



Dying With Dignity Canada

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

June 2018

It has been a big week for DWDC with our announcement of a substantial donation from the late Dave Jackson, a long-time supporter and passionate advocate of the cause. Our full press release is attached, if you'd like to take a look. We'd like to thank you for your support and kind words over the past few days, and the dedication that our valued volunteers and donors have shown us over the years. There is so much work to be done on this issue and we look forward to continuing to break down barriers and work towards bringing real, fair choice to Canadians.

http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/a_gift_for_all_canadians

The *Vancouver Sun* reported on the announcement:

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/dying-with-dignity-canada-gets-7-million-donating-from-late-vancouver-businessman>

Alberta's Covenant Health requires patients to leave its buildings to receive MAID or even to be assessed. Through an information request, DWDC was able to acquire 360 pages of emails, memos and other communications that provide more insight into this issue. DWDC Communications Officer, Cory Ruf, comments:

"We recognize they have sincere angst about this issue, but at the end of the day, you cannot ban MAID at facilities that care for dying Albertans without subjecting them to unnecessary and sometimes brutal suffering," he said. "It's a circle that cannot be squared."

<http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/covenant-health-walks-ethical-tightrope-between-canadian-canon-law-on-assisted-death>

At a chapter-organized event in Calgary, assisted dying experts reflected on MAID two years since legislation came into effect. Shanaaz Gokool comments:

"We've made progress, but we have a long way to go," Gokool said. "There are people and families and doctors and nurses and pharmacists who don't even know this is allowed, so there is a real issue with education for a lot of different communities. And then putting in the systematic pieces to ensure that people, the most vulnerable, will have access to the help that they need."

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/medically-assisted-death-alberta-1.4689599>

Jen Wiles spoke to the *Calgary Herald* about her dad's choice to assess MAID in February 2017:

"The outcome for our family was positive — it was what he wanted. After his death we felt good, which is a strange thing to say. We did everything with him. We went to the funeral home, we picked up a casket together, we did all this stuff with him. Through all those months, we came to a place that was really kind of beautiful and we have felt good since. We were able to really grieve ahead of time. He was relieved, we were relieved. We got up the next morning and we felt good."

<http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/my-dad-gave-us-a-gift-daughter-opens-up-on-fathers-medically-assisted-death>

David Dunn held his wife, Cecilia, as she slowly died from a drug overdose in their apartment. She suffered excruciating pain from fibromyalgia, but was told that she did not qualify for MAID under the current law. Shanaaz Gokool comments:

"That legislation failed those people terribly," she said. "I think that the legislation lets down Canadians all across the country and it's unconstitutional."

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/saskatoon-man-calls-for-changes-to-assisted-dying-law-after-wife-s-death-1.4699586>

David and Cecilia's story was also covered by the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*.

Video:

<http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/saskatoon-man-says-medical-assistance-in-dying-program-failed-wife-who-committed-suicide>

Global News also reported on the story, including the fact that David was arrested following the death of his wife and could face charges.

Video and article:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4243004/saskatoon-arrested-witness-wifes-suicide-medically-assisted-death/>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4236902/medically-assisted-death-fails-saskatoon-family/>

Author Lawrence Hill wrote a moving piece for *The Globe and Mail* about accompanying his mother, Donna Mae Hill, to die in Switzerland after Donna was told that she didn't qualify for MAID here at home.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-act-of-love-the-life-and-death-of-donna-mae-hill/>

Lawrence also spoke to CBC's *Metro Morning* host Matt Galloway about this experience.

Audio:

<http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/metro-morning/segment/15548651>

DWDC Physicians Advisory Council Member, Dr. David Amies, writes about the independent witness requirement in his latest blog post:

Whereas I have no objection to acting as a witness and am happy to be of service in this regard, I do wonder why those, who framed the law, considered it necessary to encumber the grievously ill with this extra, intrusive and bothersome administrative burden. Why is it not sufficient for an applicant for MAID to discuss the matter with their personal, preferred, health care practitioners and sign a consent form?

http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/witnessing_and_waiting

This piece provides a look at how patients are navigating medical assistance in dying in the Newmarket, ON area. DWDC Communications Officer, Cory Ruf, speaks to some of the barriers to MAID including the independent witness requirement:

"It was designed as a safeguard," but it has become a "barrier to access at a vulnerable time," Ruf said.

<https://www.bradfordtoday.ca/local-news/patients-face-barriers-in-medically-assisted-dying-decisions-941497>

B.C.'s Dr. Eric Haywood-Farmer has assessed 14 individuals and provided MAID for 10 over the past 2 years. He shared his views during a panel discussion earlier this month:

"The feeling in the room when someone dies is a lot like the feeling when a baby is born ... it's something that only happens to you once, and being able to facilitate that and coach families through it so that it's a more positive experience for them has been really rewarding."

<http://www.kamloopsthisweek.com/news/right-to-die-debate-continues-1.23341832>

In this blog post, DWDC director Leigh Naturkach describes how a visit to her 92-year-old Opa led her to reflect on her relationships and her wishes for care at end of life.

http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/leigh_story

Jean Ayre accessed MAID in December 2017. Her husband, Don, shares her story on the DWDC blog.

http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/jean_and_don_story

North Okanagan resident, Shirley Quinn, discussed her plan to access MAID with her local newspaper. Her daughter reflects on her death:

"Mom smiled at us all gathered around the bed in the hospital with the doctor ready to begin, and said 'I'm going to be fine. You four go out for dinner afterwards.' Always looking out for her family," said MacDonald. "She was the glue that held us together. She wanted to be sure that even without her we would stay close, starting immediately after her death."

<https://www.westerlynews.ca/news/b-c-woman-being-in-control-of-death-a-civil-right/>

DWDC Physicians Advisory Council member, Dr. Georges L'Espérance says that there is no conflict between palliative care and medical assistance in dying.

(This article is in French, but can be translated using Google Translate)

http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/f119a28c-fe34-49a3-bcc7-4a5399faf1bb_7C_0.html?utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Internal+Share&utm_content=Screen

This opinion piece reflects on the 2 years since assisted dying legislation came into effect.

(This article is in French, but can be translated using Google Translate)

<https://www.lenouvelliste.ca/opinions/loi-sur-laide-medicale-a-mourir-deja-deux-ans-8cc354245e364dcd0ff9cfe9d885288d>

As mentioned in the last "recent news," assisted dying in the state of California is on hold, leaving patients in limbo. A hearing is set for June 29th to consider a separate motion to reverse the decision.

Video and article:

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/07/health/california-aid-in-dying-limbo-partner/index.html>

Alexandra Robinson shares the story of her family's experience with hospice care.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/first-person/article-dads-heading-into-hospice-care-can-we-make-the-best-of-the-worst/>