



March 30, 2021

The Honourable David Lametti, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice, and Attorney General of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Ministers Lametti and Hajdu:

I write to you on behalf of the country's psychologists who are members of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), the national voice of the profession. Bill C-7 - *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)* – which has now received Royal Assent – recognizes the complexities that are associated with providing medical assistance in dying to persons whose sole underlying condition is mental illness.

The CPA supports the proposed legislative process for an Independent Review by experts to consider the safeguards to be put in place when a request for MAiD is made on the basis of a mental illness. Since the 2017 legislation has passed, psychologists across the country have played important roles in the end-of-life decisions faced by people seeking MAiD. Given these roles, and our expertise when it comes to mental illness, we ask that a psychologist, who is a recognized expert in the area, be included among the expert reviewers.

The CPA and the profession of psychology has been keenly involved in policy discussion leading up to MAiD legislation. In 2016, we presented to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights<sup>1</sup>. Our chief recommendation, subsequently recognized in the law, was to create exemptions in the Criminal Code of Canada for regulated health providers, like psychologists, who may be consulted by persons considering an end-of-life decision. The CPA subsequently released two reports: one on medical assistance in dying and end of life care<sup>2</sup> and one with guidelines for psychologists involved in end-of-life decisions of their patients<sup>3</sup> which collectively address the many psychological issues attendant on the MAiD process.

Psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated mental health care providers. In addition, most unique among our scope of practice is the assessment, psychometric measurement and diagnosis of cognitive and emotional functioning and illness. We believe fully that it is our responsibility to contribute our expertise to the development of sound and effective policy that will govern access to MAiD by people with mental illness and guide the practice of regulated health providers involved in the MAiD process of whom psychologists are part. Several of our members, specifically those who led and participated in the development of our two MAiD reports, would be excellent contributors whose names we would be glad to suggest to you for the Independent Review.<sup>4</sup>

The CPA remains available to you at any time on this issue. I can be reached at 1-888-472-0657 ext. 323, or [executiveoffice@cpa.ca](mailto:executiveoffice@cpa.ca).

With best wishes and appreciation to you for your leadership during the challenges we have faced in Canada and internationally in 2020/21.

Sincerely,



K.R. Cohen, Ph. D., C. Psych  
Chief Executive Officer

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Government%20Relations/Bill%20C14%20submission%20April%2028FINAL.pdf>

2

[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Task\\_Forces/Medical%20Assistance%20in%20Dying%20and%20End%20of%20Life%20Care\\_FINAL.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Task_Forces/Medical%20Assistance%20in%20Dying%20and%20End%20of%20Life%20Care_FINAL.pdf)

3

[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Task\\_Forces/Practice\\_Guidelines\\_End\\_of\\_Life\\_Decisions\\_CPATaskforceReport\\_BoardApproved\\_March12020.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Task_Forces/Practice_Guidelines_End_of_Life_Decisions_CPATaskforceReport_BoardApproved_March12020.pdf)