VSED – Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking – is an ethical, legal, and accessible choice for a competent person to end pain and suffering in all 50 US states. The VSED 2017 conference will delve deeply into the difficult issues that arise for the many individuals and families who will face the momentous decision for themselves or for their loved ones: what is the best choice for me or for those for whom I care at life’s end?

Keynote Speaker Thaddeus Pope, J.D, PhD, law professor, bioethicist, prolific writer in law, medicine, nursing, bioethics journals – including New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA, New York Times, Director, Health Law Institute;

9:00  Keynote Address  Voluntary Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) and it’s special place in our American culture, ethics, and law regarding End-of-Life Decision-Making. Presentation:  Survey of end-of-life choices: North America versus Western Europe.

Morning Theme:  Hospice-eligible cases – ethical, legal, clinical issues for the patient and family caregiver.

Breakout Presentations:  In-depth exploration with small group discussion and Q&A

John Moskop, PhD  -  Ethical issues for patient & family considering the at-home VSED choice
Mark Corbett, MD  -  Clinical issues of family caregivers managing VSED discomforts, hygiene.
Kevin Diaz, JD  -  Can EOL legal and medical documents avoid legal controversy with VSED?
Medical Examiner  When competence, coercion, potential elder abuse come into focus?

Noon  complimentary Lunch and distribution of Guide for the VSED At-Home Family Caregiver

Afternoon Theme:  Complicated cases: without Hospice approval or without cognition – difficult choices.

Plenary Presentations:
Mark Corbett, MD  -  Clinical challenges when a competent patient chooses VSED before Hospice.
John Moskop, PhD  -  Ethical challenges of VSED choices before Hospice or absent competence.
Thaddeus Pope, JD, PhD  -  Without mental capacity what is the surrogate decision-maker to do? What forms of advance directives from years earlier be relied upon? Would the court be persuaded by it?

Panel Discussion and Audience Q&A  -  Moderator Rosemarie Tong, PhD, bioethicist

4:00  Conference closing comments  -  Thanks to our sponsors!  evaluation and feedback

6:30 - 8:00  Evening lecture  –  Thaddeus Pope JD, PhD  public is invited free-of-charge: Davidson College
Withholding Food & Fluids in Advanced Dementia – Is it ethical and legal?

Conference Speakers


John Moskop, PhD  -  Professor in Biomedical Ethics at Wake Forest School of Medicine. His book Ethics and Health Care: An Introduction speaks to many issues in our Conference: law and ethics, advance care planning, moral conflicts in end-of-life care and aid in dying. Teacher, bioethicist, researcher, writer on ethics in medicine.

Mark Corbett, MD  -  Hospice Medical Director; Geriatrics and Palliative Professor, Wake Forest School of Medicine. He has written on the challenges of end-of-life care as between patients and their doctors: “VSED: Death With Dignity or Without?” Clinician, teacher, and writer on challenges of eldercare issues

Kevin Diaz, JD  -  Director of Legal Affairs, national Compassion & Choices. For 20 years a legal advocate on personal liberty issues; recognized for as a Wasserstein Fellow at Harvard Law School. Legal advocate for individual rights with special interest in expanding the rights of individuals for autonomy at end-of-life.

Panel Moderator:  Rosemarie Tong, PhD. Emeritus Professor of Health Care Ethics; internationally recognized feminist and bioethics scholar; Co-Chair of VSED 2017 conference.

Conference Host:  Dan Carrigan  –  Former health public policy professional; author of  An American Right to Die and End-of-Life Decision Making for Life Stage Planning, President of the regional Carolina C&C chapter; principal organizer of VSED Conference.

UNC Charlotte Center City: our Conference venue is located a few mins walk from center of Charlotte at 320 E. 9th St 28202

Our Southeast VSED End-of-Life Choice Conference Sponsors

UNC Charlotte Center for Professional & Applied Ethics
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