



Isle of Man Medical Society
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Isle of Man Medical Society (IOMMS)
Official Statement regarding the Assisted Dying Bill

Date: 17 April 2026

Statement on Royal Assent, Legislative Scrutiny, and Medical Ethics

The Isle of Man Medical Society (IOMMS) welcomes the announcement today that the United Kingdom Government is currently unable to recommend the Assisted Dying Bill for Royal Assent.

As the representative body for the medical profession on the Island, we wish to express our profound gratitude to His Majesty the King, Lord of Mann, for the constitutional process that ensures all legislation—particularly that which impacts the fundamental right to life—is compatible with international human rights standards and professional medical ethics.

Gratitude to the Lord Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister

The IOMMS specifically wishes to thank the Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice, and Deputy Prime Minister for their rigorous scrutiny of this legislation. We are grateful for this intervention, which reflects the gravity of the concerns the medical community has consistently raised.

The decision to seek further clarity on the Bill's compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) validates the primary objections detailed in our previous submissions to Tynwald. Specifically, we appreciate the Ministry of Justice's focus on:

- **Safeguards Against Coercion:** Ensuring that no patient feels pressured, subtly or otherwise, into ending their life.
- **Independent Monitoring:** The necessity for robust oversight mechanisms that were notably absent from the current draft.
- **Assessment of Capacity:** Recognising that determining mental capacity in terminally ill patients is a high-stakes, complex clinical task that requires far more than the minimal protections currently proposed.

Upholding Our Previous Submissions

Throughout the legislative process, the IOMMS has maintained that this Bill represented a fundamental shift in the doctor–patient relationship. The UK Government's assessment—that essential assurances regarding safety and oversight "do not form part of the Bill"—reinforces our professional stance. We are grateful to the 8 MHKs who steadfastly supported our stance.



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- The Role of the Physician: A doctor's duty is to heal and protect. Integrating assisted dying into healthcare risks eroding public trust in the medical profession as a sanctuary for the vulnerable.
- Prognostic Uncertainty: As we have stated, the inherent difficulty in accurately predicting life expectancy makes a "six-month" threshold clinically unreliable as a safeguard.

Commitment to Palliative Excellence

The IOMMS remains firm in its belief that true compassion lies in the enhancement of palliative care services. We believe the Island's focus must now return to working with Manx Care and the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure the Isle of Man becomes a centre of excellence for end-of-life care. Our priority is to ensure every patient receives the clinical, psychological, and social support required to die with dignity through natural means.

"The practise of medicine is rooted in the preservation of life and the protection of the vulnerable. We thank the Lord Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister for recognising the serious legislative gaps we have long highlighted. This decision protects the clinical independence of the Manx medical community and, most importantly, the safety of our patients."

Dr. Vineet Varshney
Honorary Secretary

Dr Martin Rankin
President

Dr. Prakash Thiagarajan
Chair IOMMS

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