

Dear supporters,

I am pleased to present you with the latest edition of Recent News. As you can see, February was yet another busy month for our organization and our cause.

Thank you — as always — for supporting us every step of the way!

With gratitude,  
Rachel

**On February 6 — the fourth anniversary of the Supreme Court’s decision on assisted dying — Dying With Dignity Canada (DWDC) launched a campaign in memory of Halifax’s Audrey Parker.**

Audrey died with medical assistance on November 1, more than two years after she had been diagnosed with an incurable breast cancer. Though she was relieved to have the option of dying in peace with the help of a clinician, a flaw in Canada’s assisted dying law led her to end her life earlier than she would have wanted. In the final weeks of her life, Audrey called on federal lawmakers to amend the country’s assisted dying rules, so that no other Canadians are faced with the painful choice she had to make.

DWDC is carrying on Audrey’s campaign for the rights of people who have been Assessed and Approved for medical assistance in dying (MAID). [Our campaign includes a petition calling for changes to Canada’s assisted dying law](#): in particular, to the provision that requires people to confirm their wish for MAID immediately before the procedure is provided.

As part of our launch, DWDC also unveiled a video message Audrey recorded three days before she died. [You can watch the video and learn more about our campaign for Audrey’s Amendment here](#).

**DWDC CEO Shanaaz Gokool spoke with Global News Radio’s Niki Reitmayer about why it’s so important for Parliament to debate and pass Audrey’s Amendment in order to protect the rights of people who’ve been Assessed and Approved for assisted dying.**

[You can listen to the interview here](#).

**In [this Global News article](#), Shanaaz commented on the cruel choices faced by people who have been Assessed and Approved for MAID but risk losing capacity.**

*“No one should ever have to choose between spending a few more days or weeks with their loved ones and their right to a peaceful, assisted death.”*

**In [this The Canadian Press article](#), Shanaaz spoke about how the late-stage consent requirement leads some people to end their lives earlier than they want.**

*“Without the ability to waive the late-stage consent requirement, vulnerable Canadians face a clear, grave threat to their rights. We call on the government to pass Audrey’s Amendment and correct this injustice without delay.”*

**[CBC Nova Scotia shared our video](#) and spoke with Audrey’s close friend Kim King about the impacts of the law’s late-stage consent requirement:**

*“It was really, really upsetting. It took something that was so comforting to Audrey, you know, to have that control and it took it away. And therefore made her have to take the courageous step to end her life early.”*

**Kim King spoke with CBC Morning Live about DWDC’s campaign and Audrey’s dying wish to amend Canada’s assisted dying law.**

[You can watch her interview here.](#)

**Kim talked to Global Halifax about her beloved Audrey and why she’s carrying on Audrey’s campaign for the rights of people in the Assessed and Approved category.**

[You can watch her interview here.](#)

Additional Audrey’s Amendment coverage can be found here:

- [Video: Nova Scotia woman’s posthumous fight to fix assisted-dying law | Global National](#)
- [Audrey Parker pleads for change to assisted-dying law in posthumous video | The Chronicle Herald](#)
- [‘Audrey’s last wish’: Dying With Dignity Canada launches campaign to amend Canada’s assisted dying rules | Halifax Today](#)

- [Scott Thompson: In death, Audrey Parker issues a challenge to Canadian leaders | Global News](#)

Canada's new Justice Minister David Lametti was one of just four Liberal MPs who voted against Bill C-14 because he expressed concerns that the law was too restrictive. But now, as federal justice minister, he will not push for changes to the law. He said recently that any changes would have to wait until the conclusion of a parliamentary review, which won't happen until 2021.

[Shanaaz spoke with the Toronto Star](#) about the disappointing announcement:

*"How many Audrey Parkers will it take — and these are people who are ending their lives earlier than they want to with an assisted death for fear of losing the right altogether — before the government recognizes what a severe and grave violation of people's Charter right this is?"*

Both Shanaaz and Kim King were interviewed for [this Healthy Debate article](#) on whether Canada should introduce advance requests for MAID.

*"Hearing about medical assistance in dying and knowing that she had control over her end of life was literally like the [oncologist] had said: 'You two are going to Tuscany,'" says Kim King. "We were just so excited! Fast forward to when we realized, 'Uh oh, wait! Audrey, you have to keep in touch. If you start to lose mental capacity you will lose this opportunity.' It was like someone gave her a present and then took it away."*

DWDC volunteer and MAID advocate Liana Brittain wrote about how the late-stage consent requirement led her husband to end his life earlier than he wanted.

[You can read her powerful piece on the DWDC blog.](#)

Vancouver journalist Glenda Bartosh [wrote an op-ed for the Vancouver Sun](#) on why Canada's assisted dying law must be changed to allow advance requests for MAID. In the piece, Bartosh shared details about her father's life with dementia — "he spends most of his time in confusion or torment" — and encouraged Canadians to take action.

