

Dear Committee on Justice and Human Rights,

I am greatly concerned about the removal of certain safeguards from medical assistance in dying. Three serious omissions in the bill C7 need to be amended. Same day death should in no way be allowable. Contemporaneous consent must be required prior to medically ending of life, and there must be independent witnesses to the assisted death procedure.

Of course people should be able to have a bad day, without it risking their life. Same day death simply provides no room for error. This period of time is so limited that the simple logistics of attempting to provide alternative aid (i.e. non-life-ending) and support might not be possible. As an example, what if a patient has a bad day and requests death on the same day that their support person (doctor, friend, family), just happens to be out of the office and unavailable to answer the phone. How unforgiving! This is a true tragedy for these individuals in need and their loved ones who would be so willing to support them had they the opportunity.

A patient who consents to death must provide contemporaneous consent at the time of death. They must be aware of and reminded of what they agreed to. Ultimately this is about the patient. This is not simply a task on a doctor's to-do list. It is imaginable that a patient who requests and consent to death simply loses track of the what day it is. They are put to death without even knowing it's happening. What if they were having second thoughts? Without a final consent there is no reminder and no opportunity to confirm their intentions.

It goes without question that there must be an independent witness for assisted death because it simply would eliminate so many opportunities for mis-uses. There will always be those in long term care who are a burden to the system, to the staff, to the doctors, or to their families. Let's not forget that they are as human as any of us. They are vulnerable and deserve our care and protection. Let us ensure that our laws do not leave opportunities for their lives to be ended without their will.

Sincerely,

David Harcus