



# OPC Communications Bulletin

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### **TAKE ACTION TODAY!!**

#### **BILL C-14 "An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)."**

On April 14, 2016, the federal government introduced Bill C-14, that, if passed, will amend the criminal code to make physician assisted suicide legal in Canada. Legislation is expected to be in place by June, 2016, as ordered by the Supreme Court of Canada following its February 6, 2015 overturning of a legal ban on physician assisted suicide.

Thousands of concerned Canadians have contacted their elected officials, respectfully expressing their concerns. Now that Bill C-14 has been introduced, there is still much work to do, and our efforts to make our views known must continue.

**It's Time To Act!!** With Bill C-14 going to second reading, it is important that we send a new wave of communications to the federal and provincial Minister of Justice, Minister of Health, and to our MP and MPP. Letters, phone calls, emails or personal visits... just make sure they get the message.

As presented, Bill C-14 does not include any protection of conscience rights for health care workers and institutions that oppose physician assisted suicide. It is suggested that this may need to take place at the provincial level, as health care is a provincial responsibility. However, to ensure consistency across Canada, the federal government must include this protection in any legislation that it passes.

We also urge you to request that **palliative care and support for the vulnerable** be expanded, with additional funding and readily available access. It is currently estimated that only 30% of Canadians have access to palliative/hospice care. This is unacceptable! Canadians should and must be given improved care options as they approach end of life. Pope Francis has stated "*Care and concern for the final stages of life is all the more necessary today, when contemporary society attempts to remove every trace of death and dying...Euthanasia and assisted suicide are serious threats to families worldwide*".

You are strongly encouraged to take part in The Catholic Women's League of Canada **12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care**. National President Barbara Dowding tells us that "True compassion is found through palliative care and access to it must be a right for all Canadians". Please take this call to prayer seriously and commit to participate in some way. Never underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer.

**Your letters, voices and prayers do make a difference!**