

# Educational Resources on the Right-to-Die Movement

## CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

### Prepared by Choices in Dying Victoria

*These resources are provided for general education and information purposes only.... Choices in Dying Victoria in no way endorses or supports options that may currently be against Canadian Law. We regret that due to the present interpretation of Canadian law, we are unable to give personal advice regarding end of life issues. Therefore we are not able to consult with or advise individual members.*

### **Choices in Dying Victoria**

**URL: [choicesindyingvictoria.com](http://choicesindyingvictoria.com)**

**Email: [choicesindyingvictoria@yahoo.ca](mailto:choicesindyingvictoria@yahoo.ca)**

Choices in Dying Victoria is an umbrella organization that works with all other agencies and organizations involved in the Right-to-Die movement. Organized in March 2013 Choices in Dying Victoria is an adjunct of the Social Responsibility Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Church of Victoria. (5575 West Saanich Road) . They are an inclusive group welcoming all who wish to promote the legalization of Physician Assisted Suicide in Canada. Choices has cooperatively worked with Dying with Dignity Canada on two rallies and will continue to work with DWD, whenever possible.

Choices in Dying Victoria utilizes a broad definition for those wishing to end their life, which would include lingering unbearable diseases, such as MS, ALS Alzheimers and Dementia. Their mission statement states: "Through education, advocacy and compassionate support, we are committed to creating a society in which individuals, in dignity and without suffering, have the legal right to choose the manner and timing of their death."

Since their recent inception they have been active in rallies protesting the illegalization of Physician Assisted Suicide, particularly focusing on the Carter Case both at the BC Supreme Court Level and Federal Level. Additionally they provide information sessions on Advance Care Planning and Enduring Power of Attorneys. They provide general information on all aspects of the right-to-die movement.

Plans for the Fall of 2014 include: 3 Flash mobs on Overpasses (September) ; Fall CUC Regional Gathering workshop (October); and an afternoon forum featuring three doctors involved in the Right-to Die Movement, November 15, 2014. Membership is by donation. Please email for instructions to receive a tax free receipt for any amount over \$25.00.

### **Dying with Dignity Canada**

**URL: <http://www.dyingwithdignity.ca>**

Dying with Dignity is a national organization and serves its' members as a registered charitable organization that represents all people ; and all choices ; in end of life decisions. As they are a registered charity and can issue tax receipts for your donations; they are somewhat limited as to the services they can provide and the amount of advocacy they can do. Their definition and mandate as stated in their Key Documents follows:

"We support legislation which would allow a competent adult who is grievously and irremediably ill and suffering unbearably with a terminal illness or incurable physical condition to choose medically assisted dying, subject to robust safeguards and

checks. Medically assisted dying occurs when a doctor agrees to a patient's request for assistance to die and either writes a prescription for a lethal dose of medication or, at the patient's request, directly administers a lethal dose of medication or authorizes an approved healthcare professional to do so.

We also support legislation that would state clearly the patient's right to choose medical treatment focused on pain control and control of suffering over a requirement to extend their life as long as possible.

We further support legislation that would make "do not resuscitate" (DNR) orders and notarized advance medical directives legally binding. Along with this legislation, we support the establishment and maintenance of federal or provincial advance medical directives register(s).

We further support legislation that would make access to excellent end-of-life care a right for all Canadians. "

However, for their members they do have a Compassionate End of Life contact and guidelines for their members to access to receive all the choices available for end of life decisions.

They state that:

- provided you are a member and meet our eligibility criteria, Dying With we have determined your eligibility, our first step is to ensure you are aware of all your end-of-life options. In a way, we think of ourselves as a suicide prevention service. Many people contact us to explore ending their lives; once we inform them of all their options, they often realize that hastening their death is not the best route. If you are eligible for our support and you still wish to hasten your death after learning of all of your choices, we make sure you have the information to do so peacefully and effectively. If you wish, we can also be with you at your bedside when you die.

- *Client Support Program Manager, Nino Sekopet or send an email to [nino@dyingwithdignity.ca](mailto:nino@dyingwithdignity.ca).*

Membership fees:

Individual annual subscription/donation:	\$50.	Family of 2:	\$75.
Life time individual membership:	\$750.	Lifetime Family of 2:	\$1250.
Compassionate membership:	\$10.		

## **Farewell Foundation Canada**

**URL <http://www.farewellfoundation.ca/?reload>**

The Farewell Foundation believes :

"that its members have the right to make choices about their own bodies, their physical and psychological integrity, and their basic human dignity."

The Foundation also believes:

that members who have the mental capacity and the ability of informed consent should be allowed assistance from other members in the organization. There is no one who encourages a member to end their life. There is no remuneration or monetary gain for someone to assist in another member's death, nor should someone join or donate to the Farewell Foundation solely expecting assistance in dying.

\*\* Please note assisted suicide remains a federal crime in Canada

## **CARP Canada (Canadian Association for Retired People)**

**URL: <http://www.carp.ca>**

The right-to-die issue is important to CARP and we are in the midst of formulating a formal position.

One of the aspects of this issue that must be addressed is that end-of-life options are not often discussed

by families until it is too late to have an informed understanding of what choices are available and what the gravely ill family member may themselves wish. Another issue is that families and patients do not always know how the end of life stages will unfold or be experienced, both in the terms of pain and loss.

An adult discussion is needed due to the high level of uncertainty that families face and the many conflicting views that exist in the media and medical community.

CARP is therefore advocating for a national discussion around end-of-life care and greater clarity for Canadians and their families as they prepare and deal with end-of-life issues.

