

Media Advisory

Embargoed: Tuesday, March 1st, Noon ET

Humanitarian Jean Vanier calls on Canadian Parliamentarians to protect the lives of vulnerable Canadians as they consider right-to-die legislation

In a letter released today, L'Arche founder and Companion of the Order of Canada, Jean Vanier, calls on all Parliamentarians to protect the lives of vulnerable Canadians and strengthen end-of-life and palliative care services across Canada.

Calling these services a 'communal right', Vanier urges Parliament to ensure that access to physician-assisted dying be accompanied with increased support to Canadians in their final stages of life.

"Nothing is more fundamental to a society than its attitudes towards life and death, writes Vanier and L'Arche Canada National Leader, Hollee Card. "As Canada removes the legal prohibition to physician-assisted dying for certain exceptional circumstances, it enters a new medical and ethical realm."

"It strikes us that this is an occasion to reaffirm life even as we permit those facing terrible suffering to choose death. We must ensure that the best safeguards exist, while redoubling our commitment to caring for one another in the most fragile moments of each of our lives."

The full text of the letter appears in the online edition of the Globe and Mail and can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/1pkCVZZ>

The letter was released to coincide with the launch of a new Vulnerable Persons Standard - a series of evidence-based safeguards intended to protect the lives of Canadians. These safeguards will help to ensure that Canadians requesting assistance from physicians to end their life can do so without jeopardizing the lives of vulnerable persons who may be subject to coercion and abuse.

Community and health organizations across the country have endorsed the Standard and are calling on all members of Parliament to ensure that federal legislation regulating physician-assisted death incorporate these safeguards.

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For more information about the Standard, please contact:
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