

QUEBEC REMAINS CANADA'S EUTHANASIA CHALLENGE

GINETTE LEBLANC DIES OF NATURAL CAUSES

Quebec Assisted Suicide Advocate

GINETTE LEBLANC, the woman who launched the court case in Quebec to strike down Canada's assisted suicide law, died of natural causes on February 2, 2013.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition offers condolences to the Leblanc family as they grieve their loss.

Leblanc, who was living with ALS,

See LeBlanc page 4....

BATTLE IN QUEBEC JUST BEGINNING.

On January 15, the Quebec government released the 450 page Ménard euthanasia report that essentially stated that the Quebec government could legalize euthanasia, based on the recommendations of last year's Quebec *Dying with Dignity* report.

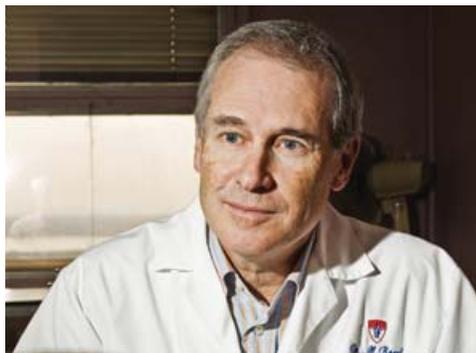
The media and many organizations that work with the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition seem to believe that

See Battle page 4....

QUEBEC PHYSICIANS' ALLIANCE FOR THE TOTAL REFUSAL OF EUTHANASIA



Dr. Sherif Emil Director, Pediatric General Surgery, Montreal Children's Hospital. (Photo: Montreal Gazette)



Dr. Manuel Borod Director, McGill University Health Care Palliative Care Unit (Photo: Montreal Gazette)

Two distinguished Quebec physicians have added their voices to the urgent public discussions in that province. Dr. Sherif Emil published an article in the *Montreal Gazette* under the title: "Legalizing assisted suicide is wrong and dangerous" (January 17, 2013). Dr. Manuel Borod authored "There is no role for palliative care in providing euthanasia", also in the *Gazette* (January 21, 2013). Both doctors are members of the *Physicians' Alliance for the Total Refusal of Euthanasia*. Some of the main points of their articles appear in our *Ins!ght* section.

ASSISTED SUICIDE LOBBY PUSHES THROUGHOUT U.S.

Laws to legalize assisted suicide in the United States have been introduced in Connecticut, Vermont, New Jersey, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Kansas, Massachusetts and Montana. Other states may join in.

In some proposed laws, the assisted suicide lobby has eliminated several of the so-called "safeguards" in their assisted suicide legislation. Several of the bills have eliminated the reporting procedure and at least one of the bills eliminated the requirement for a second witness signature.

QUEBEC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION QMA OPPOSES EUTHANASIA

QMA president Dr. Ruth Vander Stelt, representing nearly 10,000 physicians in Quebec, recently went on record saying: "the proposal to put doctors at the centre of the decision would seriously risk eroding the trust between patients, society as a whole and the medical community. How can a doctor, who is supposed to heal, relieve and comfort, become the person who ends life? ...it is unacceptable to put them in a situation that conflicts with the ethical and professional oath they have taken." Vander Stelt concluded: "Medically assisted death appears to be a universal remedy for an exceptional situation. The QMA would rather see the government work harder to improve the accessibility and quality of palliative care."

DR. EMIL AND DR. BOROD: REASONS TO OPPOSE QUEBEC EUTHANASIA

Points from the articles published in the *Montreal Gazette* by Dr. Sherif Emil and Dr. Manuel Borod are summarized here, and attributed to their authors. They are excellent points to convey to your own friends and acquaintances.

