

July 6, 2022

The Honourable John Horgan
Premier of British Columbia
Chair of the Council of the Federation
Office of the Premier
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Sent via e-mail: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Horgan:

I am writing to you on behalf of Dying With Dignity Canada, the national human-rights charity committed to improving quality of dying, protecting end-of-life rights, and helping people across Canada avoid unwanted suffering.

At the outset, DWDC is pleased to see that the Council of the Federation (COF) has recently launched a campaign to inform people across Canada about the urgent need for long-term, flexible federal funding for health care. This is a laudable goal, and we fully support it.

In advance of the 2022 Summer Meeting of Canada's Premiers in Victoria, British Columbia, we encourage COF to continue to play a leadership role by discussing the need to tackle the following priorities – priorities that need to be addressed by working in unison with the federal government:

1. Providing fair and equitable remuneration of Nurse Practitioners (NPs) who provide or are prepared to provide – medical assistance in dying (MAID) services;
2. Reducing the administrative burden and costs on MAID assessors and providers, especially NPs, by providing reasonable administrative support through targeted federal funding, which would provide consistency amongst provinces and territories;
3. Continuing to provide federal investments into expanding and improving access to palliative care while building upon the best practices from provincial and territorial palliative care programs to help identify opportunities and address gaps; and
4. Increasing investments into additional supports, including income, social, housing and health, for people with disabilities.

Remuneration for Nurse Practitioners

As you and your fellow Premiers prepare to meet, we would like to remind you of the consequences of inaction on the issue of not providing fair and equitable remuneration to NPs who provide – or are prepared to provide – MAID services across Canada. We have heard from national and provincial NP associations and DWDC's Clinicians Advisory Council (CAC) that the lack of fair and equitable remuneration is increasingly impacting access for people seeking MAID across Canada.

For example, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario (NPAO) has outlined the challenges facing NPs in Ontario. One of the obstacles for NPs in Ontario is that they are often providing MAID services without compensation. They are providing this health care service out of professional obligation and compassion.

A small number of NPs are currently struggling to fill in the many gaps that exist within Canada's MAID system. The status quo cannot continue.

DWDC recognizes that the responsibilities for MAID at the federal and provincial and territorial levels vary greatly. However, those responsibilities greatly impact one another and the delivery of MAID across Canada. For those who are eligible, and who wish to access an assisted death, it is critical that the process be patient-centric, compassionate, and considerate of the intolerable suffering of that person.

That is why DWDC has called on the **federal government to work with the provinces and territories on the development of a model for the fair and equitable remuneration to NPs who provide – or are prepared to provide – MAID services.**

We are pleased to inform COF that the **Nurse Practitioner Association of Canada (NPAC)** has endorsed the above-noted recommendation. We believe that this recommendation will help close the gaps in coverage across Canada and will also lead to consistent and stable MAID services in every province and territory.

Administrative Burden

As a result of *Proposed Regulations for the Monitoring of MAID*, which are attributed to the changes to the provision of MAID across Canada via Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*, federal legislation which received Royal Assent in March 2021,

DWDC has recently informed Health Canada how the new administrative burden may dissuade some practitioners and assessors from continuing to assess for or provide MAID.

With the goal of maintaining access for people who require this health care service, DWDC is calling on the **federal government to work with its provincial and territorial partners to find ways to lessen the administrative costs on MAID practitioners and assessors, especially NPs, by providing reasonable administrative support through targeted funding.**

Palliative Care

One of the key recommendations that DWDC put forward to federal parliamentarians – as part of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying’s Statutory Review of the Criminal Code Relating to Medical Assistance in Dying and their Application – is for the federal government to provide continued investments into expanding access to and improving the quality of end-of-life care.

That is why DWDC is supportive of the Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCC)’s view that more funding is required to deliver proper awareness, access, and delivery of the palliative care service. We have encouraged the Committee to adopt QELCC’s three key recommendations, which includes new annual funding to create a Palliative Care Collaborative, comprised of federal, provincial, and territorial government representatives, key stakeholder groups, patient groups and caregivers, to implement Health Canada’s five-year plan titled, “Action Plan on Palliative Care: Building on the Framework of Palliative Care in Canada.”

People with Disabilities

Lastly, but not least important, we are pleased to inform COF that DWDC has called on the federal government for increased investments into additional supports for people with disabilities, including those targeted at enhancing income and social supports, reducing waiting lists for housing, specialist care, day programs and assistive devices, and assisting with the navigation of a complex and confusing health care system. We have also urged all federal parliamentarians to support the passage of Bill C-22, *the Canada Disability Benefit Act* – federal legislation that will help reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities in every province and territory across Canada.

IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.



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DWDC believes that the priorities and recommendations outlined above will improve access for MAID services, improve the state of palliative care, and enhance the various supports for people with disabilities in every province and territory across Canada.

In closing, we wish you and the members of COF a successful meeting. David Granovsky, our Director of Government and Stakeholder Relations, is available should you have any inquiries. David can be reached at 647-956-4127, or david.granovsky@dyingwithdignity.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Helen Long".

Helen Long, CEO

CC: Loretta O'Connor, Executive Director, Council of the Federation Secretariat