

SPRING CEANing 2016

Medical Assistance in Dying
How is VCH responding and ensuring we are patient centred?

Advance Care Planning
How has VCH and CEAN responded?



Community Engagement Advisory Network Forum
Saturday, June 25, 2016
Trout Lake Community Centre
Report prepared by: VCH Community Engagement

Introduction

As the legislation for medical assistance in dying is implemented throughout health entities in Canada, VCH has taken the approach of calling together health professionals and CEAN members to discuss implementation throughout VCH.

In February 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *Carter v. Canada* that parts of the Criminal Code would need to change to comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The parts that prohibited medical assistance in dying under certain conditions would no longer be valid. The Supreme Court gave the government until June 6, 2016, to create a new law.

In response, the federal government introduced legislation that allows eligible adults to request medical assistance in dying.

With the new legislation came the directive that health authorities would be required to accept requests for medical assistance in dying and fulfil the request if the person requesting met the criteria as detailed in the legislation.

Details in Legislation

It states in the legislation that the service can only be legally provided by physicians and nurse practitioners (depending on the province or territory where you live). There are 2 types of medical assistance in dying available to Canadians. They include where a physician or nurse practitioner:

1. directly administers a substance that causes death, such as an injection of a drug
 - this is commonly called voluntary euthanasia
2. gives or prescribes a drug that is self-administered to cause death
 - this is commonly known as medically-assisted suicide

In order to be eligible for medical assistance in dying, a person must meet **all** of the following conditions:

- be eligible for health services funded by the federal government, or a province or territory
 - Generally, visitors to Canada are not eligible for medical assistance in dying.
- be at least 18 years old and mentally competent (this means capable of making health care decisions for yourself);
- have a grievous and irremediable medical condition;
- make a request for medical assistance in dying which is not the result of outside pressure or influence; and,
- give informed consent to receive medical assistance in dying (this means you have consented to medical assistance in dying after being given all of the information needed to make your decision. This includes information about:
 - your medical diagnosis
 - available forms of treatment
 - available options to relieve suffering, including palliative care

To be considered as having a grievous and irremediable medical condition, a person must meet **all** of the following conditions:

- have a serious illness, disease or disability
- be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed
- be suffering unbearably from your illness, disease, disability or state of decline; and,
- be at a point where your natural death has become reasonably foreseeable, which takes into account all of your medical circumstances

A person does not need to have a fatal or terminal condition to be eligible for medical assistance in dying.

People with a mental illness are eligible for medical assistance in dying as long as they meet all of the listed conditions.

However, you are not eligible for this service if:

- you are suffering only from a mental illness;
- death is not reasonably foreseeable when considering all the circumstances of your medical condition; or
- a mental illness reduces your ability to make medical decisions

You must be mentally competent and capable of making decisions at the time that the service is provided. This is because the physician or nurse practitioner will ask you to confirm your choice right before administering medical assistance in dying. You are able to withdraw your consent at any time.



Medical Assistance in Dying How is VCH responding and ensuring we are patient centred?

On Saturday June 25th, members of VCH's Community Engagement Advisory Network (CEAN) gathered at the Trout lake Community Center for our annual spring forum. This year, the topic was medical assistance in dying. The Supreme Court of Canada has decided that provisions of the Criminal Code which in the past prohibited medical assistance in dying are not in keeping with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As of June 6, 2016 patients no longer need a Court exemption and physicians, guided by the

law and the advice of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, may provide medical assistance in dying for patients who meet the criteria set out in law.

Eight CEAN members participated on the working group led by Darren Kopetsky, Regional Director of Client Relations and Risk Management, to help develop criteria to assist staff, patient and families who are seeking medical assistance in dying. Darren joined us for the day to inform attendees on the current supports and protocols that VCH has put into place. We also had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Terry Anderson, Clinical Ethicist at

VCH; speak about the moral and ethical issues presented by Medical Assistance in Dying for people working in healthcare, as well as patients and families.

One Email

In health care acronyms are plentiful. Medical assistance in dying is abbreviated in many documents and discussions as 'MAiD'. Many people find the reference to servitude or 'cleaning something up' as odious. It was discussed and agreed on that the acronym for the term medical assistance in dying –MAID - was not one that VCH wanted to use. Participants were asked to share ideas for a name that would be the email address. Some ideas put forward were:

- **reflect@vch.ca** (for staff and patients, reflecting on their views, and for patients, reflecting on their situation and options)
- **consider@vch.ca** (for staff and patients, considering their views, and for patients, considering their situation and options)
- **relief@vch.ca** (for patients, points to relief of intolerable suffering, but may be considered biased and not neutral)

After discussion and sharing of ideas the decision to go with medicalassistanceindying@vch.ca was made.

The Ethical Dilemma of Medical Assistance in Dying

The presence and sage words of Dr. Terry Anderson were a highlight of the forum. Dr. Anderson led the group through the many complex considerations of a decision to ask for and achieve medical assistance in dying. Every person who attended agreed that their perspectives, views and opinions were challenged and shifted through the discussion.



Advance Care Planning

How has VCH and CEAN responded?

At the forum CEAN members who are part of the Advance Care Planning team and facilitate the workshops through VCH were on hand to answer any questions about Advance Care Planning and starting the conversation. Resources such as [My Voice](#), an

advance care planning guide were available for participants to take home and share with loved ones. Click [here](#) to find out more about Advance Care Planning and the free workshops given by members of CEAN.

YAY CEAN!!

We were thrilled to have the opportunity to announce that the Advance Care Plan team of facilitators was awarded a VCH People First Award for their work in sharing the message of preparing an ACP and starting the conversation with your loved ones. Click [here](#) to read more about the VCH People First awards.

Forum Evaluation

Forum attendees completed an evaluation indicating that they had the information they needed to participate effectively, that they were able to express their views freely and they had the opportunity to hear other views expressed. All who responded stated that they found the information helpful and they now have more information and awareness of medical assistance in dying than before they attended. All respondents felt the forum was a good use of their time.

“It was a very organized and informative forum. Looking forward to attending similar forums on different health related issues.”

“I am presently developing my own advance care plan and the forum helped to focus my thinking on several factors I need to consider. Thank you.”



Spring CEANing!

Saturday, June 25, 2016

9:30am – 1:30pm

Trout Lake Community Centre
Grandview & Lakewood Rooms
3360 Victoria Dr.
Vancouver, BC

Agenda

9:00 – 9:30am	Registration
9:30 – 9:45am	Welcome and Opening Remarks
9:45 – 10:15am	Presentation on Medical Assistance in Death Legislation and VCH Steering Committee – Darren Kopetsky, Regional Director, Client Relations and Risk Management
10:15 – 10:45am	Presentation by Dr. Terry Anderson, Ethicist on VCH Ethics
10:45- 11:00am	BREAK
11:00 – 11:45am	Panel discussion on Medical Assistance in Death – supporting staff, patients and families Panel: Darren Kopetsky, Dr. Terry Anderson and members of CEAN who sat on the steering committee
11:45am – 12:30pm	LUNCH
12:30 – 12:40pm	Presentation to CEAN ACP Team – VCH People First Award <i>Winner in the category of Volunteer Excellence</i>
12:40 – 12:45pm	Wrap up and Evaluation
12:45 - 1:15pm	Networking and coffee