- I have come to learn through my observations as a physician, as a patient, and as a friend to many patients, that health care in Quebec is in deep crisis. The denial of this crisis by politicians and health-care leaders does not make it any less severe. Is this the type of environment in which we should introduce euthanasia? *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- Quebec has been a leader in palliative care through pioneers like Dr. Balfour Mount and the many who followed him. ... The armamentarium available to physicians has grown exponentially, and new medical journals are now exclusively dedicated to pain management and palliative care. When pain becomes an argument for ending life, it is the pain that must be killed, not the patient. *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- This has become a political and legal issue, and the lawmakers should call this act what it really is: lawful death or legally acceptable death. *(Dr. Manuel Borod)*
- Legalizing assisted suicide due to poorly treated or untreated pain is no different than legalizing assisted suicide due to poorly treated or untreated depression. *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- There is no role for palliative care in providing euthanasia for terminally ill patients. *(Dr. Manuel Borod)*
- It is no coincidence that Dr. Mount, as well as most of his colleagues in palliative care, stand firmly against euthanasia.” *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- The slippery slope is closer than we think. We only have to look at the model the Quebec government is using for its policies on euthanasia: Belgium. Recently Dr. Catherine Dopchie, a Belgian oncologist and director of a palliative-care unit, visited Quebec and spoke to large audiences in Montreal and Quebec City. She described the Pandora’s box that was opened when euthanasia was legalized in Belgium 10 years ago. Out of fear of uncontrolled pain, many patients, their families and physicians don’t even attempt palliative care, and rush toward physician-inflicted death instead, she reported. ... Dr. Dopchie said. What was originally proposed as a solution for extreme cases has become a well-marketed “therapeutic option.” *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- It is misleading to refer to euthanasia as medical or physician aid in dying — once again, all the physicians, nurses, psychologists, social workers, music therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, spiritual care counsellors, pharmacists, dietitians, volunteers and coordinators who work with the dying patient offer aid in dying. *(Dr. Manuel Borod)*
- The consideration of euthanasia by a society that cannot provide adequate care to its most vulnerable members should be seen as an indictment of that society. Euthanasia is the easier choice for society to make. Mending a broken health-care system is the more difficult choice. *(Dr. Sherif Emil)*
- Euthanasia is an affront to all those who care for the terminally ill to refer to this act as death with dignity — it is our objective that all our patients die with dignity. *(Dr. Manuel Borod)*

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition supports the efforts of the Physicians for the Total Refusal of Euthanasia and we recognize the influence of their voice.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

EPC – EUROPE

The founding meeting for EPC–Europe is being held in Rome on February 19. EPC–International is also meeting on February 18 and it intends to determine the date and location for the Fourth International Symposium on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide.

CANADA

The BC Court of Appeal is to hear the Carter case March 4 – 8. On June 15, 2012; Justice Lynn Smith decided, in Carter, to strike down Canada’s assisted suicide law and legalize a limited form of euthanasia.

Whatever decision is made by the BC Court of Appeal, it will get appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. Let’s hope that the BC Court of Appeal will strike down the disturbing decision by Justice Smith in the Carter case.

UNITED KINGDOM

Lord Falconer is once again introducing a bill in the British House of Lords to legalize assisted suicide. Last year, Falconer chaired a fake commission,

funded by *Dying in Dignity* and wealthy pro-euthanasia activist Terry Pratchett, to examine euthanasia and assisted suicide. Falconer’s committee concluded that the UK could safely legalize assisted suicide. Recently the British Medical Association re-affirmed its opposition to assisted suicide.

SCOTLAND

Margo MacDonald will re-introduce a bill to legalize assisted suicide in Scotland. Her previous attempt was defeated 85 to 16 in December 2010. The revamped bill, is soon to be released.

AUSTRALIA

Bills to legalize euthanasia are being proposed in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.

The Greens/Labor coalition government in Tasmania released a discussion paper in Tasmania that white-washes concerns about jurisdictions where euthanasia and assisted suicide are legal.

HOPE Australia is working with Real Dignity Tas to defeat the the upcoming bill in Tasmania.

EPC has developed the following talking points to oppose euthanasia in Quebec.

1. **Euthanasia is an act or the omission of an act that is done to directly and intentionally cause the death of another person with the intent of ending suffering.** Euthanasia is a form of homicide, usually done by lethal injection.
2. **Assisted suicide occurs when one person aids, counsels, or encourages another person to commit suicide.** Assisted suicide is usually done by prescribing a lethal dose to a person, knowing that the person intends to commit suicide.
3. **Quebec appears to be proposing the Belgian model of euthanasia.** Recent reports out of Belgium indicate that up to 32% of all assisted deaths in Belgium are done without request. Nurses are assisting the deaths of patients, even though it is illegal for nurses to euthanize a patient.
4. **The Quebec health care system is in a deep financial crisis.** Patients who are most vulnerable, the dependent elderly and people with disabilities, are more likely to die by euthanasia without request, in the same way as in Belgium.
5. **Euthanasia is homicide... with paperwork.** The purpose of the paperwork is to protect the doctor who administers the euthanasia from charges of homicide. Euthanasia advocates tell us that the act of filling out this form keeps doctors from euthanizing vulnerable people.

