

## **Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) – Advice to the Therapeutic Recreation Profession in Alberta**

### **ATRA's guide for Recreation Therapist's role in end of life care**

#### **Intent**

ATRA's purpose among others is to establish and improve consistent standards of practice for Therapeutic Recreation (TR) professionals and to communicate consistent messages for TR across the province. The intent of this document is to provide accurate information and resources for recreation therapists regarding amendments to the Criminal Code (June 2016) in the area of medical assistance in dying (MAID) from the perspective of the professional association.

#### **Background**

In February 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada found that the prohibition against physician-assisted dying in the *Criminal Code* of Canada was unconstitutional. In response to the Supreme Court's decision, Parliament passed legislation on medical MAID on June 17, 2016. This means that doctors and nurse practitioners in Canada can now provide medical <sup>1</sup>assistance in dying, when done in accordance with the federal legislation as well as any applicable provincial laws, rules or standards.

For updated information, please visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-services-benefits/medical-assistance-dying.html#b11>

#### **Our Professional Commitments and Actions**

1. Become informed about MAID
  - a. AHS website section dedicated to guiding patients, family members, health professionals or volunteers  
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page13497.aspx>
  - b. Training from your employer
  - c. ATRA guiding documents

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<sup>1</sup> Bill C-14, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*, Section 241.2 (7).

2. Honour differences and avoid judgment of others who have a different stance on the issue.
  - a. Understand that involvement is voluntary - no Recreation Therapist is compelled to provide MAID and involvement may range from no participation to limited participation.
3. Continue providing competent and ethical recreation therapy services to the patient who is considering or pursuing MAID in accordance with your clinical judgment, role, skills, and values with reference to ATRA's Competency Profile, Code of Ethics.
4. Refrain from providing any advice about medical assistance in dying that could be considered advising or counseling. Refer the matter to the patient's physician or the MAID Care Coordination Service.
5. Inform the patient that a referral has been made and document any discussions or referral in the patient record and inform the program manager.
6. Look for additional guidance by reviewing ATRA's Code of Ethics and Competency Profile as you consider your commitment to a patient in this situation.

## **Multiple sources to guide professional commitments**

ATRA acknowledges the mandate and expertise of Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the precedent setting work of the AHS Therapeutic Recreation Provincial Professional Practice Council. ATRA directs its members to use this document in conjunction with the resources developed by AHS and the Practice Council.

**Alberta Health Services (AHS)** is directed by the Alberta government to facilitate all provision of MAID in the province. Read the resource material available on the Alberta Health Services (AHS)-MAID website regardless of your place of employment. Search the Health Professionals / Medical Assistance in Dying section of the Alberta Health Services website for the most up to date information and resources

### **AHS Therapeutic Recreation Provincial Professional Practice Council**

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14381.aspx>.

**ATRA's Code of Ethics, Competency Profile, and Risk to the Public** are three professional resources that identify specific ethical conduct, professional competencies and potential risk to patients who will access medical assistance in their dying. These resources will provide additional insight for the Recreation Therapist.