

Shine a Light Community Action Kit

Assisted dying is now legal in Canada. But that doesn't mean most eligible Canadians who want the option of a peaceful death have fair and timely access to one. Months after the passage of Bill C-14, the federal assisted dying law, enormous barriers to access continue to separate desperately ill individuals from their right to die in peace and with dignity.

As the leading human rights organization standing guard to defend Canadians' end-of-life rights, we are already working to draw attention to — and speak out against — these injustices in the healthcare system. We continue to do our best to educate healthcare professionals and institutions on their duties when it comes to Canadians' rights at end of life. As a small not-for-profit, though, we have neither the staff nor the budget to monitor what's going in every hospital or hospice in every community across the country. That's why we need your help.

Starting now and continuing into 2017 and beyond, Dying With Dignity Canada is mobilizing our supporters to search out unfair barriers to assisted dying access where they live and help us pull them out of the shadows, for all to see. Accordingly, we're calling this endeavour the Shine a Light Campaign, and we've created this toolkit to offer up ideas on how you can pitch in.

How to contribute

Hospitals that don't allow assisted dying on their premises, physicians who won't provide referrals, hospices that won't give thorough, unbiased information on the option of assisted death — these are among the roadblocks dying Canadians and their families are reporting in these first months after the passage of Bill C-14.

But to fix these problems, and others we don't yet know about, we have to find out where they exist and how widespread they are. This is where our supporters can be of enormous help. One of the best things you can do to Shine a Light on injustice is to call the healthcare institutions in your community to ask about their policies on medical assistance in dying (MAID) and then report the results to us. We'll then create a crowdsourced map of MAID policies across Canada, to paint a picture of where access is fair and also where lots of work still needs to be done.

Here are some tips on how to contact healthcare institutions in your community:

1. Brainstorm and make a list of all local institutions

When reaching out to institutions in your community, please include hospitals, hospices and long-term care facilities in your outreach. Please focus on acute care facilities, rather than rehabilitation centres (although please call them as well, if you have time). While institutions with a religious affiliation are more likely to deny access to MAID, we know

that non-faith-based facilities are also opting-out. Please reach out to all public institutions as well, so we have a better idea of their policies, too.

Connecting with local health authorities is also a great way to track down important information. A list of the different health regions and health authorities in Canada can be found [here](#). Please visit their individual websites for contact information.

2. Track down their phone number

When you're calling an institution, the front desk staff likely will not have the answers you are looking for. Request to speak to the hospital administrators who take care of policy matters for the institution. The receptionists should be able to forward your call to the appropriate person. Some people you may want to ask for include: the institution's ombudsperson, the director of clinical care, the patient relations staff, bioethicists or the chief information officer. You may have to leave a message asking to speak with a relevant representative at a later time.

3. Starting the call

Please use the following script as a guide when calling institutions:

My name is [NAME] and I'm a volunteer with Dying With Dignity Canada. We are trying to understand the degree of access individuals seeking MAID have in hospitals, hospices, and long-term care facilities in [MUNICIPALITY/COUNTY/REGION]. We have a few questions for you on this topic. Do you have a few minutes to share [ORGANIZATION]'s protocols with respect to requests for Medical Assistance in Dying?

4. What to ask

On the final two pages of this booklet, you'll find a checklist of questions to ask an institution's representative about their facility's policies on MAID. If the institution has a formal MAID policy, please ask them to provide you with a copy that could be forwarded along to DWDC's head office. (The questions will differ slightly for each province, so please make sure you have the version that's applicable where you live.) If they are resistant, politely tell them that community residents have a right to know their local healthcare institutions' policies on MAID and that, in most cases, those documents would be accessible under provincial freedom-of-information laws. If that's not successful, calmly tell them that you or another representative of DWDC's will follow up, but in the meantime, the institution's refusal to provide their MAID policies will be noted on DWDC's website.

5. Ending the call

Regardless of whether you were successful in obtaining the desired information, please thank the person on the other end for their time. Even if they put up a lot of resistance, it doesn't necessarily mean they didn't want to help you — they may just be doing their job.



6. When you're done gathering the information

After you've finished, please let us know the results of your research. Send completed Shine a Light Healthcare Institution Reporting Forms by email shinealight@dyingwithdignity.ca or by mail to Dying With Dignity Canada, 55 Eglinton Ave. E, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 1G8 (email is preferred). Once we receive the information, we will upload it to our online Shine a Light Campaign Progress Map, to give individuals across the country a visual representation of where assisted dying is and is not accessible in their respective communities.

GO TO NEXT PAGE TO FIND BLANK REPORTING FORM.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING DWDC'S SHINE A LIGHT CAMPAIGN.

Shine a Light Healthcare Institution Reporting Form

Name of institution:	
Type of institution (Hospital, hospice, long-term care facility, etc.):	
Facility's location (street address, city, province)	
Volunteer:	
Date of call:	

Will your facility provide Medical Assistance in Dying to eligible patients?
Yes [] No []

A) If yes: do you have a policy that can be shared?

Yes [] No []

If no to A): If you don't have a policy and you have not yet had an assisted death, will your institution be prepared for a future request?

Yes [] No []

If no: What are you instructing healthcare practitioners to do when they receive a request for MAID?

FOR ONTARIO INSTITUTIONS ONLY: Are you aware that in Ontario, physicians who object to participating in MAID have a duty to provide an effective referral in accordance with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario's policy on human rights and conscientious refusal?

Yes [] No []

Will objecting physicians in your facility follow the CPSO's effective referral requirement?

Yes [] No []



If no: What will objecting healthcare practitioners be instructed to do when a patient requests MAID?

FOR INSTITUTIONS IN OTHER PROVINCES: Are there protocols in place to ensure that healthcare practitioners who conscientiously refuse to participate in MAID provide effective referrals to patients/residents who request it?

Yes [] No []



FOLLOW UP: Will objecting practitioners refer the patient on to another healthcare provider in the facility or external to the facility?

Yes [] No []

Additional notes:
