



Dr Firstname LASTNAME

By e-mail: address

15 October 2018

**To the Associate Members
of the WMA in Canada**

Resignation of the Canadian Medical Association

Dear Dr Lastname,
Dear Colleague,

During our General Assembly in Reykjavik the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) resigned from the WMA. The resignation of the CMA has no effect on your associate membership and I would like to add that we value your associate membership highly.

The departure of the CMA follows a long debate and tensions (mainly) between the CMA delegation and the WMA over its euthanasia policy. Over the past three years we have repeatedly received threats from members of the CMA delegation that the CMA might leave the WMA if the WMA's euthanasia policy was not changed. In the end, the resignation was prompted by a non-assigned quote Dr Eidelman made in his inauguration speech. Dr Simpson (CMA) identified a part of this speech as a taken from his inauguration speech as President of the CMA given some years before*. The CMA demanded the immediate resignation of Dr Eidelman at the beginning of the General Assembly the following day.

The WMA Executive Committee immediately looked into the allegation and found that a short passage of Dr Eidelman's speech indeed matched Dr Simpson's presentation. It was found that further short passages were potentially copied from blogs on the internet. The Executive Committee informed the Council in a special session convened on the spot and Dr Eidelman was given an opportunity to react. He apologised for the unassigned quotes and took responsibility for his mistake in not checking the work of his speech-writer.

* The part of Dr Eidelman's speech copied from Dr Simpson reads: *"Every day, we are given the great privilege of being invited into our patients' lives. We are with patients when they are born and when they die; we provide advice and comfort; we prevent illness and treat and manage disease. Our patients trust us, and we have always taken our advocacy role very seriously. It is part of the essence of our professionalism"...*

The Council (and later the General Assembly) accepted this apology and did not grant the CMA delegation's request to ask for his immediate resignation. The CMA delegation then left the room and formally resigned later the same day.

Everybody can draw his or her own conclusions from this. For us, it is important to let you know that your membership matters to us and that we will continue working with you, if you so wish. Canada is not the only NMA whose policy on Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide differs from that of the WMA. Differences between our policy on this subject and the opinions of member associations like those of the Netherlands or Belgium have existed for decades. Yet despite this we have always held our colleagues from these countries in high esteem and have worked constructively with them in a spirit of mutual respect. We are all aware that differences in opinion exist, not only between associations, but also within them. However, the CMA delegation had to understand that any attempt to force a policy change upon WMA members would not work.

We value all our Canadian colleagues and regret the exit of the CMA from the WMA. We hope that all our Canadian colleagues will be represented in the WMA again soon.

I look forward to your continued engagement with the WMA.

Sincerely



Dr Otmar Kloiber
Secretary General