



Newsletter, March 2022

CANADIAN NEWS:

As you probably know, when Bill C-7 was adopted in March 2021, extending “medical assistance in dying” (MAID) to people not nearing the end of their life, it allowed MAID for people with mental illness as the sole condition underlying their request, with a delay of two years for the implementation of this provision. The law required *an independent review to be carried out by experts respecting recommended protocols, guidance and safeguards to apply to requests made for medical assistance in dying by persons who have a mental illness... no later than the first anniversary of the day on which this Act receives royal assent.*

The expert panel’s report is thus expected this week (before March 17, 2022). Its [membership](#) includes several known activists for MAID for mental illness, and we do not expect much caution in the report. In a [recent article](#) co-authored by Dr. Mona Gupta, the chair of the panel, there is no doubt regarding her opinion on the issue.

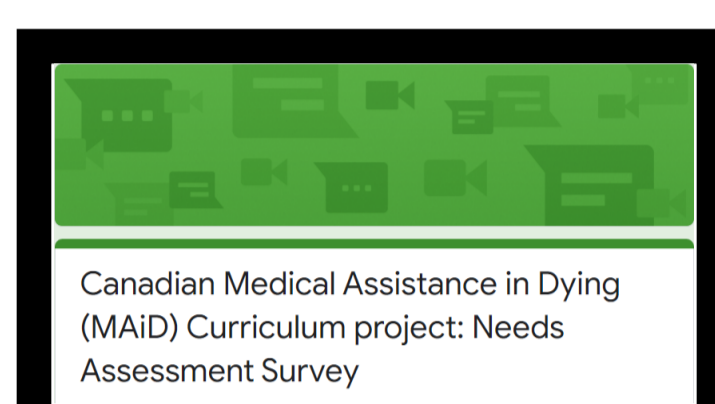
CALL TO ACTION:

- We urge all members and supporters (especially, but not only, mental health professionals) to share your views and concerns with your MP, the Ministers of Justice, Health and Mental Health and the media, when the report is tabled this week. Please click [here](#) for pertinent contact information.

We recommend that you draft a short (600-word) text now, which can be finalized and sent the day the report is announced or as soon as possible afterwards.

- Another announcement to prepare for:

We expect a Bill to be tabled in Quebec soon, to update the MAID law, following the Commission held in 2021 ([Report](#)). It will no doubt propose MAID by advance request for dementia as well as other worrisome elements.



The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada recently sent out a [short survey](#) from the Canadian Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) Curriculum Development Committee to be completed by clinicians to ‘help shape future curriculum offerings on MAiD’.

We invite all physicians and nurses to complete the questionnaire to make your opinions heard!

Drs’ VOICES:

- Dr. Félix Pageau, geriatrician and ethicist at the Quebec University Hospital Center - Laval University, is the author of the manifesto : [“La responsabilité de protéger les personnes âgées atteintes de démence”](#). He testified at the Special Commission on the Evolution of the Law Concerning End-of-Life Care, whose hearings have been completed. He explains in detail the reasons for his opposition to medical assistance in dying for patients incapable of decision-making.



- [Episode #22](#)
- [Episode #23](#)

- Following are clearly articulated responses of one physician against physician-assisted suicide:
 - [Physician-Assisted Suicide: An Egregious Boundary Violation](#), Ronald W. Pies, MD
 - [Hippocratic Medicine is Hallowed Ground](#), Ronald W. Pies, MD

COMMENTARIES:

- [After five years, is Canada’s ‘medical aid in dying’ legislation working?](#)

The author provides a brief overview of the two sides of the legislative debate around MAID and cites an informative journal article:

[A Sceptics Report: Canada’s Five Years Experience with Medical Termination \(MAiD\)](#), Koch, T. *HEC Forum* (2022).

- [MAID and palliative care in Canada](#)

The authors, who are pro-MAID physicians, express their concerns about patients requesting death because of a lack of knowledge about their condition and what to expect.

- [Inflicting death becomes a routine procedure when euthanasia is legal](#) by Margaret Somerville.

- [Living with Dignity in a dossier of the magazine of Moelle épinière et motricité Québec](#)



In its winter 2022 edition, Paraquad magazine from Moelle épinière et motricité Québec features an interview on medical assistance in dying with the LWD coordinator Jasmin Lemieux-Lefebvre, (pages 31 and 32, in French).

- [Euthanasia Run Amok \(Aka Population Culling\)](#)

“The sad truth is that many who choose this option do so out of concern (not necessarily validated) of burdening their families. Others choose it out of loneliness, exacerbated by COVID lockdowns (as I wrote about [here](#)), or because they don’t have support, financial, social, or medical. These are manifestations of a societal failure – ones that don’t devolve from the patient’s medical or mental condition – and these are problems that should invoke social assistance - not population culling. Indeed, as we legitimize – even encourage – this death strategy, we spend less money and less effort on developing palliative care.

Media coverage has worsened the problem, normalizing even hagiographizing the process, reporting on “celebrity endorsements” and euthanasia cases [donating organs](#). “

- [Living and loving with Alzheimer’s: \(Article in French: \[Vivre et aimer avec l’alzheimer\]\(#\)\)](#)

A testimony of Mr. Sylvain Dufour, a Quebec caregiver living in Abitibi with his mother Carmen, whom he accompanies with great care.

Following is a link to an [interview with Mr. Dufour](#) on Radio Canada (available in French only) and a [TV report](#) (*TVA Nouvelles Abitibi-Témiscamingue* 18 January 2022, 7:13 à 10:41).

IN THE LITERATURE:

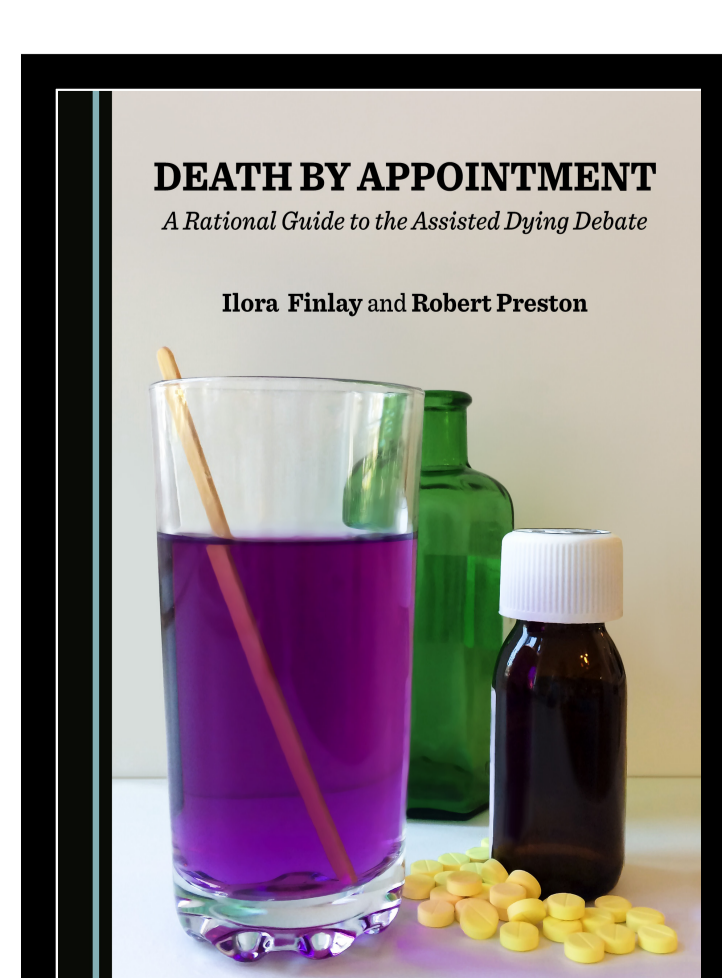
- *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (10 March 2021). [Establishing irremediable psychiatric suffering in the context of medical assistance in dying in the Netherlands: a qualitative study](#). Sisco M.P. van Veen, Andrea M. Ruissen, Aartjan T.F. Beekman, Natalie Evans and Guy A.M. Widdershoven. The study that shows a glimpse of the difficulty establishing irremediability in mental illness.
- *The LANCET* (26 February 2022). [Report of the Lancet Commission on the Value of Death: bringing death back into life](#). Libby Sallnow, Richard Smith, Sam H Ahmedzai, Afsan Bhadelia, Charlotte Chamberlain, Yali Cong et al.

RESOURCES:

- [End-of-Life Care in Dementia](#)

McGill Cares: End-of-Life Care in Dementia – online recording of a webinar offered in Feb 2022, by Dr. Catherine Ferrier, president of the Physicians’ Alliance against Euthanasia.

- [Book review of *Death by appointment: a rational guide to the assisted dying debate*](#) by Ilora Finlay and Robert Preston;



Ilora Finlay is a Welsh palliative care physician who is against the legalization of euthanasia.