

Paul A. Spiers, Ph.D.

Paul is a neuropsychologist who was educated at McGill and Clark Universities, as well as the University of Paris, Dr. Spiers conducts research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, teaches at the Boston University School of Medicine, and has a private practice examining clients and testifying in court as an expert witness in probate, civil and criminal cases.

In 1994, Paul had a fall from horseback and suffered traumatic brain injury and a paralyzing, T6-7, spinal cord injury. He is now a wheelchair user. The issue of patients' rights had always been important to him as a professional, but those rights and the choices provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became all the more important to him. The issue of choices at the end of life became his focus.

Beginning in 2000, Dr. Spiers served on the Board of Directors of End-of-Life Choices, and was then President of the Board in 2003-04. He helped to oversee organizational restructuring during his term on the board, and was instrumental in bringing about reunification with Compassion in Dying of Oregon to form Compassion & Choices. He now serves as co-chair of that organization's Advocacy Committee.

Paul has published editorials on the right to a self-hastened death for the terminally ill in the Albany Post and in New Mobility Magazine. He was heard on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *All things considered* and appeared on the CBC National News. In 2003, Dr. Spiers was interviewed on CNN's *Connie Chung Live* and then participated in a radio-debate with J. Wesley Smith on National Public Radio in Dallas, Texas. Later in the year, Paul was invited to comment regarding Suicide web sites on CNN's *Behind the Headlines* and he spoke on a panel at the NOW sponsored conference on *Women with Disabilities* in Washington DC in the fall of 2003.

Dr. Spiers has had letters published in the Honolulu Advertiser and the Burlington Free Press, and he appeared on Comcast Network's talk show, *Seeking Solutions with Suzanne*. An excerpt was aired April 14th on *CNN Headline News*, and the entire program was shown on the Comcast Cable Network in the summer of 2004.

Paul testified before the Health Committee of the Vermont House of Representatives in February 2004 and also participated in a point-counterpoint with Diane Coleman held at the Vermont State House under the sponsorship of the Vermont Disability Coalition in March 2004. Later that spring, Paul was a panelist for a program at the annual meeting of NAPAS in Washington, DC, where the controversy and opposition within the disability rights community to physician assisted dying was debated, again with Diane Coleman, and this time including Marilyn Golden of the opposition. Cornelius Baker was on the same panel speaking in favor of choice. Paul and Cornelius were both on a similar panel in Washington in the fall of 2004 at the 10th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Death with Dignity National Center.

In 2005, Paul has been a guest on NPR's nationally syndicated, social issues program, *Talk of the Nation*, regarding the Connecticut man who helped a terminally ill friend commit suicide. Barry Lynn interviewed Paul concerning the Terri Schiavo case on *Culture Shocks*, and Channel 8 News, the San Diego CBS affiliate, interviewed him the day after Terri died. Dr. Spiers testified again before the Health Committee of the Vermont House on April 14th concerning the Death with Dignity bill being considered in that state.

By invitation, Paul gave the keynote, opening address, *The Right to a Compassionate Choice at Life's End*, on June 6th, 2005, at the 15th Annual John K. Friesen Conference at the Gerontology Research Centre of Simon Fraser University, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. While there, Paul was interviewed by CBC Radio, and on television for the Shaw Cable Network's *Studio 4*. In September and October of 2005, he gave similar presentations at public meetings in New Hampshire.

Paul is now Chairman of the Board of Directors of a revitalized AUTONOMY, and recently helped to write the AUTONOMY amicus brief that was submitted to the Supreme Court of the United States in *Gonzales v. Oregon*. He attended the oral argument in Washington, D.C., when the Supreme Court heard the case and was interviewed at the National Press Club and the Washington Post. In October, Paul also participated in a panel concerned with the different views of the disability community on Physician Aid in Dying that was held at Baruch College, City University of New York.