

May 9, 2022

Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C. M.P.
Co-Chair, Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying
House of Commons
K1A 0A6

Honourable Yonah Martin, Senator
Co-Chair, Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying
Senate of Canada K1A 0A4

Re: Statutory Review of the Provisions of the Criminal Code Relating to Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) and their Application.

Dear MP Garneau and Senator Martin:

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) to provide input for consideration by the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying as part of the Statutory Review of the Provisions of the Criminal Code Relating to Medical Assistance in Dying and their Application.

The CMA actively participated in the legislative processes for Bills C-14 and C-7, and has been the leading, national medical stakeholder on medical assistance in dying (MAiD). We have played an important role in supporting the societal dialogue on end-of-life and have led numerous consultations with the medical profession on many aspects of MAiD. In early 2020, the CMA consulted with its membership, and as mentioned in previous parliamentary appearances, the medical profession remains deeply divided on all aspects of MAiD.

Fundamentally, the CMA supports maintaining the balance between three equally legitimate considerations: respecting decisional autonomy for those eligible Canadians who are seeking access, protecting vulnerable persons through careful attention to safeguards, and creating an environment in which practitioners are able to adhere to their moral commitments.

The CMA supports federal efforts to continue to provide greater clarity for physicians by introducing non-legislative measures to create more consistency of MAiD delivery across Canada. In particular, our [consultations](#) have revealed that many physicians feel that there is a need for the continued development of clinical guidance that would provide further clarity and allow for ethical reflection among MAiD providers and assessors. Continued support for clinical practice guidelines without a doubt offers physicians the clarity needed to ensure sound clinical judgment and support consistency in the application of the legal criteria.

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In addition, it is important to maintain and continue to seek ways to improve monitoring and reporting mechanisms put in place with respect to MAiD assessment and provision at all levels, particularly bedside and system-level improvements.

The CMA also supports the continued calls for more funding for palliative care, mental health care, care for those suffering from chronic illnesses, and people with disabilities to ensure that patients have a range of access to appropriate services alongside MAiD. The CMA's Policy on Palliative Care calls for all Canadian residents to have equitable access to comprehensive, quality palliative care services.

In closing, the CMA is encouraged that the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying is undertaking this review. We will continue to monitor the discussion and we look forward to providing input in any forthcoming legislative work.

Allow me to extend my sincere gratitude on behalf of all physicians and health care workers in Canada for Parliament's work to carefully examine this very complex issue.

Sincerely,



Katharine Smart, MD, FRCPC
President, Canadian Medical Association

.cc Hon. Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator, Vice- Chair, AMAD
Michael Barrett, MP, Vice-Chair, AMAD
Alistair MacGregor, MP, Vice-Chair, AMAD
Luc Thériault, MP, Vice-Chair, AMAD
Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond, Senator, Member, AMAD
Hon. Stanley Paul Kutcher, Senator, Member, AMAD
Hon. Pamela Wallin, Senator, Member, AMAD
Gary Anandasangaree, MP, Member, AMAD
René Arseneault, MP, Member, AMAD
Michael Cooper, MP, Member, AMAD
Hon. Hedy Fry, MP, Member, AMAD
James Maloney, MP, Member, AMAD
Dominique Vien, MP, Member, AMAD