

Wesley Acres Seminar on the MAiD law, its impact and how we can respond

August 3, 2026

Sources and background materials

MAiD intentionally ends the life of the patient. There are two methods of MAiD allowed in Canadian law:

- “a physician or nurse practitioner directly administers a substance that causes death”
- a physician or nurse practitioner provides or prescribes a drug that the eligible person takes themselves, in order to bring about their own death

[source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-services-benefits/medical-assistance-dying.html>]

MAiD is different than refusing treatment or withdrawing from treatment.

- “A patient’s choice to stop treatment or refuse new treatment is not the same as medical assistance in dying. Medical assistance in dying, as defined in the *Criminal Code*, only refers to situations where:
 - an Nurse Practitioner or physician provides assistance by administering a medication to a client, at their request, that causes their death (i.e., clinician-assisted medical assistance in dying); or
 - an Nurse Practitioner or physician prescribes or provides a medication to a client, at their request, so that they may self-administer the medication and in doing so cause their own death (i.e., client self-administered medical assistance in dying).”

[source: <https://www.cno.org/standards-learning/medical-assistance-in-dying/medical-assistance-in-dying---fags#general-fags-my-patient-has-decided-to-stop-treatment-does-this-mean-that-the-patient-is-now-participating-in-medical-assistance-in-dying>]

- Dr. Ewan Goligher, *How Should We Then Die?* Lexham Press, 2024, page 14, and in the session two video of the FMCIC study guide Dying Well, <https://fmcic.ca/dyingwell/> at the 07:08 mark. Dr. Goligher is an ER doctor and assistant professor of medicine at University of Toronto.

MAiD is different than having treatment in order to reduce pain or symptoms that has a secondary effect.

- Dr. Ewan Goligher discusses the role of palliative care at the 10 minute mark of the session two video of the FMCIC study guide Dying Well, <https://fmcic.ca/dyingwell/>,

including the possibility of opioid pain medication affecting breathing. He does point out that good pain control usually prolongs life, rather than shortening it.

MAiD statistics on number of deaths per year, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2024.html#a2.2>.

Timeline:

- **2015 decision of the Supreme Court.** Before the Supreme Court's decision in *Carter*, there was a blanket prohibition in the *Criminal Code* on aiding or abetting a person in committing suicide and for causing the death of a person even with their consent. These were the provisions the court reviewed and its decision allowed an exemption to those provisions for physician-assisted dying in certain circumstances. <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14637/index.do>.
- In 2016, the first MAiD law is passed, <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/42-1/C-14>.
- In 2021, the second MAiD law is passed, <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/43-2/c-7>.
- Bills to delay MAiD for sole mental illness have been passed twice:
 - Bill C-39 in 2023, <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/44-1/c-39>
 - Bill C-62 in 2024, <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/44-1/c-62>
- MAiD for mental illness is not set to take effect in March 2027, when the exclusion clause is set to expire, according to the provisions in former Bill C-62 (passed in 2024).

MAiD provisions in the *Criminal Code*, mentioned as an exemption in s. 241(1), then with definitions and eligibility outlined in s. 241.1, requirements to fill out forms, etc, ending in s. 241.31(6), <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/page-36.html#docCont>.

Fifth Estate, *Surprising Approvals for MAiD*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plinQAHZRvk>

Kiano's family interviewed after his death, <https://globalnews.ca/news/11644100/ontario-family-changes-son-maid-bc/>

Disability organizations oppose Bill C-7's expansion of MAiD, <https://www.ccdonline.ca/en/humanrights/endoflife/Statement-Bill-C7>,

<https://www.inclusioncanada.ca/post/a-person-dying-everyday-canadian-disability-advocates-highlight-canada-s-controversial-maid-program>.

UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concluding observations to Canada, paragraph 20(a) which recommends that Canada repeal of Track 2 MAiD including the 2027 expansion to persons whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness,

<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=YvmMzkyLBJ81ebVPMV%2Bj8TmDTPlrs9gqn3IMFBuvonkqQQB2MJwRI8hfkeNvKiJzLZIKZyWkJSBNURUiqEcv6Q%3D%3D>

Disability studies professor Heidi Janz, “We’re going to see more people choosing MAiD as the path of least resistance when they don’t have the energy to fight anymore.”

<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2022/03/31/perhaps-they-wont-have-died-in-vain-the-grim-project/>

The story of Amir in St. Catherines, <https://ottawa.citynews.ca/2022/11/17/ontario-man-not-considering-medically-assisted-death-anymore-after-outpouring-of-support-6114759/>.

The nature of suffering that has led people to MAiD in Health Canada’s *Sixth Annual Report on MAiD in Canada*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2024.html#a3.4>.

New Free Methodist 5-week small group study, Dying Well, <https://fmcic.ca/dyingwell/>

EFC’s free booklet, *Life Together: Disability and belonging in the church*,

TheEFC.ca/LifeTogether

Report of the Special Joint Committee on MAiD, June 2026, <https://www.parl.ca/documentviewer/en/45-1/AMAD/report-1>

Bill C-218 would reverse MAiD for mental illness, TheEFC.ca/C218

Federal and provincial breakdown of responsibilities for MAiD: “Provinces have the right to decide that MAiD is not health care,” by Derek Ross and Brian Bird, *The Globe and Mail*, Mar 23, 2026, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-ottawa-maid-crime-provinces-right-decide-health-care/>

Sick Kids considering policy in case of expansion, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/checkup/canadian-doctors-grapple-with-how-to-approach-assisted-dying-for-young-patients-1.4890776>

