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## **Dying With Dignity Canada, Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers issue joint statement on forced transfers for medical assistance in dying**

Medical assistance in dying (MAID) is a constitutionally protected right in Canada. However, institutional barriers to accessing that right remain rife in the healthcare system. Obstructionist policies have created harmful delays and confusion for Canadians who are already suffering intolerably on account of their medical conditions.

Healthcare facilities' bans on MAID are among the most troubling barriers facing Canadians who wish to exercise their right to choice. [A recent article in \*The Globe and Mail\*](#) demonstrates how these bans on MAID threaten residents' rights, traumatize their loved ones, and impede clinicians in their efforts to provide their patients with the best possible care. The story also sheds light on the dramatic lengths that some healthcare practitioners have to go to in order to ensure that physically compromised individuals in their care are not denied their right to a peaceful death.

Healthcare facilities that receive public funds have a duty to provide basic and essential health services to the communities they serve. Thus, we believe that MAID should be permitted in all publicly funded healthcare facilities, including hospitals, hospices and long-term care homes. Forced transfers are discriminatory and they undermine the principles of universal, equitable access to healthcare — principles that have been part of our national identity for more than 50 years.

We demand that all publicly funded hospitals, hospices and long-term care homes respect and accommodate residents' right to request, be assessed for and receive MAID, without the requirement to be transferred elsewhere. We support healthcare professionals who, as a matter of conscience and compassion, help their patients overcome unfair barriers to access. And we will defend clinicians who are attacked or punished for their participation in the lawful provision of MAID. These courageous individuals should be applauded, not penalized, for putting their patients first.

### **Quotes:**

"Canadians who are eligible for medical assistance in dying are some of this country's most vulnerable, physically compromised patients. Forcing these individuals to be transferred — from facilities that are, in some cases, the person's home — in order to access their right to a peaceful death is as cruel as it is impractical. It flies in the face of the values of compassion and equitable access that are enshrined in Canada's public healthcare system."

"We applaud the courageous families and clinicians who have spoken out publicly about their experiences with forced transfers. We encourage others who have experienced the discrimination and stigmatization of forced transfers to contact our organization."

— ***Shanaaz Gokool, CEO, Dying With Dignity Canada***

"MAID providers, like all medical professionals, have a number of professional and personal responsibilities. The most important of which, according to the Canadian Medical Association's Code of Ethics, is to 'consider first the

wellbeing of the patient.’ That job becomes much more difficult when healthcare facilities impose barriers for the most vulnerable individuals in our care.”

“While we suggest our colleagues inform themselves about and respect facilities’ rules and regulations, we will continue to strongly support our colleagues who put their patients’ wellbeing first and who are working to address unfair obstacles to best medical practice. We are proud of our colleagues who are working to break down these barriers. These brave clinicians embody the values of compassion, service and respect that are at the heart of our profession.”

— *Dr. Stefanie Green, President, Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers*

***[Dying With Dignity Canada](#) is the national not-for-profit organization committed to improving quality of dying, protecting end-of-life rights, and helping Canadians avoid unwanted suffering.***

***[The Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers \(CAMAP\)](#) is the national organization representing medical professionals who are involved in the provision of medical assistance in dying. CAMAP’s priorities are to support MAID assessors and providers in their work; educate the public and the healthcare community about MAID; and provide leadership on determining standards and guidelines in MAID provision.***