

Terminally ill woman who fought for right to die has change of heart

By ALYSSA NEWCOMB | ABC News 10/6/2012



Grace SungEun Lee: Terminally Ill Woman Who Fought for Right to Die Has Change of Heart (ABC News)

A terminally ill woman who battled her deeply religious parents in court over her right to die has had a change of heart.

Grace SungEun Lee, 28, who is battling brain cancer, signed a health care proxy Saturday designating her father, Rev. Manho Lee, as her primary health care decision-maker, Lee's court-appointed attorney, David Smith, told ABC station WABC-TV in New York.

Lee said she made the decision "to make peace with my God."

The reversal comes one day after the New York Court of Appeals ruled Lee's parents cannot override her wishes. The former financial manager is paralyzed and hooked up to a feeding tube and ventilator at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, N.Y.

Rev. Manho Lee, who is a pastor in Flushing, N.Y., said he was concerned his daughter would go to hell if she allowed doctors to remove life support. "When someone sets a date and time to die, that is suicide. And suicide is a sin," Lee said Friday at a news conference.

The family has long campaigned to keep the young woman on life support.

A Facebook page called "Save Grace SungEun Lee" has more than 500 supporters, who have been urged to write a letter to North Shore Hospital.

"Let them know no one should be influencing Grace's decision. Not the hospital, not the family. Only Grace has the right to think clearly about her life without any influence such as medicines," said a statement posted on the Facebook page.

In a video posted Thursday on Youtube, a man stroking Lee's head asks her if she will sign over the medical proxy to her father.

She appears to mouth, "Yes."

"When do you want to leave to a nursing home?" the man asks.

"Now," Lee appears to reply.

North Shore University Hospital is honoring Lee's request to not comment on her medical condition.