Medical Assistance In Dying

Information for Island Health patients and families

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Seeking Medical Assistance in Dying is a deeply personal decision. It is important to discuss your wishes with family members, loved ones and/or anyone else who can support you. It is normal to have questions and it is important to note that not every person who inquires about Medical Assistance in Dying will be eligible.

Whatever you decide, your health care team is here to give you the care you want and to honour and respect your wishes.

What is Medical Assistance in Dying?

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) is a process whereby a doctor or nurse practitioner helps a patient who wants to voluntarily, intentionally end their suffering. Medical Assistance in Dying has been legal in Canada since June 2016 and is governed under federal law (Bill C-7). This law sets out the eligibility requirements and processes under which MAiD can be delivered. https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-7/royal-assent

Who is Eligible to Receive Medical Assistance in Dying?

To receive Medical Assistance in Dying, you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Have a grievous and irremediable medical condition (illness, disease or disability)
- Be suffering intolerably from this condition
- Be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed
- Be at least 18 years old
- Be eligible for publicly-funded health services in Canada
- Request assistance without pressure or influence from anyone else
- Give informed consent throughout the process, including at the final moment when MAiD is to be provided.

EXCEPTION: If your MAiD practitioner determines that your natural death is "reasonably foreseeable," a Waiver of Final Consent can be completed that will allow MAiD to occur if you lose capacity before the chosen date.

If you believe you meet these criteria and want to find out more, please talk to the doctor or nurse practitioner who is most responsible for your care. You can ask any member of your care team for information or to bring your request to the attention of your doctor or nurse practitioner. You can also contact the Island Health MAiD Office for assistance.

Please understand that doctors and nurse practitioners are not obligated to help you with this process if they do not personally agree with it, but they must hand off your request and connect you with other care providers who can help you.

How Does the Process Work?

Your doctor or nurse practitioner will discuss your medical condition with you. They will make sure you have considered all the services or treatments that are available to you. These may include comfort care, pain control, hospice care, palliative care or other options. You do not have to accept any of these services, but it is important you know about them before you pursue Medical Assistance in Dying.

Should you choose to go ahead with Medical Assistance in Dying, please know you can change your mind and stop the process any time.

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Request for MAiD

Once you have decided to pursue Medical Assistance in Dying a Request must be completed. By signing the Request Form (#1632), you are formally asking for MAiD and stating you believe you meet all criteria. You can directly access this form on the BC Ministry of Health website, via the Island Health MAiD Website, or ask any health care professional.

Assessment

Two assessments are required. These assessments ensure that you are aware of other options, that you meet the criteria for Medical Assistance in Dying and that you have the mental capacity to make this important decision. Two different doctors or nurse practitioners each do a separate assessment. If they are not sure whether you are capable of making this decision, a medical professional with expertise in mental capacity may be consulted.

Period of Reflection

The original MAiD legislation required a 10 day reflection period—*this is no longer required.* For a small percentage of persons who apply, whose natural death may be considered "NOT reasonably foreseeable," there is a 90 day "assessment period" that begins on the day the MAiD Assessor begins their assessment with you. If you believe you meet these criteria and want to find out more, please talk to the doctor or nurse practitioner who is most responsible for your care.

Where Can Medical Assistance in Dying Take Place?

You can decide where you want Medical Assistance in Dying to take place. If you are receiving care from an Island Health program or are in Hospital, they can help you arrange support or other services to make you as comfortable as possible.

You can choose to receive MAiD in your own home (which is what most people prefer), in a long term care setting, or other location. You can also decide if you'd like anyone with you at the time. Medical Assistance in Dying is administered with drugs that can be taken by mouth or given intravenously.

MAiD Volunteer Program

We offer a follow-up phone call 3-4 weeks after an assisted death to connect family members or support persons with bereavement and other services. For more information, please contact us using the details provided below.

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For more information about MAiD, or if you have requested MAiD or are supporting someone through the process and would like to complete a survey about your experience, please contact us:

Email: maid@islandhealth.ca

Fax: 250-519-3669

Call at 1-877-370-8699 (Toll free phone) or 250-727-4382 (Greater Victoria)

Island Health: www.islandhealth.ca/maid
Ministry of Health (BC): https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/care-options-and-cost/end-of-life-care/medical-assistance-in-dying