

January 20, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are writing to you with a request for timely support of an initiative of the Commission on Faith and Witness of the Canadian Council of Churches. As you know, Canada has decriminalized physician-assisted death; this has, of course, been a question of interest and concern for us at the Council. What we have found so far is that a number of our member churches are re-thinking their pastoral and theological positions, and so among ourselves there is at present no consensus on the issue of physician-assisted death.

However, the Commission on Faith and Witness has found complete consensus on a closely connected issue, the divine and moral responsibility for a fully-supported and funded national program of palliative care, centered around the linked values of care of the less fortunate and love for others.

Enclosed you will find our consensus-adopted **Statement of Support for Universal Access to Palliative Care in Canada**, intended to bring this view to the attention of Parliamentarians wrestling with the issues.

We ask you to take cognizance of this initiative, and if you support it, to include our Statement with whatever depositions and/or materials you intend to offer the Parliament as this difficult problem receives the deep examination it deserves. Some Parliamentarians have told us that they intend to pursue this question fully, even seeking positive legislation.

We also encourage you to disseminate this statement widely in your church and among your contacts, and to use it in any other way you wish. You can find the online version of this Statement on our websites: www.councilofchurches.ca / www.conseildeseglises.ca .

Thank you very much for your attention to this. We ask your blessing on the work the Canadian Council of Churches does on behalf of your church and all the member churches.

In Christ,



Professor Richard Schneider
Chair, Commission on Faith and Witness



Dr. Mary Marrocco
Associate Secretary, Commission on Faith and Witness

Attachment:

Statement of Support for Universal Access to Palliative Care in Canada, Commission on Faith and Witness