

EUTHANASIA SYMPOSIUM EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

The Euthanasia Symposium was a tremendous success, on October 31 in Montréal, with more than 150 people attending the event. Our speakers presented in French or English with simultaneous translation.



All of the speakers were informative and some of the speakers challenged the participants with their ideas and cultural responses to euthanasia and assisted suicide.

We chose to have the Symposium in Montréal to enable a greater synergy between the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, the Living with Dignity Network, the Physicians Alliance Against Euthanasia and the Physicians for Life student forum. By working together, we were able to organize a dynamic event and attract more than 50 students.

During the Symposium, EPC inaugurated the Balfour Mount Award, an award to be given annually to a person who has inspired others to protect people from euthanasia and assisted suicide. Dr Mount, who is the father of palliative care in North America, received the first Balfour Mount Award for his role in opposing the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada.

Dr Margaret Cottle effectively clarified the difference between assisted death and good palliative care while Dr Patrick Vinay shared at the conference how good palliative care enables a person to live until they die.

We also gained great insight into the disability perspective from Nic Steenhout.

We were proud that Professor Margaret Somerville launched her new book, *Bird on an Ethics Wire*, at the Symposium that can be ordered through Amazon.

Jen Romnes announced her soon to be released book, *Entangled I - Caught Between Choices*, concerning the abuse that her mother, who was living with dementia, experienced from her father. Romnes changed her mind and now opposes euthanasia based on her life experience.

AMY HASBROUCK BECOMES THE NEW EPC VICE PRESIDENT

On October 30, the EPC board met to discuss business and legal issues and directions.

During the board meeting, EPC accepted the resignation of Dr Margaret Cottle as EPC Vice President and then accepted the nomination of Amy Hasbrouck, the founder of *Toujours Vivant – Not Dead Yet*, as our new Vice President. Amy is a lawyer and a disability rights leader who is known for her leadership skills.



Amy Hasbrouck

We are pleased that even though Dr Cottle is involved with other important ventures, she agreed to remain as a member of the EPC board, especially since she is an expert on euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Jean Echlin remains our President. Jean is a retired nursing practitioner in palliative care, the former director of the Hospice of Windsor and she remains as an adjunct professor at the University of Windsor

The board also decided to move forward on a new media campaign that would be developed for radio and billboard/posters.

PROTECTING PEOPLE PAMPHLETS

The *Protecting People from Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide* pamphlet is updated based on the Supreme Court of Canada's decision and references new studies on the abuses of euthanasia and assisted suicide in jurisdictions where they are legal.

The *Protecting People* pamphlet is designed to counter the false ideas and the intentional confusion that surround the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The *Protecting People* pamphlet can be ordered for \$25 for 100 copies or \$100 for 500 copies (plus postage).



A DISABLED MAN'S PLEA TO CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER ABOUT ASSISTED SUICIDE

Dear Prime Minister:

Supreme Court ruling for assisted suicide

I am writing to plead with you to invoke the notwithstanding clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and override the monstrous Supreme Court decision to strike down the nation's law against assisted suicide. It will be consistent with your previous support for a National Suicide Prevention Strategy that received unanimous support of Parliament in October of 2012. The high court's odious decision threatens to set back advances made in disability inclusion in forty years that I and others have fought hard to gain.

I have been incurably ill with aggressive multiple sclerosis (MS) for more than thirty years. Its degenerative nature gradually stripped me of physical function from being healthy and athletic to living in an electric wheelchair. If assisted suicide had been available during the mid-1980s I might have opted for it at a low point. I'm so glad I did not seek out a Jack Kevorkian. I never would have known my grandchildren. You see, Prime Minister, quality of life changes. What gave my life quality in 1984 is not what gives my life quality in 2015. Physical function is not so important to me anymore; it is love that brings quality to my life now: To love and be loved.

