



# Dying With Dignity Canada

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

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A group of physicians and assisted-dying proponents are planning to open MAIDHouse, a home dedicated to medical assistance in dying. DWDC CEO and member of MAIDHouse's startup board of directors, Shanaaz Gokool comments:

*"It's a unique project. It's the only one of its kind in the country."*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/toronto/article-toronto-group-hopes-to-open-home-for-patients-seeking-assisted-death/>

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A new report from Jocelyn Downie and Jennifer Chandler says that more clarity is needed in the current assisted dying law, especially concerning eligibility. MAID provider and president of the Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers, Dr. Stefanie Green comments:

*"Doctors starting out in this field need to feel confident that they are doing the right thing "ethically and legally."*

<http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/lack-of-clarity-on-assisted-dying-may-lead-to-needless-suffering-report-says>

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Nurse practitioners are not always compensated for the work they do to provide MAID. Willi Kirenko, a nurse practitioner in Chatham-Kent, ON, comments:

*"Some NPs are providing the service during their regular work hours and their employers are covering the cost associated with that work. Others, like myself, are offering it because we can, and we are passionate about improving access."*

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/nurse-practitioners-maid-ontario-1.4588706>

Don Kent was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer and has decided to pursue MAID when he feels ready. He is chronicling his journey on the DWDC blog:

*"He wants to share what he's experiencing, what he's learning," says Susan Desjardins, with the Ottawa chapter of Dying with Dignity, "He's putting a human face on the process and helping others to understand why people might make that choice."*

(Video and article)

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-area-man-blogs-about-his-medical-assistance-in-dying-1.3841394>

Don's blog posts can be found here:

Part one: [http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don\\_journey1](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don_journey1)

Part two: [http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don\\_journey2](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don_journey2)

Part three: [http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don\\_journey3](http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/don_journey3)

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Allan Hammond, chair of DWDC's Kingston chapter, wrote a Letter to the *Whig Standard* Editor in response to Hospice Kingston refusing to allow MAID onsite:

*"The LHIN [Local Health Integration Network] must exercise its authority to insist that Hospice Kingston provide medical-assisted death for patients who qualify."*

<http://www.thewhig.com/2018/03/15/letters-to-the-editor-march-16>

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The North East LHIN in Ontario is in the initial stages of creating a formal network for MAID referrals.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/referral-network-maid-northeast-1.4576368>

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Jocelyn Downie's article discusses patients who starve and dehydrate themselves in order to meet the eligibility criteria for MAID.

<http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2018/has-stopping-eating-and-drinking-become-a-path-to-assisted-dying/>

Jane Gerster of the *Winnipeg Free Press* wrote about the anguish patients and families experience when their assisted dying wishes are denied because of a care facility's religious beliefs. DWDC's Communications Officer Cory Ruf and Dr. Ellen Wiebe, member of our Physicians Advisory Council, both commented:

*"They're saying if you want MAID, go somewhere else... but that's not how we deal with human rights," Wiebe says. "If you're a publicly funded facility and this is a legal medical procedure, then you have to be able to offer it or allow it."*

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/at-deaths-locked-door-474985953.html>

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Patricia Craig's experience demonstrates how difficult it can be for desperately ill Canadians to exercise their right to MAID. Patricia, who was incapacitated from five chronic diseases and confined to her bed, spoke with *The Edmonton Journal*:

*"If I can help just one person and make the process easier for them, then it's worth it. Because you have to have an iron will to go through this. And I honestly don't think that should be necessary."*

<http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/an-iron-will-for-some-albertas-medical-aid-in-dying-process-is-still-a-work-in-progress>

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Dr. Matt Kutcher, a doctor from Prince Edward Island, spoke to CBC News about his role in providing MAID, which he calls a "profound experience." Dr. Kutcher's first involvement with MAID was with Paul Couvrette, who was the first person to access assisted dying on P.E.I.

*"I don't want this to be something that's whispered about, that's hidden behind doors," said Kutcher. "We have a law that governs it. It's regulated carefully. It's done with great care by the people involved in it."*

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-medical-assistance-in-dying-kutcher-celliars-brittain-maid-1.4498684>

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Dr. Jonathan Reggler, chair of our Physicians Advisory Council, wrote a letter to *The BMJ* about why assisted dying should be legal in the United Kingdom:

*"There is the belief that patients will distrust their physicians because we are supposed only to help prolong life; in fact, most patients are pleased to learn that we are more interested in their well-being and their autonomy than in our own rather narrow view of the role of the physician at the end of life. I get thanked on a weekly basis for being involved in providing MAID."*

<http://www.bmj.com/content/360/bmj.k562/rr-2>

DWDC's former CEO Wanda Morris wrote about her friendship with Katherine, a DWDC volunteer who was forced to access her assisted dying wish in Switzerland because she did not qualify at home.

*"I still mourn her loss. But mostly I regret that she died too soon, and that she died, alone, in a foreign country. Katherine's last act was to travel to Switzerland for an assisted death. Even though Medical Aid in Dying had been legalized in Canada, it didn't protect her."*

<http://nationalpost.com/health/seniors/grey-matters-protections-needed-for-those-who-choose-assisted-dying>

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The Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia has taken a strong stance on medical assistance in dying in response to the Delta Hospice Society's refusal to allow MAID in its hospices. As reported by *Global News*, Fraser Health's board chair Jim Sinclair said hospices are obligated under the Canada Health Act to provide MAID if a person requests it.

*"The right to a medically-assisted death is a step forward, not a step backwards."*

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4012677/hospices-medically-assisted-death-fraser-health/>

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An Ontario woman, Sonia Perna, spoke to the *Ottawa Citizen* about her father's life and end-of-life choice. While initially against her father's MAID choice, Sonia had a change of heart when she saw her father's rapid decline:

*"I'm proud of him. I think it's beautiful that he allowed me to be there with him going through this, and I think that's a father's true love."*

<http://ottawacitizen.com/life/life-story/a-fathers-love-sonia-perna-was-proud-of-her-father-for-allowing-her-to-be-a-part-of-his-death>

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This *Hamilton Spectator* piece follows one woman's journey with grief after her mother's medically assisted death.

<https://www.thespec.com/living-story/8130703-the-last-goodbye-a-mother-s-decision-to-die/#.WoM6wMpK2L8.twitter>

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A psychiatrist wrote about depression and MAID for *Healthy Debate*. While terminally ill patients are often depressed, he wrote, that doesn't mean they're incompetent.

*"Depression does bias a person's outlook, but bias is not the same as mental incompetence. Doctors have to balance the need to protect patients in vulnerable mental states from exercising poor judgment against the need to respect their autonomy."*

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

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Guernsey could be first place in British Isles to allow assisted dying. It is expected that parliament will vote this May.

[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/mar/21/guernsey-parliament-to-vote-on-proposals-to-allow-assisted-dying?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/mar/21/guernsey-parliament-to-vote-on-proposals-to-allow-assisted-dying?CMP=share_btn_tw)