

Basic Background on MAiD in Canada

Why Focus on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)?

“Incurable cannot mean that care has come to an end,” the Vatican affirms, even when a cure is impossible, our care and compassion should never cease.

[vaticannews.va](https://www.vaticannews.va)

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) is now the fifth leading cause of death in Canada. Since its legalization in 2016, more than 60,000 Canadians have died by euthanasia. While often framed as a compassionate choice, many who request MAiD are not dying. They are struggling with loneliness, fear, or the feeling that their life no longer matters.

Originally allowed only when death was imminent, MAiD now includes:

- People with **chronic illness**
- People with **disabilities**
- And there are proposals to increase accessibility to MAiD

Why Are People Choosing MAiD?

Doctors and experts tell us that all physical pain at the end of life can be managed with proper care. MAiD is rarely chosen because of pain. According to the Government of Canada, those who request it often name:¹

- Loss of ability to participate in meaningful activities: 95.5%
- Feeling like a burden: 45.1%
- Emotional distress: 38.5%
- Loneliness or isolation: 21.1%

Why is MAiD a Growing Concern?

MAiD has been practiced for decades in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. In Canada, just eight years after legalization, we are already second only to the Netherlands in terms of the percentage of deaths by MAiD. By 2023, 4.7% of all deaths in Canada were caused by MAiD.²

This rapid growth makes Canada a cautionary example for the rest of the world. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is right to [call for Canada](#) to roll back its expansion of euthanasia, or MAiD. This also reinforces the fact that MAiD is an election issue in Canada on which every federal political party leader should take a clear stand.³

¹ Fifth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada, 2023. Section 3.6 Nature of suffering. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2023.html#a4.4>, November 12th, 2024.

² James Crisp. UK Telegraph. *Global deaths from assisted dying surpass 30,000 in a year.* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/11/26/assisted-dying-hits-record-high-deaths-rise-30000-in-year/>, November 26, 2025.

³ UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. *Statement Regarding UN Committee's Call to Reverse MAiD Expansion in Canada.* <https://www.cardus.ca/news/news-releases/statement-regarding-un-committees-call-to-reverse-maid-expansion-in-canada/>, March 26th, 2025

What's Wrong with MAiD?

- It poses a grave danger to vulnerable individuals.
- If death becomes a "solution," what is the incentive for seeking treatment?
- When MAiD is offered as a valid or even preferable option for "treatment," the value of human life is trivialized.
- Morality and the sanctity of life have profound existential implications.
- We are failing our mission to be in loving relationships with our sisters and brothers.

The Church's Response

These are not medical problems. They are human ones. These issues deserve human answers, not a prescription to die. When someone asks, "Do I still matter?" We want the Church to be the voice that answers, "Yes." You matter. You are not a burden. You are not alone. We will stay.

This is why the Church must respond with clarity and compassion. Our Catholic bishops warn that this expansion "undermines the universal and inviolable dignity of human life and harms the building up of society; it cannot be condoned under any circumstances."⁴

For more information about MAiD, visit the CCCB website: [Suffering and End of Life - Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops](https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-05-05-Message-to-the-Catholic-Faithful_MAID-final.pdf)

⁴ Permanent Council of the CCCB. *Message from the Permanent Council to the Catholic Faithful on Permitting Persons Living with Mental Illness to Access Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide*. CCCB, March 9th, 2023. https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-05-05-Message-to-the-Catholic-Faithful_MAID-final.pdf