



## Dying With Dignity Canada

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

News Update, May/June 2018

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After an outcry from physicians, British Columbia has raised payments to doctors who provide MAID. Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers (CAMAP) president, Dr. Stefanie Green, comments:

*"In the past, the fees have been a significant barrier to recruiting new physicians to do this new work."*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-raises-payments-to-doctors-who-provide-medical-assistance-in/>

DWDC and CAMAP released a joint statement on physician compensation that was posted to our blog in July 2017:

[http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/assisted\\_dying\\_fees](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/assisted_dying_fees)

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The top court in Ontario has agreed to hear an appeal into a legal challenge against the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's effective referral policy, which protects patient access to assisted dying in the province. DWDC CEO Shanaaz Gokool comments:

*"We will redouble our efforts on the appeal to protect the right to choice of some of the most vulnerable, physically compromised people in Canada. We thank the CPSO for their vigorous defence of patients' right to access healthcare. If the effective referral policy is struck down, it would send a troubling message to doctors who oppose assisted dying: that it's somehow okay to tell their patients that they are on their own to find answers to their questions about assisted dying."*

[http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/cpso\\_leave\\_granted](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/cpso_leave_granted)

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In 1997, Susan Doerksen chose to end her life rather than live with chronic pain. Following her decision, her husband of 59 years was the first person in Manitoba to be charged with assisting a suicide. DWDC's Cory Ruf comments on how even with assisted dying legislation in place, many people are still unable to access their right to an assisted death:

*"The imposition of the reasonably foreseeable requirement has essentially deprived people of that option, who would otherwise be eligible or have the right to make their own choice," Ruf said. "It's leading people and families into very difficult situations and situations that resemble what individuals and families were put into before assisted dying was legalized."*

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/an-act-of-love-481850203.html>

Suffering with severe fibromyalgia and chronic pain, Saskatchewan's Cecilia Chmura died by suicide in January after she was told she didn't qualify for a medically assisted death.

Video and article:

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

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B.C.'s Adam Ross died alone on a bench in Vancouver's Lighthouse Park due to the limited eligibility criteria in the current law. His family reflects on his death:

*"Adam's chronic pain mediated every moment of his experience. This made it almost impossible for him to derive pleasure from the normal, natural aspects of daily living," explains his eldest sister, Sally. "He was finally left with a choice-less choice."*

[http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/adam\\_ross\\_story](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/adam_ross_story)

In his final letter to family and friends, Adam wrote about his decision:

*Of course, I imagined dying in a different manner, as it should be our right to choose when and how we would like that process to go, especially when you live with unbearable incurable pain that will not take you from this world naturally. But, like so many other aspects in this life, the human race has far to go in this regard. There are no words to describe the unfairness of these circumstances, but I've come to believe we are not separated, in life and in death, we are one.*

<http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/adamross>

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On May 29th, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) was at the B.C. Court of Appeal to argue that Canada should not re-litigate issues already decided in *Carter v. Canada*. Jay Aubrey, a lawyer for the BCCLA, comments:

*"Every day this law stands, and every day the Canadian government is fighting to preserve its law, is another day people suffering intolerably against their wishes," Aubrey said. "They're waiting for resolution to this trial. For many of those people, every day*

*feels like an eternity. We're not saying new evidence shouldn't go before the court. If there's new evidence of course it should. But it just shouldn't be the same evidence."*

<https://www.thestar.com/vancouver/2018/05/28/bc-civil-liberties-association-aims-to-speed-up-legal-challenge-to-federal-assisted-dying-law.html>

You can read more in the BCCLA's press release:

<https://bccla.org/news/2018/05/press-release-bccla-asks-b-c-court-of-appeal-to-accelerate-trial-on-assisted-dying-legislation/>

Despite having MAID legislation in place, some Canadians are still forced to access assisted dying elsewhere because of the restrictive eligibility criteria of C-14:

*"The legalisation of MAiD in Canada did not bring an end to so-called "suicide tourism" by Canadians. According to Dignitas' statistics, 60 Canadians used its service between 1998 and 2017, including 12 in 2017."*

<https://theconversation.com/suicide-tourism-and-understanding-the-swiss-model-of-the-right-to-die-96698>

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Physicians Advisory Council member, Dr. James Downar, writes that "frailty can be just as grievous and irremediable as cancer" in this *Healthy Debate* piece.

<http://healthydebate.ca/opinions/frailty-and-maid>

Dr. David Amies of DWDC's Physicians Advisory Council responds to an [offensive, incendiary column](#) written by *National Post* columnist Barbara Kay, in which she insults supporters of assisted dying and the thoughtful, compassionate clinicians who provide it.

[http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/no\\_tug\\_of\\_war](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/no_tug_of_war)

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Ottawa artist Richard Darch accessed MAID on March 16<sup>th</sup>. His brothers reflect on his life and death:

*"I hope that I'm lucky enough that I can feel as free as he felt that day. I think the process was the most humane thing I've ever seen."*

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/the-good-death-of-richard-darch-ottawa-artist-spent-three-decades-living-under-shadow-of-hiv-aids>

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Doctors Nova Scotia, the association that represents all physicians in the province, are pushing for better palliative care.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/novascotia/1569789-doctors-nova-scotia-says-it%E2%80%99s-time-to-make-palliative-care-plans-happen>

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Ruth Mutton spoke with *The Hamilton Spectator* about her plan to access an assisted death:

Article and video:

<https://www.thespec.com/opinion-story/8608010-ruth-loved-life-but-now-she-wants-to-die/>

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Animal care advocate Iris Carr accessed MAID on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Her husband, Bill, shares their story.

<http://www.bowenlandundercurrent.com/news/woman-with-a-caws-iris-carr-leaves-a-long-legacy-of-animal-care-behind-1.23312698>

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A lower court judgement in California has officially invalidated their End of Life Option Act. For the time being, doctors can no longer write prescriptions for assisted dying medication.

<https://www.compassionandchoices.org/california/>

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Proposals that may have seen assisted dying legalized in Guernsey were rejected earlier this month.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-guernsey-44153575>

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Ten years ago, British journalist and writer, Katharine Whitehorn reported on Oregon's assisted dying laws with strong approval. Now she lives in a care home and is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Her powerful story highlights the need for advance requests.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/29/assisted-dying-katharine-whitehorn-alzheimers>

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