



Dying With Dignity Canada

It's your life. It's your choice.

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION IN ADVANCE OF THE 2021 FEDERAL BUDGET

SUBMITTED BY:
DYING WITH DIGNITY CANADA



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ABOUT DYING WITH DIGNITY CANADA

DWDC (DWDC) is the national human-rights charity committed to improving quality of dying, protecting end-of-life rights, and helping Canadians avoid unwanted suffering. We defend human rights by advocating for assisted dying rules that respect the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provide support to adults suffering greatly from an irremediable medical condition who wish to die on their own terms, and educate Canadians about their legal end-of-life options, including the right to medical assistance in dying (MAID), and the importance of advance care planning.

DWDC POSITION ON END-OF-LIFE CARE

As DWDC advocates for choice at end of life, and access to quality end-of-life care, we support the statement made by Health Canada in its 2019 Action Plan on Palliative Care: "Canadians deserve to live out their lives with dignity and in comfort, with access to care that respects their wishes and is appropriate to their needs." DWDC also supports the goals of the Quality End-of-Life Coalition of Canada, as stated in their Blueprint for Action 2020-2025:

- Increasing public awareness around hospice palliative care benefits, issues and areas needing improvement, including support for caregivers and those experiencing grief and bereavement
- Ensuring health care providers, volunteers, communities, caregivers and others have access to education and training to ensure they possess the required competencies to provide optimal care
- Contributing to research and systematic, standardized data collection on hospice palliative care with special interest including formal and informal caregivers, and grief and bereavement
- Advocating for universally accessible and culturally safe access to hospice palliative care for under-served populations and those who provide caregiving and experience grief and bereavement.

DWDC also advocates for *home-based and in-community* investment in palliative care, as a hospice-based approach may create limits by focusing on a specific location, rather than on the application of the skills and care associated with palliative care. We also support working closely with established organizations having expertise in grief and bereavement to enhance their reach and expand the contributions they are already making for those in our communities who have suffered the loss of a loved one.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DWDC supports the recommendations proposed by the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) in its pre-budget submission, one of which proposes



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targeting funding at the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada. Specifically, we agree with the CHPCA that all priorities of the Framework should be funded. They are:

- Palliative care education and training for health care providers and caregivers
- Measures to support palliative care providers and caregivers
- Research and the collection of data on palliative care
- Measures to facilitate equitable access to palliative care across Canada, with a focus on underserved populations.

DWDC also calls on the federal government to show continued leadership, as evidenced in its 2019 Action Plan on Palliative Care, and engage governments in Canada at all levels to take the following actions:

- Continue to provide funding to provincial/territorial governments designated for investment in end-of-life care
- Work with provincial and territorial partners to initiate a review and assessment of quality of care in seniors' residences
- Examine ways to increase funding for culturally appropriate end-of-life care
- Provide funding to end-of-life organizations to research the benefits of various aspects of end-of-life care, with the goal of implementing improvements, and engage these organizations in educating the public and practitioners on advance care planning, advance requests, and end-of-life planning and care in general
- Integrate into the curricula of schools of medicine and nursing, and continuing education programs, modules on end-of-life care including palliative care and MAID, so that practitioners have the basic skills to recommend and implement quality end-of-life care plans
- Respect the dignity and autonomy of all Canadians experiencing suffering intolerable to them and protect their constitutional right to be informed of all treatment options and to choose the course of action they feel is appropriate to their condition.

DWDC hopes the information provided in this submission if of assistance as you consider target areas for Budget 2021. We would be pleased to meet with you via video conference to discuss our recommendations and to answer any questions you may have. To arrange a meeting, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact Mr. Puneet Luthra, Director of Government Relations at puneet.luthra@dyingwithdignity.ca or 647-956-4127, Ext. 27.

Sincerely,

Helen Long
Chief Executive Officer