

Feb 6, 2016

Honourable Kelvin Ogilvie & Honourable Robert Oliphant
Joint Chairs
Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying
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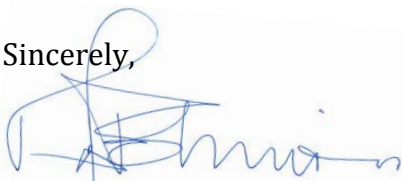
Dear Honourable Sirs;

The College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) is a member of the Canadian Nurses Protective Society (CNPS). Pursuant to the Health Professions Act, Province of Alberta, the mandate of CARNA is to regulate the practice of registered nurses and nurse practitioners in order to serve and protect the public interest. As the Association for registered nurses and nurses practitioners in Alberta, CARNA also represents the voice of the profession.

CARNA wishes to provide our support and full agreement with the CNPS written submission on Physician-Assisted Dying. In preparing their submission, CNPS has worked closely with member nurse regulators across Canada to bring a fulsome perspective. In particular, CARNA supports the request for explicit legislated exemption to clarify that nurses may counsel, support and provide care to patients who are considering or engaged in the assisted dying process. Nurses are essential members of the health care team and are often the only team member providing care to patients 24/7, especially for the patient nearing end of life. Nurses provide comfort to patients, listen and counsel patients on highly personal matters, discuss treatment options, monitor the patient's capacity to make decisions, administer medications, and provide direct care. Given this broad scope of practice, it is reasonable to assume that nursing care would be required in the event of inducing death, whether it is the care and comfort or the administration of medications. These activities should be protected from risk of criminal prosecution. We believe that a failure to provide a clear exemption for these essential nursing activities may result in compromised care for the patient seeking assisted death.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Special Joint Committee on Physician-assisted dying and wish you well in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Mary-Anne Robinson BN MSA RN
Chief Executive Officer

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