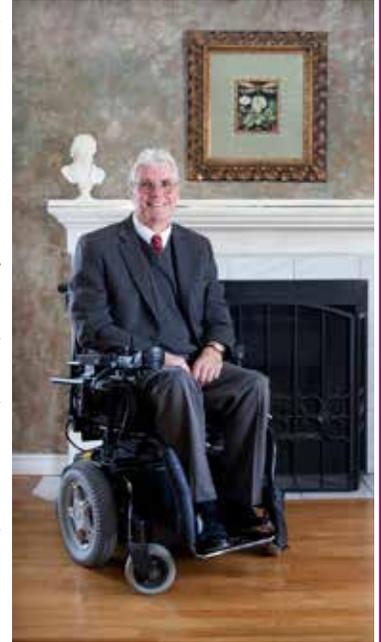
You did the right thing in 2012 by supporting a national suicide prevention strategy. Do the right thing again and invoke the notwithstanding clause, even though it will be unpopular. A national suicide prevention strategy must be for all Canadians, not just the healthy. Support increased emphasis on palliative medicine in medical schools and nursing programs across the country.

Thank you for reading and considering my letter. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

I am, Sir,

Yours very truly,

Mark Davis Pickup



Mark Pickup

QUEBEC DOCTORS' GROUP CHALLENGES EUTHANASIA LAW

The Quebec group, Coalition of Physicians for Social Justice and Lisa D'Amico, a woman with a disability, have launched a legal challenge to the Quebec euthanasia law that is scheduled to begin on December 10.

The Canadian Press reported that Dominique Talarico, the lawyer for the group stated:

"The Supreme Court has not ruled on the Quebec law, has not addressed the Quebec law, because that law was not part of the questions to be decided,"

Talarico said that a patient's consent cannot be free and informed if they have not been offered all palliative care options, which is not always the case in the province due to a lack of accessibility to certain treatments, drugs and services.



Dr Paul Saba

"The actual state of the health system, disease screening, the state of health care and palliative care in Quebec are possibly more deficient than anywhere else in Canada. The context of care is part of the totality of evidence to be presented to Superior Court,"

Dr Paul Saba, the leader of the group, stated:

"As a doctor, I can't accept something that is non-medical, non-scientific,"

"It even goes against my code of ethics in Quebec. Under the code of ethics, if we have treatments to offer or an operation, we must always use the least dangerous."

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition hopes that the Quebec court will hear the case soon based on the fact that lethal injections will begin in Quebec on December 10, 2015.

NEWS FROM AUSTRALIA

Philip Nitschke ordered to stop promoting suicide

HOPE Australia is calling on the **Australian government** to establish an inquiry into the actions of Exit International. HOPE is renewing its call now that Nitschke has been ordered to stop promoting suicide. Paul Russell, the founder of HOPE stated to the media:

The most significant restrictions will mean that Nitschke can no longer have any formal involvement in the work of Exit. No workshops, no advice, name removed from his published handbook, name and association removed from the website and the removal of all advocacy videos from the internet, etc. It would be foolish to assume that this spells the end of Exit; it does not. His partner, Fiona Stewart, has promised to continue his work and Nitschke has indicated that, upon his return to Australia, he will consider whether or not to abandon his medical licence completely.

All the while the public remains in the dark about the 12 complaints and the macabre and clandestine practices that see a continuing escalation in the body count. The suicide statistics are now showing an increase in the number of suicides using Exit methods amongst a younger cohort.

The medical board have done all that they can under their charter and we applaud their efforts. HOPE is now calling for a national inquiry into Exit and Dr Nitschke as a matter of public safety. All Australians deserve to know; those that have lost loved ones deserve justice and vulnerable people deserve to be protected.

Nitschke has promoted suicide via the internet for many years. EPC hopes that the Australian government will finally investigate the dangerous exploits of Exit and Philip Nitschke.

Exit International set-up a suicide promotion website

EPC has urged the federal and provincial governments in Canada to investigate what appears to be an Exit International website that was recently launched in Ontario to sell suicide drugs, devices, information and suicide guide books.

This suicide promotion website was launched shortly after the irresponsible and dangerous Supreme Court decision striking down Canada's assisted suicide and euthanasia laws.

EPC asked the federal and the provincial governments to investigate the website. The federal government responded to EPC by stating that our concern is under provincial jurisdiction, while the Provincial government stated that the Provincial Territorial Expert Advisory Group on assisted dying has stopped receiving input, which had nothing to do with our request.

EPC has also urged suicide prevention groups to become involved with this case.