CARP is currently planning an end-of-life forum for September, to bring together experts to have an informed discussion on this important topic.

(email received: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from CARP to bonnie-h@telusnet)

## **INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

### **COMPASSION AND CHOICES (Denver, CO)**

**URL: <https://www.compassionandchoices.org/>**

Compassion and Choices is committed to providing everyone a very good and pain free death. They are active in the right-to-die movement and are actively pursuing legal means so that each individual may receive, should they choose a dignified 'good' death. They will provide end of life consultations for the members in the US have a 800 number to call. They have each states Advance Care Directive online and easily downloadable. They also have a one page directive regarding nutrition and hydration in the case of dementia or alzheimers. This form is easily found on their site. Please note, it would have to be included in your BC Advance Care Plan under your Beliefs, Values and Wishes statement and may not be adhered to, at this time. A direct link to that page follows;

**<https://www.compassionandchoices.org/userfiles/Dementia-Provision-2014.pdf>**

### **DEATH WITH DIGNITY NATIONAL CENTER, Portland, Oregon**

**URL: <http://www.deathwithdignity.org>**

Very long standing organization in the right-to-die with dignity. Having over twenty years in the movement, Death with Dignity National Center was integrally involved with the Oregon State Death with Dignity Act, passed by voters in 1994. Delayed by the federal government on appeal, it was finally enacted in 1997. They state:

“The greatest human freedom is to live, and die, according to one's own desires and beliefs. From advance directives to physician-assisted dying, death with dignity is a movement to provide options for the dying to control their own end-of-life care.

Death with Dignity National Center is the leader in this movement, successfully establishing, advancing and defending the landmark Oregon and Washington Death with Dignity Acts.”

To be eligible for physician-assisted suicide, one must be a resident of Oregon, have been examined and certified by two physicians that you have terminal illness and have less than six months to live. They cannot have a diagnosed mental condition or suffer from depression. They must make two oral and one

written request fifteen days apart and have been advised of alternative choices: palliative care and hospice.

## **DIGNITAS (SWITZERLAND)**

### **URL:**

**[http://www.dignitas.ch/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=47&lang=en](http://www.dignitas.ch/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=47&lang=en)**

Dignitas motto is: "To live with dignity. To die with dignity.

Dignitas states their aims as follows:

- counseling on end of life issues
- cooperation with patients' physicians
- will carry out patients' beliefs values and wishes as they pertain to dignity and the right to die.
- suicide prevention
- advocates for the patient when it comes to physicians not appointed by the client or wishes/ regulations of the nursing home
- legal expertise in end of life issues
- assisted or accompanied end of life when patients determine the end is the desired outcome

Membership is a requirement of Dignitas. Many Canadians and others from around the world migrate to Switzerland and Dignitas for assistance in a safe and legally dignified death. Dignitas works with foreign nationals and can provide services to their members within the confines of Switzerland.

One off Joining fee: \$240.00 USD

Annual membership subscription: at member's discretion but suggested at \$95.00 USD

You can find a membership application form in pdf format on their website.

## **EXIT INTERNATIONAL (AUSTRALIA)**

**URL: <http://www.exitinternational.net/page/AboutUs>**

Exit International (Australia) is largely an advocacy site which is working on changing the laws. Founded in 1997 by Dr. Philip Nitschke MBBS, PhD after the first Rights of the Terminally Ill Act (ROTI) was overturned. They provided the latest information and updates on the movement for right to die issues; seminars, webinars; clinics etc. Exit International has a sister website :

**<http://www.peacefulpillhandbook.com/page/Home>** which sells a Handbook; supplies and materials for those contemplating a final exit. \*\* This is neither approved or endorsed by Choices in Dying Victoria and is provided as an educational resource only.

## **FINAL EXIT NETWORK (Tallahassee, FL)**

**URL <http://www.finalexitnetwork.org>**

Final Exit Network works on a membership basis and provides advice and education to those who are terminally ill and wishing to die. Membership for one year is \$50. Lifetime membership is \$500. USD. There is strict acceptance criteria that must be followed and once accepted an Exit Guide will visit you and advise you of your options. Final Exit Network never supplies equipment. They have an excellent online educational resource and store. Again, Choices in Dying Victoria does not endorse nor support this particular site or its' methods. The online store may be found at: <http://www.finalexit.org/ergo-store/>

**RIGHT TO DIE SOCIETY OF CANADA - not recommended at this time**  
**URL <http://www.righttodie.ca>**

This formerly very active site has not been updated since March 2013. Ruth von Fuchs is the sole remaining officer. She is in the midst of updating the site on her own with a newsletter.

Right to Die Society of Canada believes in a:

**A Better Present**

“People who are suffering intolerably from an incurable condition must have an adequate level of information and support with respect to every one of their options — including, though not limited to, the option of a hastened death.”

Choices will continue to monitor this site and once it is more active, encourage users to check it out.

**WORLD FEDERATION OF RIGHT TO DIE SOCIETIES**  
**URL <http://www.worldrtd.net>**

WFRTD is an international network of Right-to-Die Societies with over 53 member societies from 26 countries.

Their mission includes:

“The Federation:

- Disseminates current information and educational materials about voluntary euthanasia, physician-assisted dying, other right-to-die issues, and related matters of interest;
- Promotes co-operation and liaison among our member societies;
- Facilitates international conferences on dying and death;
- Provides assistance, where requested, to groups and individuals interested in establishing similar societies in countries where such societies do not currently exist; and

Responds to requests by interested groups, scholars, and individuals for information about right-to-die issues.”