Exposing Vulnerable People



to Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Alex Schadenberg

New EPC Publication

“Using already existing studies, Schadenberg has uncovered the shocking truth about euthanasia in Belgium, the lives lost and the deep threat to others. His work demonstrates unequivocally that we must never follow this Belgian pathway to the easy killing of people whose lives are not valued by those who do the killing.”

Kevin Fitzpatrick, Not Dead Yet, UK

\$20.00

Order the book today

1-877-439-3348 or email: info@epcc.ca.

\$50 for 3.....\$100 for 8.....\$200 for 20 copies

Harry Lamb
Sales Representative
Sutton Group Preferred Realty
London ON • 519-471-8888

Place Your Ad Here
Call Our Office
Reach Our Readers
London ON • 1-877-439-3348

Michael A. Menear, Lawyer
Menear, Worrad and Associates
100 Fullarton Street
London, Ontario • 519-672-7370

... **Leblanc** from page 1

hired a recently retired human rights lawyer, René Duval, to challenge Canada's assisted suicide law. The case that was filed on October 31, 2011 claimed that Canada's assisted suicide law was unconstitutional. The case was scheduled to be heard in Trois Rivières, Quebec from March 25 - 28, 2013.

The Toronto Sun reported Duval to have stated: "*Due to Ginette Leblanc's death the case is now closed.*"

The *Leblanc* case was nearly identical to the *Rodriguez* case that the Supreme Court of Canada decided in 1993 by a 5 - 4 margin that Canada's assisted suicide law was not unconstitutional.

However, Duval added a clause to the *Leblanc* case that would have quietly legalized euthanasia in Canada.

Even though the *Leblanc* case is now closed, the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is still responsible for paying \$50,000 in legal expenses based on the cost of research and the production of legal documents for our intervention.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition launched the Declaration of Hope as a positive response to the human issues that lead to people requesting euthanasia or assisted suicide.

Gloria Taylor, the plaintiff in the *Carter* case in BC, who also lived with ALS, also died of natural causes in early October, even though Justice Smith had granted Taylor a constitutional exemption to die by euthanasia.

... **Battle** from page 1

euthanasia will be legalized in Quebec. We acknowledge that the situation appears dire, but the battle is not over. In fact, it is just beginning.

Last November, the assisted suicide referendum in Massachusetts appeared dire. In September, just two months before the referendum vote, a poll indicated that 68% of Massachusetts citizens were planning to vote for assisted suicide. On election day the assisted suicide question was defeated 51% to 49%.

Jean Pierre Ménard, the chief architect of the Ménard report told the Quebec government that they could legalize euthanasia by not prosecuting euthanasia cases and by defining euthanasia as a form of "medical treatment" thereby regulating it within the Quebec's healthcare provisions.

Véronique Hivon, the Quebec minister responsible for implementing the *Dying With Dignity* report, plans to introduce legislation in June.

The Quebec government has indicated that they are planning to legalize the Belgian model of euthanasia. Quebec is proposing to legalize euthanasia even though 60% of the 427 presentations to the committee opposed euthanasia.

A recent poll of 2200 Canadians sponsored by the EPC found that 74% of Canadians were concerned that the Belgium model of euthanasia will lead to abuse while 69% of Quebec residents were concerned.

Confusion over terminology has been created by the media. The Ménard report advocated for the legaliza-

tion of euthanasia under the term "assisted dying." The media has referred to it as assisted suicide. The Menard report is clear that they advocate legal euthanasia, not assisted suicide. It is clear that Quebec intends to legalize a Belgian-style model of euthanasia.

Quebec citizens should be very concerned that their government appears to be intent on decriminalizing along the lines of the Belgian model.

When analysing the Belgian model of euthanasia it is clear that the definitions that are used and the system that is in place has led to significant abuses of euthanasia.

Take Action

The Declaration of HOPE a Huge Success

The Declaration of Hope clearly states what we support and what we oppose, and proposes a positive position to deal with euthanasia and assisted suicide. The Declaration of Hope has been printed on the back of the EPC letter.

**To sign
the Declaration of HOPE
please go
to the web site below**

www.declarationofhope.ca

Use all the means at your disposal to email, tweet, post and facebook this address to your contacts. Ask your friends and family to sign, too!