

April 30, 2016

Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

Dear Committee members:

Re: Bill C 14

Terminal illness

As is, the draft legislation for Bill C14 does not meet the minimum standard of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in Carter. Carter does not require terminal illness, but the government's legislation proposes that a natural death is reasonably foreseeable or, in other words, terminal. People with chronic conditions, such as Multiple Sclerosis or Amyotrophic Lateral Stenosis, would not qualify for an assisted death unless their death were imminent.

Advance consent

Advance consent should be included in the law. Without advance consent, people with diagnosis of dementia or other degenerative conditions, will be faced with a cruel choice to take their own lives early or die a long, protracted death.

Waiting period

For some patients, a waiting period of 15 days will be too long. If an individual is competent at the time of request for assisted death and has been scheduled for such but, due to a coma or sudden stroke, loses competency he/she would not longer qualify.

Language

The language of the Carter decision should be used in legislation. The Carter decision stated that physician assisted death be granted to a patient with a "grievous and irremediable medical condition that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstance of his or her condition."

"Intolerable to the individual" should be respected by your committee. The patient should have the choice.

With respect,

Patricia B. Remmers

