

Wednesday, March 23rd, 2016

NATIONAL DISABILITY ORGANIZATIONS CALL ON PARLIAMENTARIANS TO IMPLEMENT THE VULNERABLE PERSONS STANDARD

Over 42 national and provincial/territorial medical, faith-based, and disability organizations have joined the call to Parliamentarians to ensure that the Vulnerable Persons Standard's safeguards are incorporated into federal legislation concerning physician-assisted dying.

Today we are proud to highlight the numerous national and provincial/territorial disability organizations who have endorsed the Standard and are promoting it with their members. With their endorsement, members of the disability community are calling on Parliament to balance equitable access to physician-assisted dying with important safeguards to protect vulnerable people.

"The recommendations contained in the Joint Parliamentary report on medically-assisted dying should give all Canadians pause. They would remove virtually all restrictions on accessing physician-assisted death and significantly exceed the guidance provided by Canada's Supreme Court," says Tony Dolan, Chair of the

[Council of Canadians with Disabilities](#).

Joy Bacon, President of the [Canadian Association for Community Living](#), says "It should be possible for Canadians to access these services without also jeopardizing the lives of vulnerable persons. I hope the Standard will help the federal government to strike a better balance between these important rights."

National Endorsing Disability Organizations:

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

Canadian Down Syndrome Society
Canadian Association for Community Living
Canadian Association of the Deaf
Council of Canadians with Disabilities
Communication Disabilities Access Canada
Disabled Women's Network of Canada
National Education Association of Disabled Students
People First of Canada
PLAN - Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network

Provincial-Territorial Endorsing Disability Organizations:

ARCH Disability Law Centre	Inclusion British Columbia
Citizens with Disabilities - Ontario	Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities
Community Living Atikokan	New Brunswick Association for Community Living
Community Living Manitoba	Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living
Community Living North Bay	Nova Scotia Association for Community Living
Community Living Ontario	Prince Edward Island Association for Community Living
Durham Association for Family Respite Services	Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres
Inclusion Alberta	Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
	Yukon Association for Community Living

The Vulnerable Persons Standard was developed by a group of more than forty advisors with expertise in medicine, ethics, law, public policy and needs of vulnerable persons.

To learn more about the national and provincial/territorial organizations supporting the Standard, please visit us at www.vps-npv.ca.

DID YOU KNOW:

Effective communication is essential for all patients facing end-of-life decisions.

Successful communication is a two-way process in which messages are correctly and unambiguously understood by both the patient and the physician. If there is any question about the communication process as identified by the physician or the patient, then a neutral, independent professional with expertise in the patient's communication needs must be engaged in order to assess the required communication accommodations and/or to provide direct communication support.

Communication accommodations and supports are required if the patient has challenges understanding information provided to them, retaining and weighing the consequences of options as part of the decision-making process and accurately and authentically communicating their decision.

Communication accommodations include picture or letter boards, speech-output devices, or communication support from a sign language interpreter (ASL/English or LSQ French), Deafblind intervenor, speech language pathologist, language translator or cultural interpreter.

IN THE NEWS:

Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov, *Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Manitoba; Canada Research Chair in Palliative Care; Director of the Manitoba Palliative Care Research Unit, CancerCare Manitoba; Chair of the Canadian Virtual Hospice*, has been featured in a three part series on physician-assisted death.

Read the entire series below:

[We Must Speak for Those Who Can't](#)

[Too Quick To Ask for Early Death?](#)

[Protecting, Caring for the Mentally Ill](#)

The Vulnerable Persons Standard is 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.

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