

Friday, April 8th, 2016

NEW RESEARCH REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABILITY PRESENTS EXTENSIVE EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF VPS SAFEGUARDS

Today the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) released a report on "[Assessing Vulnerability in a system for physician-assisted death in Canada](#)".

The report draws on extensive evidence from medicine and social science research to identify key dimensions of a 'vulnerability lens' to assess vulnerability among adults requesting physician-assisted death.

While reports by the Provincial-Territorial Expert Advisory Group and the Parliamentary Joint Special Committee express concern about safeguarding vulnerable persons, the evidence suggests their recommendations would fall far short of the constitutional protections for vulnerable persons required by the Supreme Court of Canada.

A national organization representing people with intellectual disabilities and their families, CACL endorsed the Vulnerable Persons Standard in March of this year. Today's 40-page report - the first of its kind in Canada - presents a strong base of evidence for three of the Standard's five important safeguards to protect vulnerable persons: Consistent and appropriately nuanced standards for informed consent; A national standard for vulnerability assessment; A clear requirement for independent prior review and authorization.

The report reviews critical limitations of Canada's current healthcare delivery system and emphasizes the importance of a nationally-consistent system for physician-assisted death, concluding that each of these key safeguard

requirements must be embedded in the Criminal Code.

"Federal leadership for this purpose is essential. Only with a uniform standard across Canada will provincial/territorial health authorities, health professionals and health care regulators have clarity about the specific legal obligations and needed policies/practices to... [protect] vulnerable persons from being induced to commit suicide in a time of weakness."

Read CACL report [here](#).

IN THE NEWS:

Commentary: Senator Betty Unger, [Euthanasia Legislation Must Comply with Charter to Protect the Vulnerable](#).

Commentary: Daniel Leblanc, [Canadians want restrictions on doctor-assisted dying, poll suggests](#); The Globe and Mail.

Commentary: Catherine Frazee, [Physician-assisted death: finding the right balance](#); Halifax Chronicle Herald.

Paper: Jacques Frémont, [Some Thoughts Concerning Parliament's Legislative Leeway in a Post-Carter Era](#); Social Science Research Network.

Blog Post: Trudo Lemmens, [Balancing Access to Physician Assisted Dying with Protecting the Vulnerable](#); University of Toronto - Faculty of Law.

Blog Post: Trudo Lemmens, [Joint Parliamentary Committee Assisted Dying Report Goes Beyond Scope, Ignores Evidence](#); University of Toronto - Faculty of Law.

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. The Standard is a series of evidence-based safeguards intended to help 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.

To learn more about the Standard and the many Canadians and organizations endorsing the Standard, please visit us at www.vps-npv.ca.

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Stay up to date with the Vulnerable Persons Standard:

