
Tuesday, April 26th, 2016

BILL C-14 & THE VULNERABLE PERSONS STANDARD: A PROMISING START, BUT SOME DISTANCE STILL TO GO

An Advisory Group of over 40 leading Canadian experts in health care, law, ethics and disability have reviewed [Bill C-14](#) and have concluded that its protections are the absolute minimum requirement for a law that does not make people more vulnerable to harm.

In restricting eligibility to persons whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable, and in committing to further study of potential impacts upon vulnerable social groups, Bill C-14 provides limited but important safeguards for the purpose of protecting vulnerable people. As we move toward final legislation, supporters of the VPS are calling on Members of Parliament and Senators to now strengthen the Bill to ensure that vulnerable persons will be more fully protected in the coming system.

These safeguards include:

- Extending the current requirement for judicial oversight until such time as a study of the merits and implications of some form of prior review can be conducted.
- Safeguarding the right for patients to be informed of the full range of available treatments, technologies and supports that could ease their suffering, whatever its source.
- Establishing a clearer standard of voluntary request and consent, specifying that a request cannot be made as a result of external pressure or any form of inducement.

- Making a clear commitment to national monitoring and reporting of demographic, geographic and diagnostic data, as well as vital information about the suffering that motivates requests, and the treatment and support options offered and pursued in response to that suffering.

Medically assisted death represents a fundamental change to our social fabric, and a profound risk to vulnerable persons. Great care is needed to ensure that eligibility criteria and safeguards are clearly understood, rigorously applied and carefully monitored.

DID YOU KNOW?

The VPS website now features a [dedicated page](#) featuring news and resources on Bill C-14. This page will be updated regularly as our parliamentarians consider amending the Bill so that it more fully embraces the five key safeguards required by the Vulnerable Persons Standard.

IN THE NEWS:

- [Advocate urges government to "hold the line" on assisted suicide eligibility](#), The Guardian article featuring Canadian Association for Community Living EVP, Michael Bach
- [The Deadly Problems Surrounding Bill C-14](#), Huffington Post commentary by VPS Advisor, Dr. Will Johnston
- [Parliament has the power to draw the lines it chooses when it comes to the legislation on physician-assisted death](#), Policy Options Magazine commentary
- [Real heroes are the ones fighting for life](#), Toronto Star commentary
- [U.S. Suicide Rate Surges to a 30-Year High](#), New York Times feature

"We call upon the various legislative bodies that will be developing laws, policies and procedures in response to the ruling of the Supreme Court to... interpret the recent judgment in narrow terms providing safeguards to deter abuse..."

Toronto Board of Rabbis is one of more than 50 national, provincial and community organizations endorsing the Vulnerable Persons Standard)

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:

