



Council of Canadian Academies
Conseil des académies canadiennes

News Release

Council of Canadian Academies to Undertake Studies Related to Medical Assistance in Dying

Ottawa (December 13, 2016) – The Council of Canadian Academies' (CCA) Board of Governors has approved a request by Minister of Health Jane Philpott and Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould, to undertake independent reviews related to medical assistance in dying.

The CCA will examine three particularly complex types of requests for medical assistance in dying that were identified for further review and study by the legislation passed by Parliament in 2016. These cases include requests by mature minors, advance requests, and requests where mental illness is the sole underlying medical condition. In undertaking these reviews, the CCA will compile and assess information and evidence to inform the ongoing policy discussion on the issues related to assistance in dying in these three circumstances.

The review process will begin with planning meetings to discuss the scope of the work resulting in a detailed study plan. This will be followed by the recruitment of panel members to conduct the reviews. As part of its independent expert panel process, the CCA will consider evidence from peer reviewed literature, international and national organizations, health care providers, stakeholders, and other groups. The CCA's Member Academies — the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences — will partner to provide key guidance and input throughout the assessment process, including study design, expert panel nominations, and dissemination processes. As with all CCA assessments, the final reports will undergo rigorous peer review and will be released to the public in both official languages. It is expected the reports will be finalized and released in late 2018.

Quotes

"We are honoured to receive this request arising from the current legislation on medical assistance in dying from Ministers Philpott and Wilson-Raybould. We recognize that the three areas identified in the legislation involve sensitive and complex issues that would benefit from careful assessment. Together with our member academies, whose expertise is critical to the success of this work, we look forward to undertaking these reviews."

Eric M. Meslin, PhD, FCAHS – President and CEO, Council of Canadian Academies

"The Royal Society of Canada is pleased the CCA has been chosen to undertake this set of reviews on medical assistance in dying. Six years ago the RSC undertook a similar study and looks forward to supporting and advising the CCA in this review. While this is a very complex and controversial subject, it is one of significant importance to Canada."

Maryse Lassonde, PhD, O.C., C.Q., FRSC, FCAHS – President, Royal Society of Canada

“The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences is extremely pleased the CCA has been asked to conduct these reviews on medical assistance in dying. The CAHS looks forward to informing the study process and helping to ensure Canada’s best experts are put forward to assist in this undertaking.”

Carol P. Herbert, MD, FCAHS – President, Canadian Academy of Health Sciences

“This is an important and sensitive issue that will benefit from a thorough and independent assessment of the evidence, and that is precisely what the CCA does best – bringing together the wide range of expertise available in the Academies to review difficult problems. As one of its three founding member academies, the Canadian Academy of Engineering is very pleased to support CCA in these reviews.”

Douglas Ruth, PEng, PhD, FCAE – President, Canadian Academy of Engineering



Background

The CCA is a not-for-profit organization that undertakes independent, evidence-based expert panel assessments and workshops to inform public policy development in Canada. CCA projects are conducted by multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral panels of experts from across Canada and abroad. CCA reports provide evidence to inform decision-making processes rather than explicit recommendations. Established in 2005 with an initial grant from the Government of Canada, the CCA has become well known for its rigorous process and its comprehensive analyses of complex issues. The CCA was founded by three independent organizations that represent some of the finest minds in Canada – the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Their Fellows and senior decision-makers sit on CCA’s Board of Governors and Scientific Advisory Committee, and they are a key source of membership for expert panels.

For questions about these reviews:

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