

Indigenous Peoples Should Not Be Compelled to Provide or Facilitate Medical Assistance in Dying

Senators, Elected Federal & Provincial Leaders, and Regulators,

As Indigenous people in Canada, we have grave concerns over the implications of Bill C-7 on our communities.

The expansion of “Medical Assistance in Dying” (MAiD) beyond those whose death is foreseeable will have a lasting impact on our vulnerable populations. Not only has the consultation of Bill C-7 with our leaders been inadequate, it has not taken into account the existing health disparities and social inequalities we face compared to non-Indigenous people.

As sovereign nations in Canada, we have a right in determining how health services will be delivered in our communities, and the Government of Canada has a responsibility to respect this relationship.

Bill C-7 goes against many of our cultural values, belief systems, and sacred teachings. The view that MAiD is a dignified end for the terminally ill or those living with disabilities should not be forced on our peoples.

Given our history with the negative consequences of colonialism and the involuntary imposition of cultural values and ideas, we believe that people should not be compelled to provide or facilitate in the provision of MAiD. Furthermore, our population is vulnerable to discrimination and coercion in the healthcare system, and should be protected against unsolicited counsel regarding MAiD. These civil measures should extend to all Canadians.

Regardless of one's opinion of MAiD, the right to self-determination and to act on one's conscience is recognized as a fundamental freedom in all peoples.

We call on our government leaders and regulators to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices by respecting Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practice our own traditions and customs when supporting those who are dying, without discrimination in the health care system.