

## **Pro-Life News in Brief**

BY Liz Townsend

### **Assisted Suicide Allowed in Swiss Hospital**

Vaud University Hospital Center of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, became the first Swiss hospital to allow patients to kill themselves with a doctor's help. The hospital announced that as of January 1, hospital patients who are "close to death and sound of mind" can ask an external doctor or a specialist with the euthanasia group Exit to provide them with lethal drugs, Agence-France Presse reported.

"In addition to Lausanne, other leading Swiss hospitals are now actively discussing permitting the procedure," said Doctors for Life International in a press release. "Though Swiss law initially did not allow doctors to kill their patients, the practice of euthanasia has been gradually extended from private groups into the public health systems."

Alberto Crespo, the hospital's legal and ethical director, told the Associated Press that the hospital will not accept patients whose only reason for admission is to die. It will also refuse to admit foreigners from countries without legal euthanasia who travel to Switzerland to kill themselves.

Euthanasia opponents condemned the hospital's decision. "Assisted suicide is not about caring: It is about the intentional ending of human life—an act barred by the Hippocratic Oath for more than 2,000 years," said Doctors for Life International. "Once [assisted suicide] becomes acceptable to the public, the categories of people deemed expendable steadily expands to include those perceived to have a diminished value to society or to themselves."

### **Unborn Baby Not a "Person" in HOV Law**

An Arizona judge denied a mother's challenge of a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) citation January 10 after she claimed that her unborn baby should have been counted as a person that would qualify her to drive in the HOV-2 express lanes.

Candace Dickinson received a ticket November 8 when she was driving in the HOV lane on Interstate 10 near Phoenix, the Arizona Republic reported. Sgt. Dave Norton said that he pulled Dickinson over because only one person was visible, a violation of the law requiring more than two people in the car during weekday rush hours, according to the AP.

Dickinson, who gave birth to her son November 23, represented herself in a court hearing January 10. She claimed that since other Arizona laws consider the unborn as a person, such as when a preborn baby is a victim of violent crime, her son should have been counted as the second occupant of the vehicle, the Republic reported.

"Under all law, a person should include an unborn child," Dickinson told the Republic. "Why should it be any different under the traffic code?"

However, Judge Dennis Freeman ruled that under the HOV law, the second person must be someone who occupies his or her own seat in the vehicle, according to the Republic. Dickinson lost her case and had to pay the \$360 fine.

“I expected what happened, but my definition of a person is different from everyone else’s,” Dickinson told the Republic.

### **Bone Marrow Stem Cells Treat Illinois Woman’s Lymphoma**

While most media continue to focus on the unproven claims of embryonic stem cell proponents, people around the world are quietly being cured by treatments that don’t sacrifice a human being’s life. One such patient is Carolu Purtle of Monmouth, Illinois, who is recovering after a March 1, 2005, transplant of stem cells derived from her own blood treated her non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, a type of cancer of the immune system, according to the Daily Review Atlas.

Purtle’s blood was drawn at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, where stem cells were then extracted. These cells were transplanted back into her own body, where they traveled to the bone marrow and began to create new, healthy cells, the Review Atlas reported.

This treatment is only effective if the cells are cancer free. Purtle was able to use her own cells because her cancer hadn’t yet spread to her bone marrow. “I was fortunate enough to be able to use my own stem cells,” Purtle told the Review Atlas. “When you are transplanted with a donor’s stem cells, there is greater possibility for complications.”

Purtle said that she was glad to be able to use her own stem cells rather than cells derived from killing a child. “Research has shown that adult stem cells are just as effective as embryonic stem cells,” she told the Review Atlas. “I don’t feel that we should have babies just to do research. If I had to choose, I’d rather have adult stem cells.”

### **Don Ho Performing Again after Adult Stem Cell Treatment**

Singer Don Ho returned to performing just six weeks after an adult stem cell treatment repaired his seriously damaged heart, KITV reported.

Ho gave a concert at the Ohana Waikiki Beachcomber Hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, January 22. The 75-year-old entertainer said he will continue to perform once a week as he continues to recover, according to KITV.

“This is not a second chance,” Ho told KITV. “This is about 100 chances already. I didn’t know that until the doctor opened me up and said, ‘Oh, you have 10 percent of your heart left.’”

The treatment, which was done in Thailand December 6, used stem cells taken from Ho’s blood that were injected back into Ho’s heart, where they are expected to reproduce and create new heart muscle, KITV reported.

Unlike in the still-theoretical embryonic stem cell therapy, no human being is harmed by the cell extraction, and there is no potential for rejection since the cells are derived from Ho’s own blood.