

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



SPRING 2024

VOICE for CHOICE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR DYING WITH DIGNITY CANADA

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

2,571



INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED

687



INDEPENDENT WITNESSINGS

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

140

END-OF-LIFE CHOICE AND PLANNING PRESENTATIONS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

It Takes a Village

At DWDC, we want to be here when you need us. If and when you are ready to navigate end-of-life choice for yourself or a loved one, we'll be here to offer support. You can be part of this effort in various ways. Talk to your networks about end-of-life planning. Share the resources DWDC offers. Or consider adding DWDC to your will to help us help others for years to come. It's easy to do and creates a compassionate and lasting impact as part of your legacy.

Reach out to **Ryan Lindsay**, our Director, Development, for more information - ryan.lindsay@dyingwithdignity.ca.

The amazing efforts of our PROGRAM TEAM and support services

We know from conversations with people in our community that their financial support comes from wanting to ensure that, if and when they need us, we will be there for them.

Did you know that after a pilot program, Dying With Dignity Canada's support services became a permanent department of the organization in 2005? We have been helping people across Canada

navigate their end-of-life choices for almost 20 years. This service happens quietly behind the scenes as compared to our public-facing advocacy efforts and education programming. In 2023, we assisted over 2,500 people, with their questions and resource needs, to better understand their choices at end of life. We also provided Independent Witnesses for over 680 people initiating the MAID process. This task is performed by many of our volunteers across the country who want to ensure that the person's end-of-life wish is respected and honoured.

UPDATE ON ADVANCE REQUESTS FOR MAID

The 2023 final report from the Special Joint Committee on MAID (AMAD) made three recommendations in support of advance requests for MAID, including Recommendation 21: that the Government of Canada amend the Criminal Code to allow for advance requests following a diagnosis of a serious and incurable medical condition disease, or disorder leading to incapacity. Unfortunately, the Government's response to the AMAD report was vague and non-committal despite the fact that 82% of people across Canada support an advance request for MAID for individuals diagnosed with a grievous and irremediable condition.

In December 2023, DWDC supported an advance request for MAID petition initiated by five concerned citizens.

In two months, the petition collected over 16,000 signatures from people across the country who want this change in our assisted dying laws.



MP Brendan Hanley will present the petition in the House of Commons shortly, reminding decision-makers of this important amendment that we are advocating to be made as soon as possible.



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.

NEW RESOURCE:



What to expect at a MAID death

In February, we launched our newest resource **What to expect at a MAID death**. The guide was designed to help prepare family and friends for what they may experience when their loved one has a medically assisted death.

It is a perfect complement to our other resources, the **MAID Assessment Guide** and **How to prepare for a MAID death**.

There are many nuances to the MAID assessment process and what happens on the provision day; we wanted to provide people with the information they need to navigate the assisted dying experience.

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD



all of our guides for free on our website in the Education and Resources section

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



500 - 1835 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4S 1X8
Toll free: 1-800-495-6156

DWDCanada @dwdcanada

February 29th, 2024, **Bill C-62** received Royal Assent, delaying eligibility of medical assistance in dying (MAID) for those whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental disorder (MD-SUMC) until March 2027 – in total, a six-year delay and denial of constitutional rights for those affected, who may wish to access MAID MD-SUMC. On behalf of those who suffer intolerably from longstanding, treatment-resistant mental disorders, Dying With Dignity Canada is deeply disappointed by this decision and the stigma and discrimination it perpetuates.

“What is most troubling is how inconsistent this is with Canada’s objective of being an inclusive and equitable country. Excluding people from the option of applying for an assisted death based on their diagnosis is a clear breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

Helen Long, CEO,
Dying With Dignity Canada.

Advance Care Planning Month

In recognition of Advance Care Planning (ACP) month, DWDC has updated our ACP Kit with the generous support of the **Cloverleaf Family Foundation**. Thanks to the **Slaight Family Foundation**, once complete, the improved Kit will be promoted and supported with educational materials. A committed working group – many of whom use the Kit in ACP presentations in their community – participated in the review and editing process with the goal of creating an accessible and concise document to help anyone start and complete their Advance Directives.

“Too often, families and caregivers are left without any direction as to what treatments the patient would want, or not want. This can cause conflict in an already stressful situation.



Given the length of this most recent delay, we implore the government to set clear and measurable timelines and criteria to assess the state of Provincial and Territorial readiness well in advance of 2027. We are considering next steps and will continue to advocate for this change in MAID legislation. Our hearts go out to the small group of people who are suffering and are most negatively impacted by this denial of human rights, compassion, and autonomy.



Every person across the country should complete this task, for themselves and for their loved ones.”

Dorothy Stephens, retired nurse and ACP presenter.



The new Kit is available free for download from our website in the **Education & Resources**

section. Check the **Upcoming Events** section for ACP presentations in your community or arrange one for a group you belong to by filling out a ‘request a presentation’ form on our website.