

## **News - January 13, 2020 – Letter from CCCB – Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia 2 week public consultation information.**

On Monday January 13, 2020, the Government of Canada, through the Department of Justice, launched a two-week public consultation on expanding eligibility for assisted suicide and euthanasia ("Medical aid in dying", known by the acronym AMM). This consultation follows the decision of the Superior Court of Quebec, taken in September 2019, which concluded that it is unconstitutional to limit access to the MA only to people at the end of their life. The Government of Canada has not appealed the judgment of the Court of Quebec, but has indicated that it is prepared to change the law for the whole country.

Although the government has committed to a full review of the law five years after its adoption (June 2016 - June 2021), the current approach targets a specific piece of legislation (the "eligibility criteria") and it is supposed to help the government formulate its response to the judgment rendered in Quebec. Canadians are invited to make their views known (online or by PDF) by the end of the consultation period, before 11:59 p.m. (PST), Monday, January 27, 2020.

Online in French: <https://justice.survey-sondage.ca/f/s.aspx?s=6E6210A5-E100-4201-A55D-CFB52ADA1C0C&lang=FR>

French PDF: [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/am-ad/survey\\_maid\\_eng.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/am-ad/survey_maid_eng.pdf)

The survey questions do not ask whether euthanasia or assisted suicide should be expanded to include persons with disabilities; this question is implied. The only direct questions in the survey are whether an early request should be enough for someone to have access to euthanasia or assisted suicide, or whether the government's current "safeguard" measures are sufficient to prevent abuse, pressures and other types of misuse of MAID once eligibility for MAID is expanded to include those whose deaths are not reasonably foreseeable.

However, there is space in three sections of the survey for comments that may include, for example: concerns about expanding access to euthanasia and assisted suicide due to pressure and abuse that vulnerable people could experience (minors, depressed, disabled or mentally ill); the inadequacy of the so-called "safeguard measures"; the need for stronger and more effective safeguarding measures; and the urgent need for viable alternative options to MDA, which would be possible through better public funding and better support for palliative care, home care and "hospices".

We Canadians are all invited to make our views known by completing the questionnaire and adding our comments.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CECC) website provides previous statements on assisted suicide / euthanasia and also provides links to the consultation. All the resources can be found on the dedicated euthanasia and assisted suicide web page on the CCCB website:

<https://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide>

Mgr Frank Leo, jr, C.S.S.  
General secretary  
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CECC)