

Your Name Your Street Address City, Province Postal Code

Date

The Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hepburn Block  
80 Grosvenor Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Dr. Hoskins,

As a citizen of Ontario I feel it necessary to express my concerns regarding the recent health care reforms and how they will affect the accessibility to excellent ethical palliative care for all Ontarians.

With an aging population and an increase in terminal illnesses the need for excellent ethical palliative care has never been greater. The 2015 Supreme Court of Canada ruling says the law that makes it illegal for anyone to help people end their own lives should be amended to allow doctors to help in specific situations. The existing law is being reviewed and the federal government is now drafting necessary changes. The issue of euthanasia does not stand alone. In order to ensure a strong commitment to long-term options the Ontario health care system must respond to these increased needs.

I am a practicing Catholic. From a faith perspective, I believe that all people:

- should have the right to make informed and conscientious decisions about their end of life care
- decide when to refuse or withdraw life sustaining interventions when the burdens resulting from such medical treatment are clearly disproportionate to the benefits hoped for
- receive effective pain and symptom management to lessen pain and suffering
- have access to high quality palliative and hospice care that encompasses support for the physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological dimensions of the end of life experience for the dying person and their family.

Any regulations adopted as a result of the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada must:

- allow for, encourage, and promote the best palliative care possible for patients who require end of life care
- respect the *Local Health System Integration Act* (2006) ensuring that a religious organization is not required to provide a service that is contrary to its

- mission and values and that the rights of conscience for those individuals who work in health care organizations will be respected
- include a protocol for safe transfer of care when a person, after receiving relevant information to support the process of informed consent, chooses to receive care elsewhere.

As a result I have three key questions I hope you can answer:

1. How are the recent health care reforms going to affect palliative care?
2. Are Ontario doctors and health care providers going to be able to opt out of the practice of doctor assisted dying?
3. Will Catholic facilities lose funding because of this opt out decision?

I look forward to hearing back from you as to what action plans you have come up with to address palliative care in Ontario. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your name and signature]

cc your MPP