



# Dying With Dignity Canada

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

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### **Hot News Round-Up** by Kelsey Goforth

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Barry Hyman qualified for an assisted death and asked to die at home. But his home at the time was a publicly funded Jewish nursing home in Vancouver whose board forbade assisted deaths on site. That left his daughter, Lola, with a choice: She could transfer her father to an unfamiliar clinic to die, or she could sneak one of the country's leading doctor-advocates of assisted dying, into her father's room to help him die in his own bed.

*"The room was very quiet. We just held his hand and stared at him," Lola said. "My sister was sobbing, just sobbing. I was a stone. A complete stone. My heart was racing that someone would open the door."*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/assisted-dying-in-religious-facilities-means-tough-choices-forfamilies/article37516504/>

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DWDC Physicians Advisory Council member, Dr. Ellen Wiebe, spoke to CBC's *As It Happens* about providing MAID for Barry Hyman and what she will do moving forward.

*"We had a debriefing meeting with the administrators from Louis Brier as well as from Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. In that meeting, I was asked to promise that nothing like this would ever happen again, and I refused to promise that. I said that I would take each case individually. And if a patient said that they wanted to die at home, and I could offer it, I would do so."*

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-monday-edition-1.4477708/doctor-accused-of-sneaking-in-and-killing-someone-at-jewish-nursing-home-says-she-did-nothing-wrong-1.4477714>

This story was also covered by the *Canadian Jewish News*.

<http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/vancouver-louis-brier-home-centre-assisted-death-controversy>

*The Jerusalem Post* also picked up the story.

<http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Medically-assisted-suicide-sparks-scandal-at-Canadian-Jewish-elderly-home-533037>

CAMAP Director, Dr. Stefanie Green, shared her views in response to the above article.

<https://t.co/hfYJy0Kb8i>

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**From Shanaaz Gokool:** This next story references a "very lovely compassionate person" who said 'OK, I know a doctor who's just recently moved to Nova Scotia who can do this, let me make a call.'" I want you to know that lovely person is our very own Kelsey Goforth who sends you the Hot News Round-Up.

Cape Breton man, Weldon Bona, faced numerous obstacles trying to access MAID this week. His friend, Kelley Edwards, spoke to the media about the experience and the role of DWDC: *"Basically, they go do in 12 hours what the ... [provincial medical assistance in dying] program wasn't willing to give us even in a week."*

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/cape-breton-man-death-medical-assistance-1.4494847>

DWDC Board Member, Jim Cowan, also spoke to CBC about access in Nova Scotia.

Audio: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/programs/informationmornings/when-a-right-is-not-available-it-s-wrong-1.4494584?autoplay=true>

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Documents obtained by Dying With Dignity Canada through a freedom-of-information request revealed that a publicly funded Catholic health-care network in B.C. mismanaged the forced transfer of a frail man seeking an assisted death.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/patients-botched-transfer-renews-calls-for-assisted-dying-in-all-publicly-funded-health-care-facilities/article37536563/>

This story was also covered by CTV and features quotes from DWDC's CEO Shanaaz Gokool about the harms of this practice: *"It creates a system of forced transfers for some of the most vulnerable people in our country and people who are often very physically compromised."*

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/renewed-discussion-over-assisted-dying-amid-dispute-at-faith-based-sites-1.3752674>

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37 Albertans have been transferred out of institutions to access MAID. DWDC's June Churchill of the Calgary Chapter comments: *"It's very hard on the patient. These are terminally ill people who have problems with pain management and they or their family are having to insist that a transfer be made."*

Video and article:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3963697/37-albertans-transferred-after-faith-based-facilities-refused-medically-assisted-deaths/>

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The lawyers representing DWDC and AQDMD were in court last week to request that we be allowed to present an expert report as part of our intervention in the Quebec constitutional challenge. Lawyer Jean-Pierre Menard expects this to be a long legal battle.

Video and article: <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/quebec-superior-court-hears-constitutional-challenge-to-medical-aid-in-dying-law-1.3749769>

More on the Quebec challenge can be found on our blog: [http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/quebec\\_court\\_challenge](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/quebec_court_challenge)

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Horst Saffarek was moved from St. Joseph's General, a hospital in Comox, B.C. that does not allow MAID, to a hospital in Nanaimo. However, his health declined after the transfer and he died before being able to access MAID: *"That move was really stressful on us as a family, it was stressful on him, and it possibly, you know, contributed to him going earlier. It took away from us being able to celebrate Dad, and just enjoy our last moments with him."*

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-january-11-2018-1.4481312/should-catholic-hospitals-have-to-provide-access-to-medically-assisted-dying-1.4482372>

DWDC board member Dr. Derryck Smith wrote a strongly-worded letter to the editor on forced transfers and publicly funded faith-based institutions banning assisted dying on-site.

<https://t.co/6yG3bf3Vba>

Dr. David Amies of DWDC's Physicians Advisory Council, wrote about the harmfulness of forced transfers for the DWDC blog: *Practitioners have rights, too, and they cannot be forced to take an active part in procedures they find distasteful. But, they are ethically obliged to offer patients reasonable help in obtaining their legitimate wishes surrounding their treatment. If that obligation causes some people in the health care professions a little unease, so be it.*

[http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/amies\\_harmful\\_policies](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/amies_harmful_policies)

A Catholic hospital in Antigonish, NS is opting out of allowing MAID onsite. CEO Shanaaz Gokool comments: *"There are hospices and long-term care residences as well as faith-based facilities that have decided to, because for some reason they're allowed to, opt out of providing basic and essential health care."*

<https://t.co/uWDoeTdgWJ>

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Palliative care physician and MAID provider, Jyothi Jayaraman, sent a letter to the editor about the damage caused by forced transfers: *Watching the patients under your care being forcibly moved in and out for medical assistance in dying (MAID) assessments, or listening to the family's anguish and bewilderment at the necessity for doing so causes great moral distress among care providers. Conscience is not limited to objection – it includes the decision to participate.*

(4<sup>th</sup> letter from the top)

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/jan-9-life-without-a-cell-phone-plus-other-letters-to-the-editor/article37532798/>

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Law professor Jocelyn Downie (who was recently named to the Order of Canada) wrote a piece urging that flaws in the medically assisted dying process be fixed.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1535266-opinion-fix-flaws-in-medically-assisted-dying-process>

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