Due to concern for Canadians who live with depression and other psychiatric conditions that leave them vulnerable to suicide, we will not publicly name the website.

GERMANY OPENS THE DOOR TO ASSISTED SUICIDE

On November 6, the **German Bundestag** opened the door to assisted suicide for "altruistic" reasons. The law is similar to the Swiss law except that the German law prohibits the commercialization of assisted suicide.



The Swiss law also permits assisted suicide for altruistic reasons but over time suicide clinics have become accepted. Now that Germany officially permits assisted suicide, the question is how will the law develop over time. *The German RT News* reported:

The bill, which was upheld with 360 out of 602 votes, criminalizes organizations that assist patients in terminating their own lives for profit. It is meant to prevent the commercialization of the procedure as a "suicide business."

However, single instances of suicide assistance – by a doctor or relative – do not contradict the new law.

On November 2, Germany's Jewish community stated their opposition to assisted suicide. According to the *Jewish Times*:

Central Council President Josef Schuster, a physician and member of the Central Ethics Committee of the German Medical Association, said:

"Seriously ill and elderly people should not be pushed to commit suicide,"

"Assisted suicide must not become a regular service provided by doctors, an alternative to care for the dying,"

Schuster urged more support for hospice and palliative care.

CALIFORNIA GROUPS ARE COLLECTING SIGNATURES OPPOSING ASSISTED SUICIDE LAW

A coalition of groups led by the Seniors Against Suicide have launched a petition campaign to collect 365,800 signatures in order to overturn the recently passed California assisted suicide law. Information about the campaign is obtained at: www.stopassistedsuicide.com

The groups stated their intention to challenge the assisted suicide law on October 7, two days after Governor Brown signed the deceptive assisted suicide bill into law.

Dr. Mark Hoffman, clinical psychologist and spokesperson for Coalition Against Assisted Suicide stated.

“Physical pain can be treated, but suicidal thoughts are a more subtle yet clear expression of ‘psychological pain.’ This ‘alarm bell’ of deeper depression must be assertively addressed. Offering suicidal patients poison in these situations is simply dismissive medicine. It is in direct violation of a physician’s oath,”

Petitioners have 90 days to circulate and return 365,800 valid voter signatures by January 4, 2016 to the Secretary of State.

A largely volunteer effort, Hoffman said he will also be using professional petition gatherers.

“We have an incredible army of volunteers that have come forward when they heard of Brown’s signing, and more every day. But many have never done this before, so we want the professional assistance to make sure we do this right.”

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition supports the efforts of the Coalition Against Assisted Suicide and we urge all groups opposing assisted suicide to work together to achieve this monumental task.



MORE ONE-SIDED PRO-EUTHANASIA REPORTS



Prof Jocelyn Downie

Dalhousie University professor and euthanasia activist, Jocelyn Downie, recently received a Trudeau Fellowship to conduct end-of-life research. According to the Dalhousie media release:

Prof. Downie ... will receive \$225,000 over three years and has already begun her research associated with the fellowship. In June, she gathered a group of international end-of-life experts in Amsterdam to discuss how to best track incidences of assisted dying in Canada.

Downie is a leading euthanasia activist who published the book *Dying Justice: A case for decriminalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada* (2004). Downie is responsible for several “one-sided” quasi academic reports that were written by stacked committees of like-minded academics without effective input from academics who disagree.

Recently, Downie was appointed to the Provincial-Territorial Expert Advisory Group on Physician-Assisted Dying which is another stacked committee of pro-euthanasia leaders and academics asked to produce a quasi-academic, and one-sided report that will be sold to the world as legitimate research.

NEW YORK JUDGE UPHOLDS ASSISTED SUICIDE LAW

A New York state judge rejected a legal challenge to state laws that protect people from assisted suicide. According to the *New York Daily News*:

State civil judge Joan Kenney said in her ruling that the U.S. Supreme Court has already found that New York state laws prohibit assisted suicide, and the statutes are not in violation of a patient’s civil rights.

“In New York, as in most states, it is a crime to aid another to commit or attempt suicide,” Kenney said in her ruling. “But patients may refuse lifesaving medical treatment.”

Doctors could face prison time if convicted of aiding a suicide in New York.

