

# Gehrig's disease victims consider suicide, survey says

BOSTON — More than half of victims of Lou Gehrig's disease in a two-state survey said they would consider assisted suicide.

Lou Gehrig's disease is a progressively fatal illness that eventually leaves victims unable to speak, swallow or move.

Dr. Linda Ganzini and others from the Oregon Health Sciences

University in Portland surveyed 100 victims in Oregon and Washington state. The survey was finished before Oregon's law making physician-assisted suicide legal took effect last fall.

In the survey, 56 of the patients agreed with the statement: "Under some circumstances, I would consider taking a prescription for

a medicine whose sole purpose was to end my life."

Forty-four of these people said they would request a lethal prescription if that were legal.

The doctors also surveyed 91 relatives who took care of these patients. Three-quarters of them said they shared the patients' views on assisted suicide.

The survey was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

An editorial by Dr. Lewis P. Rowland of Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City said many doctors never discuss the ultimate prognosis with their patients.

"Physicians rarely raise the is-

sue of assisted suicide," he wrote, "and at our ALS center, few patients ever ask about it."

One victim of the disease who did seek it was Merian Frederick, 72, of Ann Arbor, Mich. In an essay in the journal, her daughter told of Mrs. Frederick's decision to end her life with the help of Dr. Jack Kevorkian.



Meet the phone company that raises as much hell as you do.



When it comes to issues of peace, civil rights, economic and social justice and the environment, we like to raise hell. Kind of like you. We're Working Assets Long Distance. And in case you hadn't guessed, we're not your usual phone company. Sure, we give you competitive calling plans (How's 9¢ a minute sound?)\* and even a calling-card-only option. But then we also give you a whole new way to stand up for important progressive causes—just by picking up the phone. That's because Working Assets donates 1% of our customers' charges to nonprofit groups like Human Rights Watch, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Voters For Choice Education Fund. And the results have been nothing short of astounding—over \$13 million in donations since 1986. So if you want to help us raise a little hell—and a lot of money—just pick up the phone.

 **WORKING ASSETS**  
Long Distance

1-800-761-6014 [www.wald.com](http://www.wald.com)

Call now to get 100 FREE minutes\*\* just for signing up.

\*Our Round-the-Clock-Plus Plan offers 9¢ a minute on interstate direct-dialed calls, 24 hours a day. In-state rates vary by state. Plan includes a \$4.50 monthly fee. \*\*Free minutes credited at the interstate rate.