

Friday, April 15th, 2016

## **BILL C-14 REFLECTS SOME IMPORTANT PROGRESS TOWARD THE PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE PERSONS**

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Yesterday's release of [Bill C-14](#), proposed federal legislation to amend the Criminal Code to permit medical assistance in dying, demonstrates considerable progress toward reaching the balance called for by the Supreme Court in the Carter decision. The Court emphasized the importance of balancing competing rights of access and protection of vulnerable persons.

The Preamble to the Bill states unequivocally that "robust safeguards, reflecting the irrevocable nature of ending a life, are essential to prevent errors and abuse in the provision of medical assistance in dying". Further, it affirms "the inherent and equal value of every person's life", and commits "to avoid encouraging negative perceptions of the quality of life of persons who are elderly, ill or disabled".

These are powerful and encouraging assurances.

In the days ahead, Advisors to the [Vulnerable Persons Standard](#) will carefully review Bill C-14 to assess whether its detailed provisions adequately reflect this assurance.

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### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Vulnerable Persons Standard is an important tool for legislators in Parliament and provincial and territorial legislatures to guide law and policy

reform.

The five safeguards set out in the Standard ensure that a system for physician-assisted death offers appropriate protections for vulnerable persons.

The Vulnerable Persons Standard is also intended as a resource for civil society and professional organizations committed to help develop and promote robust safeguards that will ensure that vulnerable persons are protected in any system for medically-assisted death.

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### IN THE NEWS:

- Canadian Association for Community Living Press Release: [Draft Bill on Medical Assistance in Dying Seeks Delicate Balance: Some Progress Being Made](#)
- Editorial by Dr. Harvey Chochinov: [Assisted-dying law will be just the first step on a difficult road](#), The Globe and Mail
- Commentary by Trudo Lemmens: [New Bill Medical Assistance in Dying Balances Competing Charter Rights; Prior Review Still Needed](#), University of Toronto Faculty of Law
- Commentary by Dr. Catherine Ferrier: [Opinion: New federal assisted-dying law fails to protect vulnerable persons from death](#), Montreal Gazette
- [Key players in the right-to-die decision and debate](#), CBC News
- [Federal government tables long-awaited assisted-dying bill](#), CTV News

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*"An inordinate focus on individual rights and access must not be permitted to overshadow the requirement for protection of the vulnerable required by the Supreme Court. The notion of vulnerability itself is an essential concern of a truly just and compassionate society. The Vulnerable Persons Standard is an effective and needed tool in fostering both justice and compassion."*

- Nuala Kenny, OC, MD, FRCP(C) Professor Emeritus, Dalhousie University  
and Former Member, Provincial-Territorial Expert Advisory Group on  
Physician-Assisted Dying

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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](http://www.vps-npv.ca).

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