

BMA to poll members on assisted suicide

MEMBERS of the British Medical Association (BMA) are to be polled on their views on assisted dying.

They will vote on whether to reaffirm the BMA's current policy to oppose legalised physician-assisted suicide for terminally ill people or adopt a neutral position regarding a change in the law.

Delegates passed the motion at the BMA's annual meeting in Belfast following a lively debate.

While the results of the survey -

open to 155,000 members - will not be binding, they could inform policy-making in the future.

A BMA spokesman said: "The BMA represents doctors and medical students, who, like the wider population, hold a range of views on many issues, including assisted dying.

"While today's motion instructs the BMA to poll its members on the issue - which we will now explore a way to take forward - the BMA's policy to oppose a change in law remains in place

until a decision is made to the contrary."

Under UK law, it is currently illegal to encourage or assist suicide, and doctors found guilty of helping someone to die can be jailed for up to 14 years.

The Royal College of Physicians dropped its opposition to assisted suicide in March but maintains a neutral stance on any changes in the law.

The Royal College of GPs announced on Saturday it will consult its 53,000 members on whether it should alter its opposition to any legislative changes.

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