



ALBERTA
HEALTH

Office of the Associate Minister of Health
MLA, Calgary - Acadia

OCT 21 2016

AR 138047

Cathy Bouchard
President, Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
364, 5140 - 62 Street
Red Deer, Alberta
T4N 6R1

Dear Cathy Bouchard:

Honourable Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health, and Honourable Lori Sigurdson, Minister of Seniors and Housing, forwarded your e-mails regarding hospice and palliative care. I appreciate the opportunity to respond on behalf of the Government of Alberta. Please accept my sincere apology for the delay in doing so.

I understand that your organization would like our government to develop and promote hospice and palliative care strategies to give Albertans access to quality end-of-life services.

The Ministry of Health believes in providing access to necessary health care services, including palliative and end-of-life care, regardless of where one lives in Alberta. Recognizing the need to develop provincial approaches for increasing access to palliative care services, the Ministry continues to work with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to implement the Palliative and End of Life Care Provincial Framework, which was developed by provincial palliative care experts, academics, and patient and family groups. For more information about the framework, please visit albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/seniors/if-sen-provincial-palliative-end-of-life-care-framework.pdf and for other palliative care links, please visit albertahealthservices.ca/about/Page10774.aspx.

For Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID), Alberta has developed a provincial regulatory framework with guiding principles that ensure proper care and access. While our government respects the right of health providers to conscientiously object to providing MAID services, our government has required that physicians provide inquiring patients with contact information for the AHS MAID care coordination service without delay when requested. This service provides information about the range of end-of-life care options, including palliative care options.

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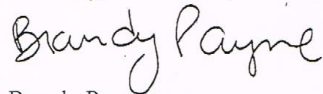
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Your concern of coercion of patients or health care providers to partake in MAID has been further addressed through AHS policy and within the Standards of Practice through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta. For more information about the MAID framework, please visit albertahealthservices.ca/info/page13497.aspx.

The federal government has indicated a need to ensure that palliative and end-of-life care is an option provided to individuals requesting MAID. Therefore, Bill C-14 sets out criteria for this inclusion as part of the discussion between individuals seeking MAID and practitioners who assess eligibility. I appreciate your comments about requesting the House of Commons to identify hospice palliative care as a medical service.

Thank you again for writing and for sharing your thoughts on this sensitive issue.

Sincerely,



Brandy Payne
Associate Minister of Health

cc: Honourable Sarah Hoffman
Deputy Premier
Minister of Health

Honourable Lori Sigurdson
Minister of Seniors and Housing