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The Problem

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) is a controversial procedure that has been permitted by the Supreme Court of Canada and Parliament. It involves directly ending a patient's life by lethal injection. Some caregivers believe that it is morally acceptable to end the life of a patient upon request, while others do not. Some go further and believe that all caregivers must help willing patients to end their lives prematurely. In CPSO experts insist that conscientiously objecting physicians will have to leave family medicine, palliative care and other specialties and move to a smaller number of specialties like pathology or cosmetic surgery. The CPSO intends to investigate and discipline conscientious objectors.

A prominent Canadian medical ethicist at Queen's University, has advocated for a morals test to be applied to medical school applicants to screen out those with conscientious objections.

The Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience represents more than 110 healthcare facilities (with almost 18,000 care beds and 60,000 staff) and more than 5,000 physicians across Canada.

Our members come from diverse perspectives, but all agree that taking a patient's life or referring for this procedure violates at least one of the following:

- The Hippocratic Oath;
- Our religious convictions;
- Our mission and values;
- Our professional ethics;
- Our creed; or,
- Our deeply held conviction that healthcare should heal people, not hasten death.

Our position is supported by Evangelical Christian, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Jewish theologians and moral authorities.

Our right to freedom of conscience and religion is enshrined in s. 2 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Our right to protection against discrimination is enshrined in s.15.

Many other provinces, such as Alberta, have adopted alternatives to effective referral and no other foreign jurisdiction that allows assisted suicide or euthanasia requires an effective referral.

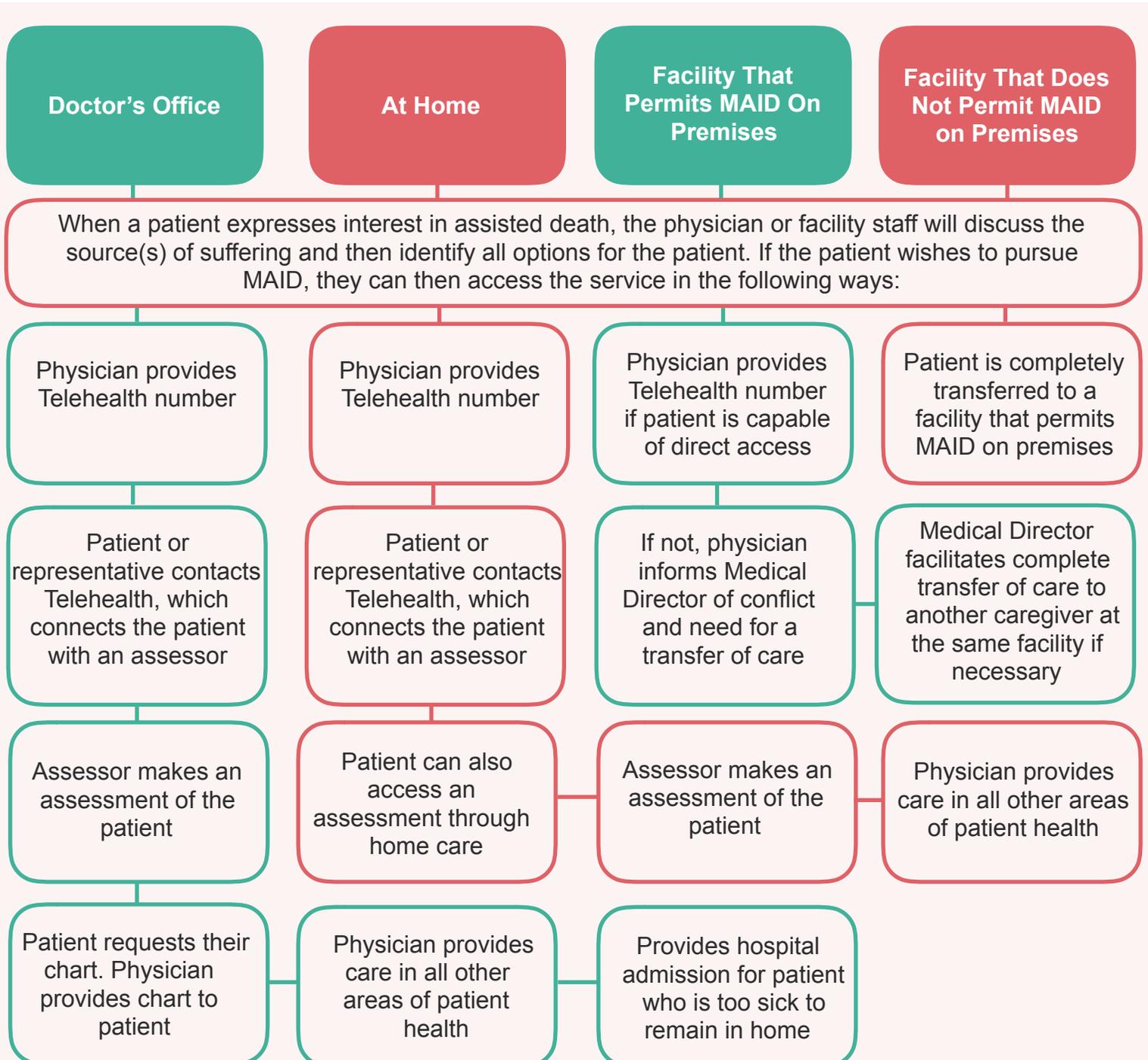
In November 2017, the Manitoba legislature passed legislation which protects the conscience rights of doctors, nurses, and pharmacists by ensuring that no health care professional can be required to provide or aid in the provision of MAID. In addition, it states that their professional regulatory bodies must not make policies requiring them to provide or aid in the provision of MAID, nor discipline their members based on those policies.

The Ontario government has the opportunity to protect the conscience rights of physicians, other medical professionals and facilities by passing legislation to protect healthcare professionals and faith based facilities from being forced to participate in or refer for medical assistance in dying. Conscientious objectors need to be able to continue to care for their patients.

The Solution

Pass legislation to protect physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals from being forced to refer for, perform, or assist in MAID, or being discriminated against for taking this stand.

How Access is Provided in Ontario in Different Settings while Protecting Conscientious Objectors



Legislative protection along with use of a Care Coordination Service that does not require physician referral would provide patient access while allowing physicians to continue to serve their patients. In order for this to work, conscientious objection must be legally protected.