

## It's Time To Talk

### Facts about pending legislation on euthanasia/assisted suicide in Canada

#### What is euthanasia?

Euthanasia - the intentional killing of someone, with or without consent, either by act or omission. The person who commits euthanasia must intend, for whatever reason, to kill the other and must cause his or her death. There is a great difference between "allowing to die" and "making die." (For example: When treatment is withdrawn or withheld, the cause of death is the underlying disease or condition. In euthanasia, the cause of death is the lethal injection, pill or other means used.)

#### What is assisted suicide?

Assisted suicide - when a person kills himself/herself with the help of another person, who provides the means to carry out the act.

#### What is happening now?

On February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously overturned a legal ban on doctor-assisted suicide. The court ruled that the law should be amended to provide assisted death in specific situations. The Government of Canada is now drafting legislation that is expected to be in place by June 2016.

#### What does the Catholic Church teach?

Life is a precious gift, to be cherished from the moment of conception to natural death. Catholic teaching clearly states that it is permissible to refuse burdensome and disproportionate treatment that prolongs the inevitable process of

dying. However, dying is simply not the same as being killed.

#### What can be done to help those who are suffering?

As only 30% of Canadians have access to palliative (end-of-life) care, all Canadians should be given improved care options that offer effective medical control of pain, and even more importantly, loving accompaniment as they approach the inevitable end of life.

#### Why should we take action?

Legalizing euthanasia/assisted suicide in Canada is a threat to the vulnerable - people with disabilities, the elderly, the very sick, the dying.

If adopted, the current parliamentary recommendations will:

- Provide access, by 2019, to assisted suicide for minors (under 18)
- Allow people suffering from depression or mental health issues to access assisted suicide
- Permit people with illness, such as dementia, the ability to pre-schedule their deaths.

#### The legalization of euthanasia/assisted suicide in Canada is a threat to those who care for the sick.

Recommendations might lead to legislation that would:

- Force health care workers who want to save lives to act against their conscience

- Require all faith-based hospitals, long-term care facilities and hospices to provide assisted suicide
- Force doctors who refuse to kill a patient to ensure that someone else does it - no country in the world currently requires such a violation of conscience.

- info and resources on pgs 1-2 are developed by the Christian Medical and Dental Society

### What can I do to help? Take action today!

#### 1. Learn more about the issue.

Go to [www.CanadiansforConscience.ca](http://www.CanadiansforConscience.ca) and find out what the legalization of physician-assisted suicide will mean for the vulnerable and for healthcare workers.

#### 2. Discuss the issue with your family and friends.

Most people aren't aware of the sweeping scope of what our government is proposing. We need to protect the vulnerable and the people who care for them.

#### 3. Tell legislators how you feel.

Visit [www.CanadiansForConscience.ca](http://www.CanadiansForConscience.ca) and use their tools to write to the Minister of Justice, Minister of Health and your local Member of Parliament. You may also send a letter by post (no postage required) or email. See **sample letter on page 2 to guide you.**

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*“Mindful of the inherent dignity of each person, it is time for families across the country to have a difficult but necessary conversation about the reality of death. We need to understand the destructive implications of these legal changes, and offer truly loving and merciful alternatives.” - Cardinal Thomas Collins*

Please tell legislators how you feel about the legalization of doctor-assisted suicide in Canada.

Urge your elected representatives

1. to protect the vulnerable and
2. to ensure that individuals and institutions can provide health care without having to compromise their moral convictions.

*Please address your letter to:*

MINISTER OF JUSTICE  
The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0H8  
Fax: 613-954-0811  
Email: [mcu@justice.gc.ca](mailto:mcu@justice.gc.ca)

MINISTER OF HEALTH  
The Honourable Jane Philpott  
Brooke Claxton Building  
Tunney's Pasture  
Postal Locator: 0906C  
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9  
Fax: 613-941-5366  
Email: [hon.jane.philpott@canada.ca](mailto:hon.jane.philpott@canada.ca)

YOUR LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
Find contact information for your member of parliament using your postal code at [www.bit.ly/findlocalmp](http://www.bit.ly/findlocalmp)

*\*No postage is required when sending mail to elected officials.*

## Sample Letter to Legislators

*Feel free to use this sample letter but personalize wherever possible.*

Dear Minister Wilson-Raybould,

I am concerned about the protection of vulnerable people in society as well as conscience rights for Canadian physicians who refuse to participate in assisted suicide/euthanasia. While I am opposed to any form of assisted suicide, I recognize the government must prepare legislation on this issue following a recent Supreme Court decision.

I am concerned that the recommendations of the Commons-Senate Committee on Physician Assisted Death do not adequately protect doctors' conscience rights. A referral for assisted suicide, even to a third party, is a form of participation. I am also troubled by the recommendation that facilities should not be allowed to opt-out of providing physician-assisted death in their facilities. It is deeply distressing that Canada would allow access to assisted suicide for minors, those suffering from depression and other mental health issues, and other vulnerable people.

Why are we not providing greater support for these people, and access to palliative care for all Canadians?

I believe the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects Canadian citizens from being forced by the state to act against their moral or religious convictions. There are certainly alternative ways to respect the patient's request without compelling dedicated physicians to face professional disciplinary action simply because they wish to follow their conscience or forcing the closure of facilities that cannot provide doctor-assisted death.

This legislation could result in doctors being forced out of practice and the closure of some available institutions – a reality that will affect many more Canadians in need of health care.

Please carefully consider my concerns as these policy deliberations are conducted. I request that whatever legislation is developed respects and protects the vulnerable as well as the conscience rights of Canadian physicians, other health care providers and objecting facilities.

