



Doctors decry expansion of terms for medical assistance in dying contained in Bill C-7

OTTAWA - As *Bill C-7 An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* is reintroduced in Parliament today, physicians are expressing deep concern over a lack of protection for the most vulnerable of Canadians.

In 2016 when euthanasia was introduced into Canadian law, Canadians were told that advance directives, and access to assisted suicide for mature minors and those whose sole reason for requesting it was mental illness, were off the table. Thus, when Medical Assistance in Dying became law, Parliament added certain safeguards to protect the lives of vulnerable people.

These proposed amendments take away most of them.

Dr. Ryan Wilson, President of Canadian Physicians for Life, says, "This bill significantly expands euthanasia. The federal government is focused on streamlining death. There is no waiting period. You do not have to be dying. You do not even have to consent at the time of your death. The bill creates an atmosphere that is ripe for abuse and poses a great danger to marginalized Canadians.

"We are deeply concerned that this proposed legislation sends the message to persons with disabilities that their lives are not worth living. People facing challenges, be it at the end of their lives or in a time where they are more vulnerable as in the case of mental illness, should be offered support and solutions, not just the option to die. Unmet needs should not be a cause of death."

Canadian Physicians for Life is calling for the Government to respect its commitments to work with the provinces and introduce palliative care services, thereby providing a viable alternative to medically-assisted death.

Dr. Wilson stated that "70% of Canadians nearing the end of life still have no access to basic palliative care services. While the government promised to deliver in this area, it has failed to do so. Governments signal their priorities by what they *do*. This government, during a pandemic, has prioritized the expansion of euthanasia and has forsaken its fiduciary responsibility to protect the lives of Canadians. As medical professionals, we are gravely concerned."

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