



September 27, 2016

Ms. Karen Matty
Chair, Fraser Health Authority Board of Directors
Mr. John Bethel
Chair, Quality Control Committee, Fraser Health Authority Board
c/o Executive Assistant to the Board
Fraser Health Corporate Office
Ste. 400 13450 102nd Avenue
Surrey, BC V3T 0H1

Dear Ms. Matty and Mr. Bethel:

It is distressing to learn that the Fraser Health Authority Board is considering mandating all palliative care units and hospice facilities under the Fraser Health Authority to provide “Medical Aid in Dying.”

The availability of assisted suicide/ euthanasia in palliative care wards will undermine the contribution of palliative care at the very time it needs support and development. What a cruel dilemma to offer palliative care patients – compassionate care or death, as equally viable options.

Such a decision will also create a terrible conflict of interest for palliative care workers who see their departments as sacred places to alleviate suffering and honour human dignity. These doctors, nurses and clinicians are trained for and passionate about accompanying their patients through the final stages of life. Instead, they will watch vulnerable people they care for offered an economically expedient shortcut in the form of a lethal injection. In addition, these palliative care workers may be forced to participate in medically assisted suicide, contrary to their ethical principles.

[Attached is a letter](#) I have sent to all hospitals and Catholic health-care institutions in the Lower Mainland, outlining my concerns about the spread of euthanasia and assisted suicide in B.C. In it, I make clear that the Church is a strong advocate for true palliative care, which means alleviating pain, managing symptoms, and bringing relief to suffering. As the World Health Organization has stated, palliative care does not mean hastening death, it means improving the quality of life.

I am also including an opinion piece by a Calgary palliative care physician who makes an unassailable case for clear separation between palliative care and assisted suicide. Dr. Leonie Herx clearly establishes there is no place in palliative care for assisted suicide. <http://www.current-oncology.com/index.php/oncology/article/view/2631/1753>



Archdiocese of Vancouver

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With cordial best wishes and gratitude for the loving attention given to the patients entrusted to your care, I am

Sincerely yours,

+J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

cc: Honorable Christy Clark
Premier of British Columbia
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Honorable Dr. Terry Lake
Minister of Health
Room 337, Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Mr. George Heyman
MLA- Vancouver-Fairview
642 West Broadway
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