

Four Pillars of Our Next Phase

The ban on physician-assisted dying may be a thing of the past, but the need to fight for Canadians' end-of-life rights is more pressing than ever. As part of our ongoing mission to protect your choice, we are in the midst of an unprecedented transformation. Below is a preview of how we're building on past successes in order to meet the challenges of the post-Bill C-14 era.



LEGAL ADVOCACY

After the June passage of Bill C-14, with its unconstitutional eligibility criteria, many of the battles for fair access to assisted dying will be waged in court. Already, at least one court challenge to the new law has been filed, and we expect more cases to come forward before year's end.

For our part, we refuse to sit on the sidelines and let others decide the future of your choice. We are committed to defending the rights of Canadians in the courtroom, even if it means expanding our advocacy into realms that were unfamiliar to us before. For example, we are currently laying the groundwork for DWDC's first-ever Legal Advisory Committee, a small group of skilled lawyers who will help guide our legal advocacy moving forward.

Additionally, we are planning to participate in two court cases that could shape the future of assisted dying in Canada. Supporting the *Lamb v. Canada* challenge to Bill C-14 will be a major objective. We also plan to act as intervenors in two Ontario cases that could have huge implications for individuals across the country. (Read page 6 to learn more.)



EMPOWERING DOCTORS

If you'd told us in January that DWDC would become a go-to organization for Canadian doctors seeking information on medical assistance in dying, we wouldn't have believed you.

What a difference a few months can make.

DWDC is now a hub for physicians committed to offering their patients compassion and choice at end of life. With help from our Physicians Advisory Council, we have established a network of likeminded doctors who can compare notes on their experiences and offer each other emotional support. We facilitate online seminars, led by the inimitable Dr. Ellen Wiebe, on the delicate ins and outs of providing medical assistance in dying. And we field questions from doctors and other practitioners who have received inquiries about assisted dying but aren't sure how to respond.

With the ink barely dry on Bill C-14, we expect that our work to support doctors who are providing medical assistance in dying will only grow in the months ahead.



SHINING A LIGHT ON INJUSTICE

Hospitals that refuse to provide referrals for assisted dying. Physicians who won't discuss a full range of end-of-life options or ensure that their patients are not abandoned. Delays in accessing the most effective prescription drugs.

These are some of the barriers to access Canadians may face in these early days after the passage of Bill C-14. And it's our job to expose these flaws in the healthcare system in the hopes of correcting them as quickly and as responsibly as possible.

Our work as a watchdog has us on the lookout for abuses of your rights. We rely heavily on the insights of our chapters and volunteers, who have their ears to the ground where they live. They also play an important role in educating their communities about the legal options that each of us has when planning for end of life.

Raising our voice in the media is another key component of our patient rights advocacy. Whether we're speaking out on a case of a family whose rights have been ignored or pointing out the gaps left by Bill C-14, our interventions in the media send the following signal: we are watching.



SUPPORTING PATIENTS & FAMILIES

Now more than ever, Canadians grappling with catastrophic diagnoses need somewhere to turn for comprehensive, compassionate answers about their options at end of life. That's why we're pleased to announce the revival of our Personal Support Program.

In many ways, the program will operate much as it did before its brief stint outside the DWDC fold. Nino Sekopet, our returning Personal Support Program manager, still provides information and emotional support with the utmost sensitivity and discretion. In addition, he, along with his roster of trusted volunteers, will continue their work to inform Canadians about the importance of advance care planning.

What's changing, though, are the needs and experiences of the individuals we serve. After the passage of Bill C-14, Canadians looking to access assisted dying have begun coming to us for information on how to navigate the system. (In some cases, we are able to serve as a conduit between a patient who wants final relief and a doctor who is willing to provide it.) These interactions are incredibly rewarding, and they ground us in all of the work that we do.