



Dying With Dignity Canada

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

[802 - 55 Eglinton Avenue East](#) | [Toronto, ON](#) | [M4P 1G8](#)

Phone: 647-559-4125 | **Fax:** 416-486-5562 | **Toll free:** 1-800-495-6156 ext.25

kelsey.goforth@dyingwithdignity.ca

George and Shirley Brickenden died together on March 27th at their Toronto retirement home. They are one of the few couples in Canada to receive a doctor-assisted death together, and the first to speak about it publicly. DWDC CEO Shanaaz Gokool shared that dying together, "is the final articulation of the love that they've had for each other for nearly 73 years."

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-medically-assisted-death-allows-couple-married-almost-73-years-to-die/>

You can read George and Shirley's obituaries here:

<http://v1.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/Deaths.20180329.93400505/BDASStory/BD A/deaths>

The Brickendens' moving story has sparked responses from people all over the country. Devon Hutchinson, of Kitchener, ON, wrote a letter to the *Globe and Mail* about his parents who died by suicide together in 2010. In his letter, he wrote about how he wished his parents could have had access to a gentler option:

"I have no doubt that my parents made the right choice. They were both dying of cancer with rapidly deteriorating health. They were so in love, too. I've come to realize that if one had had to live without the other for any length of time, it would have been far worse. But the shock of the loss was so terrible for those of us left behind."

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/article-april-6-choice-in-death-plus-other-letters-to-the-editor/>

Shanaaz Gokool spoke to Vancouver's Radio 98.3 program about the Brickendens.

Audio: <http://cirh2.streamon.fm/listen-pl-15385>

Bob and Noreen Bishops of Haliburton accessed MAID together on the exact same day as the Brickendens:

"They held hands, laid back with smiles on their faces, and said goodbye," said [their son] Steve. "And away they went."

<http://www.haliburtonecho.ca/bishops-leave-haliburton-hand-in-hand?id=876>

Shanaaz Gokool and Richard W. Ivey, chair of DWDC's Patrons Council, submitted this response to [Barbara Kay's recent *National Post* column](#):

"For Dying With Dignity Canada's part, we will continue to call for more and better palliative care, just as we will continue to serve as the leading defender of the right to medical assistance in dying. Championing one doesn't mean opposing the other. Canadians want, and deserve, fair access to both."

<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DaMSbVFXUAAXkEq.jpg>

DWDC Communications Officer Cory Ruf, wrote a letter to the editor on why we advocate for better palliative care:

"In our view, palliative care and assisted dying are two essential options on a spectrum of care for individuals who are exploring their legal end-of-life choices. In our submissions to government, we've called for improved access to palliative care, which we now refer to as a human right."

(5th letter from the top)

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/article-march-27-its-private-sort-of-plus-other-letters-to-the-editor/>

His submission was in response to Ing Wong-Ward's opinion piece:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-there-is-more-than-one-way-to-die-with-dignity/>

Supporter Don Kent shares part four of his journey with us on the DWDC blog:

http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don_journey4

Dan Duma was unable to die at home and spent the last part of his life advocating for better access to healthcare. Currently, there is a three-month wait period that OHIP requires for patients that are new to Ontario who wish to access home care or a bed in a hospice home. Under inter-provincial reciprocal billing agreements, new residents can be admitted to hospital for medical care during the waiting period, but this doesn't apply to home or hospice care. If passed, Dan's Law will eliminate the wait period for palliative care patients moving to Ontario from another province.

<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/dans-law-for-palliative-care-could-die-before-election-supporters-warn>

Various medical and palliative care associations wrote to the *Windsor Star* to express their support for Dan's Law.

<http://windsorstar.com/opinion/letters/reader-letter-ontario-mpps-should-pass-dans-law-before-election>

DWDC Physicians Advisory Council members, Justine Dembo and Jonathan Reggler, along with bioethicist Udo Schuklenk published a paper in *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* on MAID for individuals whose sole underlying condition is mental illness.

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0706743718766055>

The Vancouver Island Health Authority has put out a Request for Proposals for 120 new residential/complex care beds. The group Equal Access Comox Valley is calling on VIHA to only consider bids from organizations that respect the right to assisted dying.

<http://www.equalaccesscomoxvalley.ca/no-maid---no-contract.html>

Caren McCracken accessed her right to MAID last month. Her friend reflects on her decision:

<https://tvo.org/blog/current-affairs/-saying-a-final-goodbye-to-a-dear-friend>

In international news, assisted dying becomes legal in Hawaii.

<https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/04/05/us/ap-us-hawaii-assisted-suicide.html>