In the October 5 issue of The New England Journal of Medicine under "Correspondence" I saw the following letter by Douglas H. Ingram, Fourth-Year Student, New York University, School of Medicine, that I thought might be of interest to you:

** waar Rights Ave Burdons**

"To the Editor: For his provocative article, "The Rights of Patients," (New Eng. J. Med. 277:609-611, 1967), Dean Chiles has won my respect for the positive stand he has taken on the rights of patients to privacy, pain, truth and death.

But simply because we recognize the existence and dignity of these rights does not require that we place such burdens on people incapable of supporting them. I suspect that few of the general population, healthy or ill, demonstrate the attitude of Dean Chiles.

For the majority of people the right to privacy during illness—difficult as the prospect of illness is—is more difficult than the right to pain unalleviated by the common question, "How are you this morning." Because an obstacle to the much needed self-deception that accompanies the only courteous reply, "Better, thank you," an honest assessment of an illness becomes the irresistible evidence of an irremediable judge; and the right to death becomes the hopeless horror of a frantic gasp for life.

Except for the few like Dean Chiles, our patients somehow indicate the desire to forego their rights.

The sensitivity to determine which patient can endure which of these rights belongs to the art of medicine, and it is from articles, statements, and pleas, like those of Dean Chiles, that we are reminded that the practice of medicine requires such human sensitivity."

EJE:jn
Thanks for your memo of October 24, 1967, quoting the letter by Mr. Douglas H. Ingram. I think this is very well stated. I will pass it along to Mrs. Miriam Karlins, who might want to bring it to the attention of the Humane Practices Committee.