

Royal City Men's Club

Minutes

Meeting, August 1, 2024 9:30 to 11:00A.M.

Speaker: Don Johns

Theme: Dying with Dignity/Maid

The meeting was opened by Warren Gregg, President, at 9:50. He began with a moment of contemplation to remember lost members, and members with debilitating injuries/conditions. He welcomed everyone, including spouses, and introduced our theme and speaker for today. Frank Webster (activities committee) mentioned the visit to HMCS Haida in Hamilton which went well, and announced the visit to the steam train Museum in Puslinch on August 6th, and the upcoming day at the races at the Elora racetrack on September 13th. Martin Alderwick (membership) introduced 2 new members and guests. Julian Sale (speakers committee) introduced our speaker, Don Johns

Don Johns is a retired United Church minister living in the Village by the Arboretum with his wife, Carolyn. He served the church in congregations in Saskatchewan, Toronto and Ottawa. Don has been an active member of Dying With Dignity (DWD), a national organization of advocacy and support for those seeking medical assistance in dying (MAID). He has been trained by DWD as a Client Support volunteer and has also taken on assignments of speaking on behalf of DWD and a gentle death. He and his wife have been volunteer witnesses for those requesting MAID and have responded to over 30 calls in the Guelph/Kitchener area. They have now retired from the volunteer witness role.

Theme: Dying with Dignity/MAID

Mr Johns asked us to listen to his talk with our heads and our hearts. The difficulty is how to die. 50% of deaths occur in hospital, and 20% occur in long-term care homes. There are fewer formal funerals. Most deaths follow medical progress in diagnosis and are 'long term'. He asked: so what can we do to have a good death?

He talked about planning. First – make a will. Second: make an advanced care plan outlining your wishes. There are 10 questions to answer. The form can be found on the MAID website. Third: discuss it with your family. Four: circulate the document with your family and close friends. The MAID or Dying with Dignity websites can help. All of this will help prepare an advance care directive. This is not a legal document. It should be accompanied by a medical list form, detailing your medical

care professionals. He also mentioned a death dula who can help carry through the directive.

MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) has been legal in Canada since 2016. There have been 335,000 assisted deaths across Canada.

In order to be eligible for MAID, there are 2 tracks:

Track 1: an irremediable condition leading to inevitable death within 1 year.

Track 2: an irremediable condition but death is not imminent, as diagnosed by 2 independent experts.

In both cases you must have the ability to consent. You can sign a form to allow access for medical assistance even if you are no longer able to consent at that time, and you can opt out of the procedure at any time. When the date you set arrives, you will be asked again whether you wish to proceed. There are 3 injections, and it is painless and takes between 5 to 7 minutes.

Concerning mental illness, such as Alzheimers, there is a federal ruling pending. It has been on the books for 3 years. Consult the Dying with Dignity website for updates.

Questions:

Is dementia included? No, not currently.

Can you request assistance before you become ill? Enquire with your doctor, but generally no.

By the way, the hospice in Guelph does not recognize or allow MAID.

It would be good to prepare and sign a do not resuscitate document – a legal form. Just putting up a sign on the fridge to not resuscitate is not legal and will be ignored by health care professionals.

In Ontario - the DNR must be signed by your physician.

Talk to your family about your wishes.

What is going on in other Provinces varies.

Religious concerns must be taken up personally.

There was a round of applause, and Warren brought the meeting to an end at 11:00 A.M.

Recording secretary
Ron East

This is from Julian Sale: (Thanks Julian)

Planning a Gentle Death

This document is provided for information purposes and is accurate to the best of our

knowledge as of 1 Aug 2024. If you plan any actions or decisions based on this information, please be aware that this information is likely to change in the future, and it

is your responsibility to confirm its accuracy at the time.

First Step

Start with An Advanced Care Planning Kit from Dying With Dignity.

The DWD Advance Care Planning (ACP) Kit invites you to think about and express

your wishes for health care and treatment at the end of life. It is intended to provoke

thinking, conversation, and planning, and to encourage communication among you, your loved ones, and your health care providers. Whether or not you currently qualify for MAID, this is a valuable starting point.

<https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-resources/advance-care-planning-kit/>

Second Step

After going through this process of understanding with your family and doctor, create or update a legal Will and an Advanced Medical Directive plus a Medical Power of Attorney.

In Ontario, Canada, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) is governed by federal law under the Criminal Code of Canada, as well as provincial regulations.

According to the current legislation, a Medical Power of Attorney (also known as

a Substitute Decision-Maker or SDM) cannot apply for MAID on behalf of the person who granted the Power of Attorney.

Here are some key points regarding MAID and the role of a Medical Power of Attorney in Ontario:

1. Personal Request Requirement: The request for MAID must be made by the individual who is seeking it. It must be voluntary, informed, and free from external pressure.

2. Capacity and Consent: The individual requesting MAID must have the mental capacity to make healthcare decisions at the time of the request and at the time the procedure is performed. They must also provide informed consent throughout the process.

3. Substitute Decision-Maker Limitations: While a Medical Power of Attorney can make many healthcare decisions on behalf of the person, they are not permitted to request or consent to MAID on their behalf. This decision must be made personally by the individual seeking MAID.

4. Advance Requests: As of now, advance requests for MAID (i.e., requests made in advance for a future time when the individual may no longer have capacity) are not permitted under the law.

If you or someone you know is considering MAID, it's essential to consult with healthcare professionals and legal advisors to understand the specific requirements and ensure all legal and ethical guidelines are followed.

Next Step

If you believe you qualify for MAID, ask your doctor to help you start the application. Here are the current criteria (Aug 2024)

Dying with Dignity and MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying)

In order to be eligible to apply for MAID, two independent health care professionals must evaluate you according to the following criteria. Your doctor

can help you start this process, or if he/she is unwilling to do so, they are obliged by law to put you in touch with a medical professional who can help you.

To qualify, a person must satisfy all the following criteria

Be eligible for government-funded health insurance in Canada

Be 18 years of age or older and have decision-making capacity

Have a grievous and irremediable condition*

Have made a voluntary request for MAID that was not a result of external pressure

Give informed consent to receive MAID after having received all information needed to make this decision, including a medical diagnosis, available forms of treatment, and options to relieve suffering (including palliative care).

* To have a “grievous and irremediable medical condition,” a person must:

Have a serious illness, disease, or disability (excluding a mental disorder until March 17, 2027)

Be in an advanced state of decline that cannot be reversed

Experience unbearable physical or mental suffering from an illness, disease, disability, or state of decline that cannot be relieved under conditions that the person considers acceptable.

Dying with Dignity

<https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/>

<https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/education-resources/advance-care-planning-kit/>

<https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/end-of-life-support/get-the-facts-on-maid/>

Federal Government

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-services-benefits/medical-assistance-dying.html>

Ontario Government

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/medical-assistance-dying-and-end-life-decision>