

URGENT MEDICAL ASSISTANCE in DYING CONSULTATION

Dear Parishioners,

The Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada, on behalf of the Coalition for Healthcare and Conscience, advised that, "The Government of Canada is asking for input by January 27 on their proposal to expand the criteria for euthanasia in Canada so that more people will be eligible."

Members are asked to make their voices heard by filling out the "Consultation" (see below) to let the federal government know their thoughts on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID).

Responses must be completed and sent by January 27, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.!

The Government of Canada is asking for input by January 27 on their proposal to expand the criteria for euthanasia in Canada so that more people will be eligible. **We would like you to tell them what you think.**

A Quebec Court declared in September that the clause in the federal euthanasia legislation that death must be "reasonably foreseeable" in order for a patient to qualify was unconstitutional. This clause was added to the law when it was passed in 2016 to protect people with disabilities, including those with mental health concerns.

Doctors know that often persons with disabilities or with serious mental health concerns consider suicide rather than to face life with a physical or psychological limitation. But with love, a strong support network and proper medical care, many do change their minds and lead their lives with dignity and self-respect.

What if that supportive community is not there? What if the government does not provide proper mental health or palliative care supports? (THEY DON'T) What about the stigma and attitudes that consider people with disabilities a burden on society? What about the barriers that currently exist in simple day to day living? Any normal person would get discouraged. Now our government is proposing to offer euthanasia rather than a helping hand.

All along, the 2015 legalization of euthanasia (also known as Medical Assistance in Dying) was sold as a solution for the elderly who were near death anyway and who were in intolerable physical pain. Those who were opposed to legalizing euthanasia argued that it was a slippery slope and that vulnerable people, children, those with disabilities, those with mental health concerns, and those with dementia would be put at risk. Now, less than five years later, what was predicted has now happened. And our government, is leading the charge to open euthanasia to more and more people.

We know from a report commissioned by the Federal government that they are looking into including children, people whose primary diagnosis is mental illness, and those with advanced directives to be able to be euthanized.

That is why we need people to complete this survey. **When you read the survey form you will notice that you will not be asked whether or not euthanasia should be expanded to include persons with disabilities. Sadly, that is assumed by the government. The only real questions permitted in the survey are whether or not to go with euthanasia through advance directives or to add to existing “safeguards”.**

While the survey is designed so that you aren't asked the critical questions about expanding access to euthanasia, there is room for you to speak up. **You can use the open-ended comment boxes to point out that persons with disabilities (including those with new diagnoses) should be given the resources to live not the invitation to die.** Parliament could legally overrule the Quebec judge's decision. You may also use this space to challenge expansion of the criteria to children, or to people who have advanced directives. You can also speak to the total inadequacy of the current so-called “safeguards” and to advocate that the safeguards be strengthened, beginning with the adoption of the Vulnerable Persons Standard: <https://www.vps-npv.ca>

Please complete the consultation today and make your voice heard. Visit <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/ad-am/index.html> or click on 'Fill Out the Consultation'. It only takes 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire.

Fill Out the Consultation

Coalition for HealthCARE And Conscience
<http://www.canadiansforconscience.ca/>