



Dying With Dignity Canada

It's your life. It's your choice.

NEWS UPDATE November 2018

Audrey Parker spent the last few weeks of her life speaking to the cruelty of having to die sooner than she would have liked because of her fear of losing capacity and being deemed ineligible. She died with the assistance of a nurse practitioner on November 1st. DWDC's Communications Officer, Cory Ruf comments:

"As an organization, we want to make sure that no one who has been assessed and approved for assisted dying has to face the same cruel set of choices that Audrey has faced," said Cory Ruf, spokesman for Dying with Dignity Canada. "No one should be forced to die earlier than they would like to or forgo proper pain care to access their right to a medically assisted death."

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-federal-health-minister-responds-to-terminally-ill-womans-pleas-to/>

Audrey's friends and DWDC's CEO Shanaaz Gokool spoke to CTV about Audrey's legacy and the problems with the current law.

Video:

<https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/video?playlistId=1.4158940>

CEO Shanaaz Gokool spoke to CBC about the category of people like Audrey who have gone through the assessment process, been approved, but have been forced to choose MAID early because of fears of incapacity.

Video:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1359457859791>

The beautiful obituary, written by Audrey herself, can be found on *The Chronicle Herald's* site.

<https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/local/audrey-parker-honouring-a-lifetime-255685/?fbclid=IwAR3VVLR9GTGobaJWQYPv5eLhaPj838gHoERayM99FDjcwN7RF6WALU6uUo>

Former senator Jim Cowan, chair of DWDC's Board of Directors, joined *The Exchange with Matt Gurney* to discuss Audrey Parker's case and the ban on advance requests for assisted dying.

Audio:

<https://omny.fm/shows/the-exchange-with-matt-gurney/woman-chooses-to-die-earlier-than-expected-fearing>

Jim Cowan and Audrey also both shared their comments with CBC, after Audrey had set her date.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/medical-assistance-in-dying-legislation-1.4829100>

In response to Audrey's story, *The Chronicle Herald* published a thoughtful and compassionate editorial on advance requests for assisted dying.

"People facing the end of their lives should not have to give up any more time than necessary."

<https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/editorials/editorial-it-may-be-time-for-a-cautious-second-step-in-assisted-dying-legislation-245015/>

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould says the government is not considering changes to Canada's assisted dying law, despite Audrey Parker's pleas. CEO Shanaaz Gokool comments:

"Our lawmakers have a duty to act to ensure that no one else has to face the same cruel choice that Audrey did at the end of her life," Gokool said in a statement. "Unless they act now, many more Canadians will be forced to die earlier than they would like to as a result of this unjust, inhumane rule."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justice-minister-assisted-dying-1.4889715>

You can read DWDC's tribute to Audrey on our blog:
https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/remembering_audrey_parker

As of Nov. 1, clinicians must complete comprehensive reports about each request for assisted death. CEO Shanaaz Gokool comments.

"They [Health Canada] estimate a full reporting per patient will take a matter of a number of minutes. And we actually think that that may not be the case," [Gokool] said. "It's really, really important to balance our need for information and data ... with the rights of the vulnerable people who are already struggling trying to find the help that they need from the limited number of clinicians who assess and provide medical assistance in dying."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/assisted-death-new-reporting-requirements-1.4869680>

The Quebec College of Physicians said the new federal regulations on reporting medically assisted deaths add needless bureaucracy that could make doctors less likely to get involved in end of life procedures.

Video and article:

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/new-federal-rules-on-assisted-dying-harmful-to-patients-doctors-college-of-physicians-1.4158065>

You can read more about the reporting guidelines on the DWDC blog:
https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/assisted_dying_monitoring_rules

Covenant Health's default policy does not allow patients to fill out their MAID requests forms, be assessed for eligibility or access MAID onsite. Doreen Nowick and other Alberta patients have been forced to endure indignities in their final weeks of life due to the unfair rules of Alberta's Catholic health-care provider. Doreen's daughter, Kim, comments:

"We were made to feel like criminals," Pelletier said. "Why could we not have a conversation or an assessment that she had a legal right to have in a health-care facility that is publicly funded? I don't understand that."

<https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/unassisted-death>

Doreen's family expressed their disappointment after meeting with Alberta Health Minister Sarah Hoffman last week:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/doreen-nowicki-minister-sarah-hoffman-meeting-1.4890460><https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/doreen-nowicki-minister-sarah-hoffman-meeting-1.4890460>

72-year-old Bob Hergott was forced to sign his request form in a bus shelter and take a cab to a different hospital for his procedure, after the Covenant Health-managed hospital where he had been a patient for five years, refused to help him on-site.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/convenant-health-assisted-dying-edmonton-1.4888114>

The Globe and Mail obtained a confidential draft of the advance requests portion of the report that the Council of Canadian Academies has been working on for the past two years.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-late-stage-consent-one-focus-of-coming-report-on-medically-assisted/>

DWDC volunteers Ron Posno and his wife, Sandy, spoke with the CBC's Alisa Siegel on *The Sunday Edition* about Ron's dementia diagnosis, and his wishes for MAID and the right to make an advance request.

Audio:

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/the-sunday-edition-september-30-2018-1.4841264/ontario-man-with-dementia-on-crusade-to-plan-his-own-death-1.4841267>

Bob Blackwood faced numerous obstacles while trying to access an assisted death in Quebec as a result of the province's dual assisted dying laws. DWDC helped Bob's wife Heather Ross share his story with CBC reporter Kate McKenna. Our CEO Shanaaz Gokool also spoke with the CBC about the complexity of the federal and Quebec assisted dying laws:

"I think their case really illustrates how when ... those two pieces of legislation buttress up against each other, it leaves clinicians in a very difficult place, and it leaves families in very, very difficult circumstances."

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/eastern-townships-assisted-dying-1.4822787>

DWDC's Communications Officer Cory Ruf spoke with *The London Free Press* about the South West Local Health Integration Network's efforts to allow nurse practitioners to assess for and provide medical assistance in dying (MAID). The super-agency oversees health care funding and administration for much of Southwestern Ontario.

"It's unfortunate and surprising that it's taken so many parts of the province so long to incorporate, or to allow nurse practitioners to participate, in a manner that the law allows for," said Cory Ruf [...] We are pleased the South West LHIN is taking steps to allow nurse practitioners to participate in this extremely important field of work."

<https://lfpres.com/news/local-news/health-care-super-agency-mulls-change-to-assisted-death-policy>

In Quebec, discussions about advance requests for assisted dying are heating up. The federal government has warned Quebec against permitting advance requests since provinces are not allowed to pass laws on assisted death that are more permissive than the federal law.

You can read more in this article published by Le Devoir. (The article is in French, but you can use this online tool to translate the story:

<http://itools.com/tool/google-translate-web-page-translator>)

<https://www.ledevoir.com/politique/quebec/537747/une-bataille-a-venir-autour-de-l-aide-medicale-a-mourir>

Alberta MAID deaths are up nearly 50 per cent this year.

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/alberta-doctor-assisted-deaths-up-nearly-50-this-year>
