



Hon. Mark Holland
Minister of Health
Government of Canada
Sent via e-mail

February 14, 2025

Dear Minister Holland,

Be assured of my ongoing prayers for you and all those who are entrusted to serve and strengthen our country.

I reach out today regarding the current consultation taking place regarding advance directives as it relates to euthanasia in Canada (referred to in legal terms as Medical Assistance in Dying – MAID). While the consultation period is about to close, I feel that it is important for you to hear feedback regarding the process and language conveyed in the consultation.

I understand the Government of Canada wishes to solicit views from Canadians on proposals relating to end of life care. However, I must convey both, in my own opinion and from those deeply engaged in end of life issues, that the wording and overall approach of the survey pre-supposes that those responding support euthanasia. We know this is simply not true.

Over the past decade, there has been significant opposition to the legalization of “Medical Assistance in Dying” in Canada. While legislation has been passed, there remains deep concern from many Canadians about the rapid expansion of euthanasia, especially from those living with disabilities, medical professionals and those with deeply rooted beliefs regarding the sanctity of life at every stage to name just a few.

According to Health Canada [data](#), in total, 15,343 Canadians died from euthanasia in 2023. This represents a 15.8% increase over 2022 with more than 1 in every 20 deaths attributed to assisted death in 2023.

The movement towards including advanced directives as another pathway to euthanasia is disturbing. We are encouraging those who have not yet been diagnosed to “schedule” their death based on the fear of what may come. Others may be pressured, even by those in the medical profession, seeing themselves as a burden to their family or caregivers.

Your government is normalizing euthanasia – by extension, those experiencing loneliness, isolation and depression associated with their medical condition are increasingly vulnerable to choosing euthanasia. This is not something our country should be proud of. We should be judged by the care, love and dignity afforded to those who are most vulnerable, especially in moments of despair and suffering. Hastening death is not a breakthrough in healthcare.



I would respectfully request that the government give serious consideration to halting any further expansion of euthanasia in Canada, especially as it relates to advance directives. Future consultation should also take into account all views on end of life care.

I would also ask, as others have for years, that the federal government prioritize palliative care over euthanasia, recognizing the need for quality palliative care to be accessible and available to every Canadian. [*Horizons of Hope*](#), an initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and numerous faith-based partners, is one such example of how we can both educate our community and encourage outreach to the sick and suffering by offering quality palliative care.

I would be happy to meet along with those with expertise in palliative care should you ever wish to discuss this matter in greater detail.

I will continue to keep you and all Members of Parliament close in prayer.

Sincerely,

Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

cc. Hon. Arif Varani, Attorney General of Canada