

# Euthanasia Prevention Coalition

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Monday, May 9, 2022

## The truly awful cost of Canada's permissive assisted death program

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Canada's National Post published an excellent editorial on May 8, 2022 titled: *[The truly awful cost of Canada's permissive assisted death program](#)*.

The editorial begins with their warning in 2015:

After Quebec became the first Canadian jurisdiction to allow assisted suicide in 2014, [we warned that](#) , “A great deal of research and reporting on those jurisdictions that permit euthanasia and/or assisted suicide suggest that the words ‘slippery slope’ are more than mere alarmism, as proponents of euthanasia tend to insist. In every state or country in which the practice has been normalized, it has also, to some degree, become banalized, with eligibility criteria increasingly relaxed. Common patterns in all jurisdictions in Europe that allow euthanasia or assisted suicide show increasing numbers over time, and a shift from a focus on terminal cancer to other diseases, including psychiatric conditions.”

We sincerely wish we'd been wrong. We're not against the idea of assisted death in some strict cases, but this country has evolved into one where the lives of those in pain are treated cavalierly, as if they don't matter. Canada has not only adopted a nationwide MAID program, it has extended it to those who are not at imminent risk of dying and will soon see many more vulnerable Canadians become eligible. Yet even before it's officially expanded to encompass those suffering from psychological disorders, the system has permitted questionable decisions about who qualifies for an assisted death, leading to abhorrent outcomes.

The editorial continues with the recent cases of MAID for people with chemical sensitivities, a condition that only requires a clean place to live.

Last month, CTV ran a heartrending [story about “Sophia,”](#) a 51-year-old Toronto woman who suffered from a disorder known as “multiple chemical sensitivities,” which was aggravated by her neighbours’ cigarette smoke that would waft into her apartment and the chemical cleaners that were used in the hallways. Sophia spent two years petitioning her landlord, the Salvation Army, and all levels of government to make accommodations for her, or find a more suitable place for her to live. After repeatedly failing, she requested MAID — and was granted a state-sanctioned assisted death.

CTV also [reported the story](#) of a 31-year-old Toronto woman identified as “Denise,” who also suffers from chemical sensitivities and uses a wheelchair. Like Sophia, Denise has been applying for government assistance to find more suitable accommodations, but says that it was easier to apply for MAID. “I’ve applied for MAID essentially ... because of abject poverty,” she said. And so far, she’s received all the necessary approvals, without anyone involved asking her about her efforts to find housing that is more accessible and free from the chemicals that aggravate her condition.

Whatever gloss about a dignified death advocates want to use to justify MAID, these are people suffering most of all from poverty. Euthanizing the poor can’t be what liberals who support physician assisted death had in mind. How much more common will cases like this be when MAID is extended to those with mental illness, who are disproportionately poor?

The editorial states that the Canadian MAID program has gone too far. They also comment on the recent case of Donna Duncan who had suffered a head injury.

It’s clear that the regime has gone far beyond offering assisted deaths to competent adults suffering from “grievous and irremediable” conditions, which is what the Supreme Court said Canadians have a charter right to in 2015. It has also gone beyond the 2019 [Quebec Superior Court](#) ruling, which said that it was unconstitutional to limit MAID to those whose deaths were “reasonably foreseeable.” That is what the Liberals used to justify their much-less-restrictive law, [Bill C-7](#) , which was enacted without appealing to the Supreme Court.

There are also questions about whether the existing system is putting to death those who are not competent enough to make such life-altering — indeed, life-ending — decisions. Police in Abbotsford, B.C., [are currently investigating](#) the case of Donna Duncan, who was euthanized despite the objections of her family doctor and two daughters, who say she was not of sound mind after suffering a head injury in 2020. Such concerns about mental competence will

only increase once it becomes legal for people with mental health challenges to apply for MAID.

The National Post concludes the editorial by calling on the government to tighten the rules for MAID.

Unlike with the initial MAID law, which was necessitated by a Supreme Court ruling, expanding eligibility to those with mental illness **was never ordered** by the courts. It was a political decision that resulted from a Senate amendment to Bill C-7 **that was accepted** by the House of Commons. The government knew enough to delay its implementation for two years and strike an expert panel to make recommendations on how it would work in practice. Yet after only a year, it has become clear that even before the mental health provisions come into effect, Bill C-7 is causing a great deal of harm. Parliament should revisit the legislation and tighten up the rules surrounding MAID eligibility, including ensuring that people with mental illnesses receive the treatment they deserve, rather than an expedited departure from this earth.