



# NT Voluntary Euthanasia Society Inc

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*Newsletter*

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## The latest from Dying with Dignity Canada

A Parliamentary Review to resolve issues with Canada's current medical assistance in dying (MAID) laws — **including the unjust and inhumane ban on advance requests** — will occur in the coming months, but only if we continue to apply pressure to returning and new MPs. We must seize this opportunity.

**This is our chance to mobilize our community and show legislators that advance requests are widely-supported by people across the country.** However, it is also an opportunity for those opposed to MAID to lobby against assisted dying rights — and, knowing that more than 80% of Canadians support advance requests, we need to ensure our voices are heard most prominently. As the new federal minority government decides on cabinet ministers and priorities in the coming weeks, DWDC will be conducting outreach and keeping up the pressure on elected representatives to honour their obligation to the long overdue Parliamentary Review on assisted dying and make advance requests the law of the land

**This is a key moment for us to finally end the prohibition on advance requests — and we are taking full advantage of the opportunity.**

Our ambitious plans include relaunching public awareness and lobbying campaigns on the issue of advance requests, mobilizing our community and providing tools to help supporters engage with the Parliamentary Review process — using this broad base of support for advance requests to create pressure on our legislators to finally approve advance requests.

We have already achieved significant victories in the movement to expand assisted dying rights this year — with the passage of the historic Bill C7 — and we will keep up the momentum in the remaining months of 2021.

**Helen Long**  
CEO  
Dying With Dignity Canada

Here we are 24 years after the NT was slapped down for having the temerity to decriminalise voluntary euthanasia when no one else had done so. Obviously, we were simply ahead of our time as there are now 20 Jurisdictions around the world with a population of some 300 million who have legalised voluntary assisted dying in some form.

The outrage of what the Federal Parliament did by the intervention is manifested in the needless suffering endured by those who would have used the provisions of the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* had it remained in operation. Although the figure cannot be known it is fair to say the number is in the thousands and is still growing.

Thankfully Australians living in Victoria and WA can now access the VAD option and those in Tasmania, SA and Queensland will soon be able to. It is ironic that Territorians are now able to relocate to another state and access VAD after a qualifying residential period.

As this newsletter goes to press we are on the cusp of yet another attempt to have the situation addressed with Senator McMahon's Bill to return powers to the NT currently before the Senate. There is an expectation that the bill may be debated during the November sittings of parliament from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>.

This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> attempt to have the Territory's power to legislate on the subject of VAD restored in the last 13 years. The first was introduced by Senator Bob Brown in 2008. Other attempts were made by Greens Senator Richard DiNatale, Liberal Democratic Senator David Leyonhjelm and current NT ALP member in the House of Representatives Luke Gosling.

All these years we have had political support to return the powers; however that support has never extended to the heavyweights in Canberra who determine which legislation is passed and which is not.

Even the backing of the NT and ACT Chief Ministers, their governments, their Legislative Assemblies and all but one Territory federal member has not been enough to have this longstanding injustice rectified. The fate of Senator McMahon's bill hangs in the balance. Sadly, the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee report into the bill was simply a waste of time. After seeking submissions and deliberating on the subject, the best the committee could come up with is – quote:

*"The committee makes no recommendation about the appropriateness or otherwise of using the territories power to prevent the territories from enacting VAD legislation. The committee considers it is a matter for the Senate to decide whether the use of the territories power in this way is appropriate."*

The message from the body of the report is even worse as influential ALP Senator Kim Carr who supports the restoration of VAD powers opposes the McMahon bill and recommends it not be passed in its current form. Sen Carr is deputy chair of the committee and in his minority report he states, quote:

*"Irrespective of views that individuals may hold on the policy substance in this bill, it is currently so poorly drafted it doesn't warrant the support of the chamber. Specifically, amendments relating to the Fair Work Act 2009, acquisition of property otherwise than on just terms and voluntary assisted dying ('VAD') all lack coherence."*

Sen Carr's concerns also relate to the exclusion the Australian Capital Territory.

While the bill may be amended to accommodate issues raised by Sen Carr and other supporters, it will give opponents more opportunities to chip away at the core issue, which is the authority to consider VAD.

If the bill is brought on for debate and a vote in November we will either have the powers back and the Andrews Act abolished or not - in which case the subject will disappear until sometime after the next federal election.

Marshall Perron

## **Terminal patients deserve death with dignity. New Mexico aid-in-dying law sets standard.**

***Waiting periods prolong suffering for terminally ill patients. Nation should follow law that allows easier access to options for death on own terms.***

"I couldn't take her pain away."

Those were the words of Danny King after his wife Sharon King died. She is reportedly one of the first New Mexico residents to use the state's groundbreaking law that allows terminally ill adults to have better access to medical aid in dying. The law – which allows patients to take prescription medication that ends unbearable suffering – is already serving as a model for other states to improve current medical aid-in-dying laws or pass new ones.

New Mexico's law is innovative because it corrects the access problem created by time-consuming regulatory roadblocks that can take weeks or months to overcome. It also maintains time-tested, core safeguards of similar laws in Washington DC and eight states: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont and Washington.

These unnecessary hurdles often prevent a large percentage of terminally ill adults from using this peaceful dying option, causing needless end-of-life suffering. A 2018 study by Kaiser Permanente Southern California shows one-third (33%) of terminally ill adults who request to use California's End of

LifeOption Act die before completing the law's time-consuming, multi-step process, including many during the 15-day waiting period.

"That mandatory minimum waiting period is a huge barrier for some patients," said a Sacramento, California, family medicine specialist, during a news conference hosted by Compassion & Choices Action Network. The network sponsored California legislation aimed at reducing wait times and improving access to end-of-life options. "Every one of the 80+ patients that I have overseen through the process had been thinking about it for weeks or months before their first visit."

### **BMA drops opposition to assisted dying and adopts neutral stance Doctors' union votes to change official position after debate at annual representative meeting**

The Guardian

By Andrew Gregory, Sept. 14, 2021

The doctors' union, which represents about 150,000 medics, voted to change its official position following a debate by members at its annual representative meeting in London. It had opposed legalising assisted dying since 2006.

Campaigners seeking a change in the law welcomed the "historic milestone" and said it could help pave the way towards a future change in the law.

### **AGM 14 August 2021**

At the recent AGM, the following office bearers were elected:

*President*

*Vice-President*

*Secretary*

*Treasurer*

*Public Officer*

Judy Dent

Robyn Harrison

E A (Janie) Mason

Adam Turley

Adam Turley