



MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

What is medical assistance in dying?

Medical assistance in dying is one of a number of choices that can be considered in end-of-life care. It is a process where a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner (“practitioner”) helps a patient who wants to voluntarily and intentionally end their life by:

- Administering a medication to the patient that will cause their death peacefully; or
- Prescribing a medication that will cause their death peacefully. The patient may be able to take the medication themselves in the presence of a practitioner.

Responsibilities of health care providers who are not comfortable participating

- Health care providers are required to provide patients who request information on medical assistance in dying with the Central Coordinating Service’s contact card. Health care providers may also provide patients with an information package, consisting of an information sheet and questions and answers document.
- Health care providers are not required to discuss or review the information package with the patient if they do not want to. Other than providing the Central Coordinating Service contact card on request, nothing compels a health care provider to provide, or assist in providing, medical assistance in dying.
- If you have been asked about medical assistance in dying, but do not want to participate or discuss the service, you must provide the Central Coordinating Service contact card to the patient. You may also provide an information package to the patient. You should offer to contact the Central Coordinating Service on behalf of the patient. If you are uncomfortable doing so, direct the patient to contact the Central Coordinating Service to facilitate access to a practitioner that can provide them with more information, conduct an assessment, and if applicable, provide medical assistance in dying.

NWT Central Coordinating Service

Toll-free at 1-833-492-0131

Monday - Friday: 9:00am - 5:00pm

Email: maid_careteam@gov.nt.ca

- If you have received any form of request for medical assistance in dying, whether verbal or written, and become aware that the patient has died from a cause other than medical assistance in dying within 90 days of the request, you must complete a **Form 9 – Death of Patient from Other Cause** in accordance with the *Medical Assistance in Dying Interim Guidelines for the Northwest Territories (Guidelines)*.



Responsibilities of health care providers interested in participating

- If you are interested in participating in medical assistance in dying services to any extent, you should:
 - Ensure you are familiar with the *Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* set the rules for how medical assistance in dying can be requested and provided in the NWT, including the responsibilities and obligations of patients and health care providers. The rules included in the *Guidelines* reflect those established in the *Criminal Code*; and
 - Become a member of the Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers, become familiar with their resources, and remain up-to-date on their training (see www.camapcanada.ca for more information).
- If a patient asks you about medical assistance in dying, you must provide the patient with the Central Coordinating Service's contact card. You should also:
 - Provide the patient with the information package on medical assistance in dying (information sheet and questions and answers document, available at www.maidnwt.com), and any other additional information you feel might be helpful to them (see **additional resources** below).
 - Review the information with the patient in a factual manner, limited to how medical assistance in dying may be an option for patients who meet the eligibility criteria and how the process works in the NWT. **When information on the lawful provision of medical assistance in dying is provided to a patient, health care providers must exercise extreme caution to ensure they do not recommend, incite, or encourage medical assistance in dying.**
 - Discuss your patient's health care condition with them and ensure they have considered all of the options and treatment available to them. These may include comfort care, pain control, hospice care, palliative care, or other options. They do not have to accept any of these services.
- If a patient would like to proceed with making a formal written request, a practitioner can help the patient to complete **Form 1 – Formal Written Request**.
 - The practitioner's role is to assess the patient to determine whether or not they have a **grievous and irremediable medical condition**.
 - In order to make the request, the patient must not sign and date the request until after they are informed by a practitioner that they have a grievous and irremediable medical condition
 - See the *Guidelines* for more details.



- If at any point you are not comfortable or are unable to continue participating in providing the service, you can
 - Contact the Central Coordinating Service on behalf of the patient to find the patient another practitioner that can provide them with more information, conduct an assessment, and/or if applicable, provide medical assistance in dying.

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OR

- Direct the patient to contact the Central Coordinating Service.

Eligibility criteria

To receive medical assistance in dying, a patient must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have a serious and incurable illness, disease, or disability;
- Be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed;
- Their suffering is constant and unbearable, and cannot be relieved in any way that they find acceptable;
- Be at least 18 years old;
- Be eligible for publicly-funded health services in Canada;
- Voluntarily request medical assistance in dying, without pressure or influence from anyone else; and
- Give informed consent throughout the process, including at the final moment when medical assistance in dying is to be provided.

See the *Guidelines* for more details.

Medical assistance in dying process after a formal request is made

Once a formal written request has been made, the process for accessing medical assistance in dying in the NWT includes:

- The patient is assessed by at least two practitioners (an 'Assessing Practitioner' and a 'Consulting Practitioner'). Both practitioners must agree that the patient meets the eligibility criteria in order for the patient to be able to receive medical assistance in dying.



- The patient’s natural death does not need to be reasonably foreseeable in order to be eligible for medical assistance in dying. However, additional safeguards must then be met, including:
 - Both practitioners must provide information on means to relieve suffering in accordance with the *Guidelines*;
 - The Assessing Practitioner or Consulting Practitioner must have expertise in the condition that is causing the patient suffering, or if neither has that expertise, one must consult with another practitioner who has that expertise; and
 - There must be a minimum of 90 clear days between the day on which the assessment by the Assessing Practitioner begins and the day on which medical assistance in dying is provided. However, if both practitioners agree that the patient’s loss of ability to consent will occur in less than 90 days, they may grant a shorter period.
- At the time medical assistance in dying is provided, the patient must be competent and able to provide consent unless valid advance consent has been provided in accordance with the *Guidelines*. Patients whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable may provide Advance Consent if they:
 - Are at risk of losing capacity to provide final consent before the date on which they wish to receive medical assistance in dying;
 - Have the capacity to provide advance consent; and
 - Have been deemed eligible for medical assistance in dying by both the Assessing Practitioner and the Consulting Practitioner.
- The patient is free to change their mind at any time, including at the time medical assistance in dying is to be provided.

See the *Guidelines* for more details.



Additional resources

- Information for Patients and Families:
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/node/2030/>
- Questions and Answers for Patients and Families:
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/en/node/2031/>
- Questions and Answers for Providers and Pharmacists:
<http://www.professionals.hss.gov.nt.ca/>
- Medical Assistance in Dying Interim Guidelines for the Northwest Territories:
<http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/interim-guidelines-medical-assistance-dying.pdf>
- Medical Assistance in Dying forms:
<http://www.professionals.hss.gov.nt.ca/>
- Medical Assistance in Dying Interim Medication Protocols for the Northwest Territories:
<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/professionals/sites/professionals/files/resources/maid-interim-medication-protocols.pdf>
- www.maidnwt.com
- Government of Canada resources:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>
- Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers (CAMAP):
www.camapcanada.ca

If you would like this information in another official language, contact us at 1-855-846-9601. Si vous voulez ces renseignements dans une autre langue officielle, communiquez avec nous au 1-855-846-9601.