

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

DYING WITH DIGNITY

CANADA

FALL 2022

VOICE for CHOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR DYING WITH DIGNITY CANADA

HIGHLIGHTS



800+
DOWNLOADS
OF THE MAID
ASSESSMENT GUIDE



200+
DOWNLOADS
OF THE
ADVOCACY
TOOLKIT &
ACTION GUIDE



16

WEBINARS

WITH 6,465 PARTICIPANTS

WFRTDS/CONFERENCE

2022

Global Perspectives on End-of-Life Choice



Dying With Dignity Canada is honoured to host the 2022 World Federation of Right to Die Societies Conference November 3–6, 2022. This event provides an opportunity for networking, education, and information sharing across the globe.

The diverse topics include:

- MAID and organ donation
- Dying with dignity with dementia
- The MAID curriculum development project
- Assisted dying around the world

PURCHASE A TICKET

or learn more about the conference on our website at www.dyingwithdignity.ca/international_conference_2022



PARLIAMENTARY Review Update

Following the passage of Bill C-7: An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) in March 2021, a Parliamentary Review of MAID legislation (first committed to in Bill C-14) was initiated to study five issues: MAID and mental disorders as the sole underlying condition, advance requests, MAID for mature minors, the state of palliative care in Canada, and the protection of people with disabilities.

So where does this process stand?

An Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness was formed in August 2021. The objective of the panel was to recommend protocols, guidance, and safeguards to apply to requests made for medical assistance in dying by persons who have a mental disorder. The Expert Panel tabled their report to the Minister of Health and Justice on May 13, 2022.

FACT: After 20 years, 1% of assisted deaths in the Netherlands have been for psychiatric diagnoses, showing that it is possible to enact legislation that will allow persons with a psychiatric illness to safely access MAID.

The Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying – the group of MPs and Senators tasked with reviewing all five issues of the Parliamentary Review – began meeting on April 8, 2022. Throughout the process, they heard from experts and people with lived experience - including **Helen Long** and **Senator James Cowan** from Dying With Dignity Canada - concerning the issues of the review, including advance requests, and the state of palliative care in Canada. On June 22, 2022, the Special Joint Committee tabled its own Interim Report on MAID for



those with a mental disorder as the sole underlying condition. The report does not contain final recommendations. Instead, it summarizes the testimony presented to the Committee. The Committee is expected to table its final report, on October 17, 2022, covering all aspects of the Parliamentary Review.

Then what? Once the report is tabled, there are a couple of potential outcomes:

1. If legislative changes are recommended, then a bill will be proposed and, similar to Bill C-7, both Houses of Parliament will debate and vote on the issue.
2. If no legislative changes are recommended, then it will be up to the provinces and territories to develop policies and practice standards.

What can YOU do? Speak up!

While the Parliamentary Review is still before the government, we can influence the changes we want to see in our assisted dying law. We encourage you to download our **Advocacy Toolkit and Action Guide** – it will help you set up and prepare for a meeting with your member of parliament.



STAY IN TOUCH! www.dyingwithdignity.ca

Sign up to receive regular updates from Dying With Dignity Canada on upcoming webinars, events, advocacy initiatives, and opportunities to engage. And follow us on: DWDCanada @dwdcanada

Support Dying With Dignity Canada to help make unwanted suffering at end-of-life a thing of the past. Charity Registration Number: 11889 0086 RR001.

HIGHLIGHTS

FROM THE 2022 IPSOS POLL:

Support for medically-assisted dying in Canada

86%

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE CARTER V. CANADA DECISION

82%

SUPPORT THE RECENT REMOVAL OF THE 'REASONABLY FORESEEABLE' ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

- Identify as a person with a disability 83%
- Identify as BIPOC 75%

85%

SUPPORT ADVANCE REQUESTS FOR MAID WITH A DIAGNOSIS

- Advance request without a diagnosis 77%

DID YOU KNOW THAT SOME PUBLICLY FUNDED HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN CANADA REFUSE TO ALLOW OR PROVIDE MAID ON-SITE, OFTEN BECAUSE THEY ARE FAITH BASED.

76%

AGREE THAT ALL HEALTH CARE FACILITIES THAT RECEIVE PUBLIC FUNDS SHOULD PROVIDE A FULL RANGE OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

- Identify as Catholic 75%
- Identify as Protestant 68%



FOR MORE DETAILS on the poll, visit the media centre on our website.

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WHAT WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON

NEW MAID ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Based on feedback from people who use our navigation services, we created a MAID Assessment Guide. The guide provides information on what to expect during the MAID assessment process, including how to arrange an assessment, how to prepare for the questions that will be asked, and more. You can download the guide for FREE from our website.



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

As part of our government relations and advocacy work, we strive to connect with all levels of government to encourage thoughtful discussion about end-of-life issues. Recently, this included:

- A letter to Ontario political party leaders during the spring election, highlighting gaps in access to assisted dying and a proper funding mechanism for nurse practitioners who assess for and provide MAID.

- A submission to Health Canada regarding the proposed amendments to the regulations on MAID – we support changes that ensure accountability and transparency for people across Canada, including those that are accessing or trying to access MAID services, and note concerns regarding the added administrative burden for MAID providers.
- A letter to the Council of the Federation – comprised of the premiers of each of Canada's 13 provinces and territories – encouraging increased investments into palliative care, social supports, and fair remuneration for nurse practitioners who assess for and provide MAID.
- Meetings with various members of parliament in their ridings.

In addition to the outreach mentioned above, we have also been meeting with a variety of stakeholders representing people living with a disease or disability. These conversations offer an opportunity for us to learn more about each organization's mission, current work and priorities, and potential ways in which we might work together to improve the end-of-life experience for people across Canada.

Myths & Facts

In response to misinformation in recent media about MAID, the criteria, safeguards, and application, we developed a list of myths and facts on our website. Assisted dying law is very nuanced and can be an emotive issue. At Dying With Dignity Canada, we respect the choice of each eligible individual to access MAID, or not. What we cannot condone is the distribution of false information, especially at a time when important decisions are being made about the legislation. Here are a couple of examples:

Myth: Vulnerable populations can be eligible for MAID if they are suffering from inadequate social supports.

Fact: Suffering from a lack of social supports does not qualify a person for MAID. While inadequate support could contribute to one's suffering, no one can receive MAID on the basis of inadequate housing, disability supports, or home care.

To be eligible for an assisted death, a patient must have a serious illness, disease or disability, be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed, and experience unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be relieved under conditions that person considers acceptable. A person must be approved by two independent

assessors, each of whom work within the parameters of the law; they are careful and thoughtful in their work.

Myth: Broadening MAID law is a slippery slope into coercion and assisted dying on demand.

Fact: No one can be forced into accessing MAID. It is a decision made by free and informed individuals after having been offered alternative means to relieve their suffering.

"Neither the national data in Canada, or Quebec nor the foreign data indicate any abuse, slippery slope or even heightened risks for vulnerable people when imminent end of life is not an eligibility criterion for medical assistance in dying." Justice Baudouin in Truchon v. Quebec