

## Bill on Physician Assisted Death

I wish to express my sincere concern of the possibility of Canada legalizing Physician Assisted Death which can also be called Active Euthanasia, which I differentiate from Passive Euthanasia which I will define as a patient's voluntary refusal of medical treatment.

I do express this belief, predominantly based on my work as an Occupational Therapist of 26 years, as I frequently have the honor of working with clients who are very ill and dying. They have had all types of illnesses and disease, and some have been very young, and I also work about 40% of the week with a First Nations population on a nearby reserve.

I have never had a patient in a palliative state ask for help or information in hastening their death; they are certainly ready to die, and some want to die soon.

I often am able to spend more time with clients than the nurses and physicians who are focused (correctly) on their immediate medical needs, and therefore get to offer some additional counselling and support that my colleagues cannot.

The clients often are very sad, clinically depressed and/or afraid and desire human contact and consolation. They are in pain and want some relief from their pain, but they have never asked for help to kill them. They are, in fact, often the most grateful and gracious people with whom I work! However, if this law as proposed goes into effect, many will start to see themselves as even more of a burden on family and the system, and mistakenly think they are doing what's best by asking for help to die.

I have purposely not focused this message on conscience protection for health care workers, as though I also see this is also of vital importance, I wish to keep the focus on the clients, as they must be our first priority as health care workers.

My hope is that your committee and all parliamentarians will strongly consider the experience of Belgium and other countries, who state that many of the safeguards they thoughtfully included in their legislation are either downplayed, or outright ignored altogether.

I suggest instead that a ***much larger emphasis AND funding*** be placed on palliative care services of all types. I know that health care is a provincial jurisdiction, but your committee is setting the rules for parliament to vote upon, and so are setting the rules that the provinces will then apply.

I strongly recommend you watch the several short videos on the Belgian experience at the following web address.

<http://www.vulnerablefilm.com/advice-from-belgium.html>

Thank you for your service to our country, it is not an easy task.

I see this as one of the defining issues of our time.

Kind Regards,

Garry W. Spiess, Occupational Therapist