



The Honourable Marjorie Michel, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Michel,

We offer our congratulations on your new portfolio, and appreciate that with this role comes additional responsibilities and commitments. We want to thank you for the work you do on behalf of all Canadians in these important areas.

We write today out of our deep and continued concern about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), especially the upcoming expansion to individuals whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness. We note that these concerns are also outlined in Bill C-218 that was recently introduced by MP Tamara Jansen.

Our perspective is amplified by a recent task force report we commissioned on MAiD within our Christian Reformed Church community, which was presented at our annual gathering in June 2025. Based on two years of extensive research done by Christian leaders and medical professionals, the report led our denomination to formally condemn the legalization and practice of medical assistance in dying. This condemnation is rooted in the biblical teaching on the intrinsic value of human life, and the core tenet that all people are created in the image of God.

The expansion of MAiD on the basis of mental illness is set to come at a time when many Canadians who struggle with their mental health are unable to afford or access the mental health care they need. According to Statistics Canada data from 2022:

- more than 5 million Canadians met the criteria for a mental disorder
- Among young women 15 to 24 years of age, the prevalence of major depressive disorder doubled from 2012 to 2022, and generalized anxiety disorder tripled
- Only half of Canadians with a mental disorder had spoken to a health professional about their mental health treatment that year

It is disturbing that 29% of Canadians now cite affordability as a reason to not access mental health services, up from 18%, (Mental Health Research Canada). Testimony at the Special Joint Committee on MAiD showed waitlists for specialized mental health treatment can be months to years long, and yet the assessment period for track two MAiD is only three months.

What additional safeguards or protections will be in place before the coming expansion? We note that:


- There are no specific legislated safeguards for MAiD for mental illness
- There is no legal requirement that a person should receive treatment for a certain length of time, receive all reasonable treatment options, or even receive any treatment
- The terms “serious and irremediable” may be subjectively defined by patient and doctors
- There is a lack of consensus within the medical community on incurability and irreversibility of decline within mental disorders

This expansion will have the greatest impact on marginalized Canadians. The lives of people in vulnerable situations will be more at risk when Canadians become eligible for MAiD on the basis of mental illness. Canadians who cannot afford or cannot access treatment will be more likely to request MAiD. *It should not be easier to obtain MAiD than it is to obtain mental health care or other needed medical or social support, and MAiD must not serve as Canada’s response to the lack of this essential care.* For these reasons, we support Bill C-218.

Beyond the concerns related to mental illness, we strongly advocate for the protection of MAiD-free spaces within healthcare environments, ensuring that individuals who do not wish to be offered or assessed for MAiD have access to care that aligns with their values. It is also imperative that conversations about MAiD are always patient-initiated, preventing any undue pressure from healthcare providers. The task force report shared at our June gathering also specifically deplored efforts to expand MAiD to include mature minors, and we must share our profound opposition to any future considerations to extend MAiD eligibility to children and teens. Furthermore, we oppose the expansion of MAiD to include advance requests, believing that such provisions raise significant ethical challenges regarding consent and the evolving nature of human suffering.

Instead of expanding MAiD, we implore your government to prioritize and ensure that comprehensive, compassionate palliative care and mental health services are readily available to every Canadian who needs them, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status. We hope that along with us, you will recognize these much-needed support as the faithful response to suffering, despair, and loneliness.

Sincerely,



Al Postma  
Executive Director, Canada  
Christian Reformed Church



Cindy Stover  
Justice Mobilization Program Manager  
Christian Reformed Church

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The Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue is a place of conversation, learning and action on God’s call to justice, peace and reconciliation. We are a ministry of the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, a denomination of 250 churches and ministries and across the country. We collaborate deeply with ecumenical justice organizations in Canada.

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