Sincerely,

# It's Time to Nominate for Annual Awards & Scholarship

It's time to get in your award nominations and scholarship applications!  
Forms are available from the CHAS office by calling 306-655-5330 or emailing [cath.health@sasktel.net](mailto:cath.health@sasktel.net).

**Completed forms must be received by mail, email or fax by June 30, 2016.**

## CHAS MISSION AWARD



### *About the Award*

The Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan presents an annual Mission Award to honor an individual who has exemplified outstanding service in Catholic Healthcare Ministry in the Province of Saskatchewan. This award will be presented at the Annual Convention Banquet.

### *Eligibility and Criteria*

Any volunteer, committee member, board member or staff member who resides in Saskatchewan, and is a current CHAS member, may be eligible for this award. We are looking for nominees who provide leadership in the work of Catholic Healthcare Ministry, exemplify the Vision, Mission and Values of CHAS, have made a particular contribution to Catholic Healthcare in Saskatchewan, and are recognized by one's peers as worthy to receive this award.

## MOOLA FREER PALLIATIVE CARE AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP



### *About the Award and Scholarship*

Dr. Dawood Moola and his wife Anne established this award and scholarship in 1995 with the objective of furthering the advancement of palliative care education and honoring those who serve with compassion in palliative care. The award features a butterfly which celebrates the beauty of a life lived, and brings hope for new life. It is presented at the annual CHAS Convention Banquet.

### *Eligibility and Criteria for Award*

Nominees for this award should show a deep respect for the principles and values of palliative care mission and philosophy, have made a particular contribution to the field of palliative care, have provided leadership in the area of palliative care, and are recognized by their peers as worthy of this award.

### *Eligibility and Criteria for Scholarship*

Scholarship funds are made available to persons who have registered or are planning to register in a Palliative Care home study or certificate program. Grants are made for programs which have a direct application to palliative care. Funds are designated for tuition and texts associated with the specified program.

## 2016 CHAS Conference - HOPE FLOATS Serving in Health Care as People of Faith

**The 73rd annual convention of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan will be held October 20-21, 2016 in Moose Jaw.**

Our first keynote, **Dr. David Kuhl**, will help us to reflect on ways in which healthcare professionals can bring hope to the relationships in which they serve while meeting the challenges of an increasingly complex healthcare system. He will be followed by **Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie**, who will provide a theological reflection on hope, exploring its deeper origins and the role it plays in our lives. Finally, we are privileged to have the opportunity to hear **Mark Pickup**, who has advanced multiple sclerosis and is wheelchair dependent, share the story of his journey from despair to hope as he found meaning through his Christian faith.

In addition to these three keynote speakers, we will be

hosting a World Cafe. In these sessions, partici-

pants will be asked to explore a set of questions at their table before visiting another table to hear their thoughts, providing us with an opportunity to learn from each others' challenges and to find inspiration in each others' successes. And to conclude our time together, our inspirational speaker, comedian **Phil Callaway**, will help us to discover how to bring laughter to life and to the work place.

For information regarding the conference or to register, **contact the CHAS office at 306-655-5330, or [cath.health@sasktel.net](mailto:cath.health@sasktel.net).**



## Witness to Mission: A mission formation experience

Little by little it grows and it becomes... *Witness to Mission* now celebrates a graphic image that captures the essence, charism and a beautiful descriptor of the experience of mission formation. Let's take a look:

### CIRCLES:

- Five interlocking imperfect circles represent the five days of *Witness to Mission*...
- Colours used are more naturally found in nature...
- Each circle is unique and has value just as each day...
- Prismatic colours represent the transformation experience....
- Circles suggest balance, movement, wholeness, life, birth...
- Center of beauty.



### TREE & ROAD:

- Tree represents branching out to connect people of different beliefs, backgrounds, or culture...
- The tree is a thoughtful presence, allowing time for reflection...
- The road invites intention and action.

### CROSS:

- The cross represents Jesus' sacrifice and life of service...
- The shape of the curving cross is representative of the road or journey that those who serve in health care follow in their journey.

We are very excited to continue this journey with a strong and professional look that will help facilities and participants to enter into this wonderful experience.

## CHAC National Gathering

The annual national conference of the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada is fast approaching—

**May 4-6, 2016**

**at the Sheraton Wall Centre, Vancouver**

The impressive line-up of Keynote Speakers includes:

**Dr. Ira Byock**, *Palliative Care Physician*

**Dr. Romaine Gallagher**, *Head, Division of Palliative Care, Providence Health, Vancouver*

**Most Rev. Paul-André Durocher**, *Past-President CCCB*



**Dr. Harvey Max Chochinov**, *Director, Manitoba Palliative Care Research Unit Cancer Care, and Sharon Baxter*, *Executive Director, Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association*

These speakers, as well as those offering workshops, will offer participants a well-rounded look exploring the conference theme:

**“Care at the End of Life: What Matters Most”**

For more information:

[www.chac.ca/conference/index\\_e.php](http://www.chac.ca/conference/index_e.php)

## Advance Care Planning

**Is it important to you that other people know and respect your health care wishes? Start the conversation about end of life care.**

**“A Faith-Based Advance Health Care Directive” from CHAS can help!**

*This booklet offers important information such as:*

- *What is an Advance Health Care Directive?*
- *Why complete a Faith-Based Advance Health Care Directive?*
- *What is a proxy?*
- *Powers of Attorney and Health Care Decision Making*
- *How to Complete the Advance Health Care Directive form in this booklet*
- *What to do with your Advance Health Care Directive*

**Booklets are \$5 each or \$3 each for 25+ copies (shipping extra). Electronic version also available at [www.chassk.ca](http://www.chassk.ca)**

*Would your organization or group benefit from an educational session on end of life issues and Advance Care Directives? Please call CHAS at 306-655-5330 to request.*

For further resources check out the website:

[www.advancecareplanning.ca](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca)

