



Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)



Indigenous Disability Canada (IDC) / British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS)

November 4, 2022

“Advancing the unique disability and health priorities of Indigenous peoples through collaboration, consultation and the delivery of comprehensive client services”

To the Ontario government and CPSO policy department:

My name is [REDACTED], and I am a member of the Lax Se el Clan in the House of Nika'teen of the Gitksan Nation, I am also the [REDACTED] of Indigenous Disability Canada and the British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, For the past 30 years I have worked within a variety of roles in both the disability and health sectors.

November 2022, marks the 8th anniversary of Indigenous Disability Awareness Month, an initiative created to celebrate Indigenous peoples with disabilities and the overwhelming contributions that they make to all our communities. It is ironic that today while celebrations of Indigenous people with disabilities are happening across Canada, Canada continues to consider expansion of State assisted death for Indigenous persons under the MAiD regime.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or UNDRIP received Royal Assent in Canada in 2021. The Declaration provides that member states must consult and cooperate with Indigenous peoples on certain matters, such as “legislative or administrative measures that may affect them,”. This is in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent.

Within the reports submitted by the Expert Panels regarding MAiD for Mature Minors and MAiD for Mental Illness, it is has been verified that no tangible consultation and engagement with Indigenous peoples on MAiD has yet to occur.

Despite this reality, and the overwhelming testimony of representatives from the Indigenous and disability communities against the expansion of MAiD, the slippery slope of MAiD remains unfettered.

This begs the question, as to why Canada or anyone presume the authority to make recommendations or implement actions for the expansion of State assisted death and suicide for, Indigenous persons with disabilities and Indigenous persons with mental illness as a sole condition, without first engaging those very people whom these proposed changes will target.

This is very difficult to comprehend, particularly considering that Canada has exempted First Nation communities from the Accessible Canada Act until 2026 due to insufficient engagement with Indigenous communities and further, to “better understand the accessibility barriers facing Indigenous people with disabilities.” Canada additionally states that this exemption “reflects the Government of Canada’s commitment to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.”

MAiD without comprehensive consultation with the Indigenous peoples of Canada flies in

the face of reconciliation and is a further marginalization of Indigenous peoples, and the continuation of the destructive colonial systems and their paternalistic mindset of “Trust us, we know what’s best.”

As a country, Canada has the ability to provide adequate supports to ensure a good life for persons with disabilities and those with mental illness, we can provide adequate funding for, and access to, comprehensive palliative care for those at end of life and their families.

MAiD should never be seen as the solution to address the absence of those services and resources, but it is fast becoming that, and that is our collective failure as the people of Canada.

Thank you.

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Indigenous Disability Canada /

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