

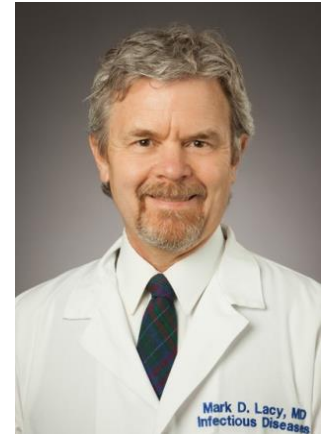
Lacy v. Torrez

Case Name: *Lacy v. Torrez*

Case Action: Filed in federal court on December 14, 2022

Significance: Whether doctors can live out their religious beliefs while practicing medicine.

Background: In 2021, New Mexico enacted the Elizabeth Whitefield End-of-Life Options Act to legalize and promote assisted suicide. Even when a physician objects to participating in assisted suicide, this law nonetheless mandates that a doctor take crucial steps to help the patient commit suicide, including referring for assisted suicide and providing information about the practice. The Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA) consists of health care professionals, including many who practice in New Mexico, whose personal religious convictions and professional ethics oppose the practice of assisted suicide. Alliance Defending Freedom filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of CMDA doctors to prevent the government from forcing health care professionals to violate their conscience and their oath to “do no harm.”



Key Points

- Health care professionals should be able to live out their beliefs without fear of government punishment.
- Health care professionals’ right to religious expression doesn’t disappear when they step into the office or hospital.
- Doctors and medicines are supposed to help and heal, not kill.

Key Facts

- Dr. Lacy and CMDA sincerely believes that suffering patients need care and sound medical treatment, not encouragement to kill themselves. The state has no authority to order them to act contrary to this genuine conviction.
- The [American Medical Association’s Code of Ethics states](#) that assisted suicide is “incompatible with the physician’s role as healer [and] would be difficult or impossible to control...”
- [The Affordable Care Act even states](#) that health care professionals must not be forced to participate in causing assisted suicide.
- The U.S. Supreme Court [ruled](#) that pro-life nuns should not be forced to provide abortifacients and other drugs that destroy human life in their health plans.

The Bottom Line: The government shouldn’t mandate that health care professionals violate medical ethics or their sincere religious convictions in order to practice medicine.