About the Book and Authors

Right-to-die issues are no longer confined to the back corridors of hospitals or the front pages of newspapers that trumpet news of Dr. Kevorkian's latest assisted suicide. A perverse combination of high-tech medicine, consumerism, demographic trends, and economic realities is forcing increasing numbers of Americans and their families to deal with end-of-life decisions—decisions that were the exclusive purview of physicians in years past. As living wills proliferate and baby boomers age, the debate is bound to intensify, forcing our public policy system to face—and attempt to resolve—the cultural, legal, and emotional dilemmas embedded in this political and medical minefield.

Deathright offers the first comprehensive survey of right-to-die issues, potential policy resolutions, judicial decisions, and legislative activity throughout the fifty states. Covering everything from pet cemeteries to holistic hospices, the denial of death to death watches, and near-death experiences to the living death of persistent vegetative states, James Hoefler and Brian Kamoie provide a balanced and readable account of the current right-to-die landscape.

With a minimum of technical jargon and an emphasis on facts, figures, and engaging case studies—including the stories of Karen Ann Quinlan, Nancy Cruzan, and Jack Kevorkian—the authors clearly demonstrate the emerging challenges raised by our constitutionally protected and statutorily regulated deathright. Appropriate for health-care professionals, public policy students, medical ethicists, and anyone who will confront questions about assisted suicide, euthanasia, informed consent, or medical self-determination, Deathright is a book for our time.

James M. Hoefler is assistant professor of political science and coordinator of the Policy Studies Program at Dickinson College. Brian E. Kamoie, research assistant to Professor Hoefler, graduated from Dickinson College in 1993 and is currently a student at the George Washington University School of Law.