



## Message from the Registrar about Medical Assistance in Dying

Today, (June 6, 2016), Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) is legal by virtue of the constitutional rights of individuals declared by the Supreme Court of Canada ruling in *Carter v. Canada*.

This message **updates previous guidance** provided by ACP; reflecting new information important to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians as a result of the June 6, 2016 transition period for the proclamation of legislation to support MAID expiring.

### Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) – Important Update

The Supreme Court allowed individuals access to MAID during the transition period (February 6, 2016 – June 6, 2016), upon receiving a court order authorizing MAID. This is no longer required.

Today, Alberta Justice issued a [directive](#) protecting pharmacists and pharmacy technicians from criminal prosecution when supporting physicians provide MAID. This protection is limited to:

- services that are provided to consenting patients who have met the criteria outlined in *Carter*;
- pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who comply with our standards and Code of Ethics based on our guidance for MAID; and,
- the period up to federal legislation being proclaimed that protects pharmacists and pharmacy technicians from criminal prosecution when supporting a physician provide MAID.

### What does this mean to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians?

This means pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can be confident that they are able to support physicians who prescribe for MAID without risk of criminal prosecution.

*“There is no reasonable likelihood of a conviction for charges under Section 241 (counselling or aiding suicide) for physicians (or any member of the health care team including pharmacists) in providing information to a patient on the lawful provision of physician-assisted death (PAD); aiding a physician to provide a person with physician assisted death; or providing physician assisted death, when the provision of PAD is in compliance with the Supreme Court of Canada’s guidance in Carter 2015.”* — Directive from Alberta Justice

It is paramount to understand that this protection is limited to pharmacy services supporting physicians prescribing for individuals who qualify for MAID based on the conditions and limitations outlined in the *Carter* decision:

- the patient is a competent adult;
- the patient has given a clear consent to the termination of life; and,
- the patient has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.

### **What the college is doing**

The College will be reviewing and updating its guidance to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians over the next week. Additional communication will be forthcoming to advise our professions about our learnings gained during the transition period of February 6 – June 6, 2016.

### **Guidance to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians**

Until further notice from our college pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should:

1. review the [directive from Alberta Justice](#)
2. review the updated [protocol for drug interventions](#) (June 3, 2016 – password protected and posted in the members only section of ACP's website)
3. review the previous [guidance documents](#) from ACP,
  - you should discuss these with your pharmacy team members, and prepare to respond to a prescription for MAID; or
  - take the necessary steps to exercise conscientious objection consistent with our Code of Ethics
4. refer individuals inquiring about MAID to the Alberta Health Services coordinating center at [MAID.CareTeams@ahs.ca](mailto:MAID.CareTeams@ahs.ca)
5. review information about MAID posted on the [AHS website](#)
6. review the [Standards of Practice for Physicians](#) and the [Advice to Physicians](#) from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta