

January 17, 2020



Canadian Disability Policy Alliance
**Alliance Canadienne concernant
les politiques reliées au handicap**

Dear Ministers Qualtrough, Hajdu, and Lemetti, and Deputy Minister Lucas --

Thank you for the opportunity yesterday to participate in the discussion of disability issues with regard to possible amendments to MAID eligibility. I am sorry I had to leave shortly before the concluding comments, but I have given the discussion further consideration, and have one additional thought to offer.

Several of the disability advocates raised the central concern that the eligibility criteria must in no way permit the interpretation that the Government of Canada, or by extension Canadian society, views disability as sufficient reason in and of itself to seek an end to one's life. Even these many years later, the casual way in which many Canadians viewed the loss of the life of Tracy Latimer has left a deep wound, and it is my sense that that wound was in some degree evident in the rhetoric of last evening's consultation.

I feel this very valid concern could be at least partially mitigated by two relatively minor amendments to the remaining criteria, should the "reasonably foreseeable natural death" criterion be removed:

1. Delete the first sub-bullet under "grievous and irremediable medical condition". It simply reiterates that the condition must be "serious and incurable". By removing it, we not only eliminate redundancy, but also omit the explicit reference to disability altogether, thus hopefully alleviating the possibility that anyone might think there was an intention to permit MAID on the basis of disability alone.
2. Clarify that these are "AND" criteria, not "OR" criteria – in other words, all of the remaining three have to be met in order to establish eligibility:
 - A grievous and irremediable medical condition;
 - An advanced state of irreversible decline; AND
 - Intolerable physical or psychological suffering.

Thank you again for the very receptive and respectful tone of the consultation. It was a privilege to be invited to attend. If I can be of further service, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann McColl, PhD, MTS
Academic Lead, Canadian Disability Policy Alliance;
Assistant Editor, *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*
Associate Director, Centre for Health Services & Policy Research;
Professor, Rehab Therapy / Public Health Sciences
Queen's University, Abramsky Hall, 3rd Floor, Kingston, ON, Canada K7L-3N6
Ph: 613-533-6319 Fax: 613-533-6353