*“Not everyone will want to make an advance [request] for assisted death in the event they reach a state like my dad. But for those of us who do, the current legislation tramples on our rights. We all have the right to determine our lives. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms says so, as did the Supreme Court in the Carter case.”*

**Closing arguments have been made in the case of two Quebecers arguing for changes to Quebec’s and Canada’s medical assistance in dying laws. They say patients shouldn’t have to be close to a natural death in order to access a clinician’s help to end their lives.**

Nicole Gladu, one of the two Quebecers challenging the assisted dying laws, told reporters, “All my life, it was...my nature to control life as much as I could. I guess I want to get old the same way.” [You can read more in this CBC News article.](#)

[Gladu also spoke with The Canadian Press](#) about why she is challenging the law’s “reasonably foreseeable” requirement: “I want to continue, as much as possible, to control my destiny. I want to stop the suffering.”

DWDC is an intervenor in the case, which [you can read more about here.](#)

**[Shanaaz spoke with CBC Sudbury](#) about the lack of public information on medical assistance in dying in Ontario.**

*“[Barriers to accessing information about assisted dying] really fly in the face of our Canadian values when it comes to universal access to health care.”*

**February 12, 2019 was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of British Columbia’s Sue Rodriguez, whose fight for fair choice eventually paved the way for legal assisted dying in Canada.**

Svend Robinson, a former NDP MP and friend of Sue Rodriguez, [wrote a piece for The Globe and Mail](#) that calls for Canadians to keep Sue’s fight alive.

*“While Sue would certainly have celebrated that great legal victory, which has given over 4,000 Canadians the choice that she was denied, I know that she would also be deeply concerned that the current government’s legislative response continues to fall far short of the objectives for which she fought with such passion and determination over 25 years ago.”*

Robinson continued to speak out against the current assisted dying legislation, calling the existing ban on advance requests “cruel and unjust” [in this article in \*The Gananoque Reporter\*](#).

[He also spoke with \*The Georgia Straight\*](#) about Sue Rodriguez’s incredible legacy and Canada’s unconstitutional assisted dying law.

**Dr. Paul Preston of North Bay, Ont. spoke about assisted dying at a Feb. 4 event, [which was covered by NorthBayNipissing.com](#). Dr. Preston shared why he provides medical assistance in dying and dispelled some myths surrounding MAID.**

*“I am not saying that assisted dying is the only way to have a good death. It’s not. But for some people it is the only way and people need to know that it is an option which is completely within their right.”*

**CMA President-elect and palliative care physician Dr. Sandy Buchman [spoke with \*Scotland's Holyrood magazine\*](#) about Canada's assisted dying law and why he provides medical assistance in dying:**

*“[...] when I saw how peaceful it was, and so loving, it felt like it was completely consistent with who I was as a physician and as a person. I knew at that moment that I had done the right thing for my patient.”*

**Dr. Tim Holland, MAID provider and current president of Doctors Nova Scotia, spoke with Global Halifax about Audrey’s Amendment and medical assistance in dying in Nova Scotia.**

[You can watch the interview here.](#)

**Marie-Ève Couture was refused medical aid in dying because she was not “at the end of life,” as required under Quebec's law. Then, she stopped eating.**

On Feb. 8, after her health had deteriorated, Dr. Pierre Viens relieved her of her suffering.

[You can read about Marie-Ève’s story in this \*La Presse\* article.](#)

**Editor's note:** You can use an online tool [like this one](#) to translate the above article to the language of your choice.

## **More information about medical assistance in dying on Prince Edward Island has been revealed.**

At least 14 Islanders have had medically assisted deaths, [according to CBC News PEI](#).

Some Islanders, including a MAID provider, [spoke with PEI's The Guardian](#) about the assisted dying process and what it means to have the option of MAID:

*"It's really about respecting each individual person and what their choices are."*

## **Canadians who have supported a loved one on a journey with assisted dying continue to come forward with their important stories.**

- The friends of Calgary's Catherine Mitchell, a former Catholic nun, [spoke with Global News about her choice](#) to access assisted dying after a terminal cancer diagnosis: *"She was an advocate for this option for people. She knew people have other opinions about this but was very OK with someone having a different opinion. This was hers."*
- Ernie Warr of Nanaimo, B.C. had a medically assisted death in 2017. [His wife Mary spoke with Nanaimo News Now](#) about the "gift" of MAID: *"It was a blessing."*

**How does one grieve when a loved one chooses an assisted death? Chloe Gray [wrote a piece for Refinery29](#) about her great grandma's decision to access MAID, and the way that choice impacted the way her family grieved the death.**

*"There are no history or self-help books to teach us how to navigate a brand-new type of grief that brings up a totally different, sporadic, rushed and uncertain feeling."*

**Jana Buhlmann, whose husband Chris accessed MAID in Sept. 2017, [spoke with New Zealand's The Death Dialogues Project](#) in a two-part podcast. She talked about what it was like to support Chris' journey with assisted dying, their love story, his death story, and how his choice has impacted her.**

[You can read more about Jana and Chris' story on the DWDC blog.](#)

**Doctors are speaking out about the importance of advance care planning and making sure your loved ones know your wishes for end-of-life care.**

- [If you can't speak for yourself, who will make your medical decisions? By Dr. Noam Berlin for Healthy Debate](#)
- [Express your wishes for end-of-life care, by Dr. Paul Hébert and Dr. George Heckman for Post Media](#)
- [This year, ensure you have an Advance Care Directive, by Dr. Taylor Loughheed for Ottawa Citizen](#)

