

# Results of the CMA Member Survey on Medical Assistance in Dying, June 2016

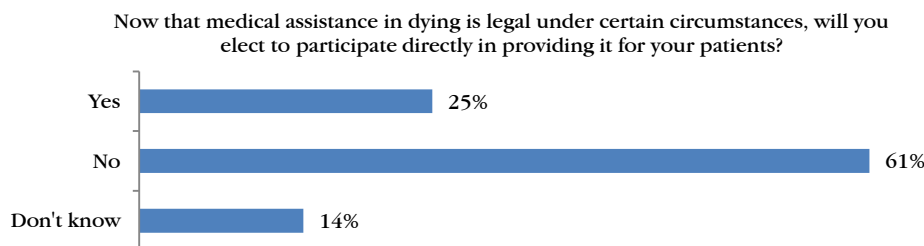
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For over two years, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has led the national conversation on end-of-life care in Canada with both our members and the public. These critical conversations allowed the association to bring forward the physician perspective as well as to ensure that the needs of patients were represented with regulators, governments and others.

The CMA continues to seek input from its members into this critical issue, most recently through a brief survey. The survey accompanied an update on the status of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Canada that was sent on June 10, 2016, prior to the passing of Bill C-14 Medical assistance in dying. The anonymous survey went to all members with available email addresses (67,731 members) and received 2779 responses (4% response rate). It closed on June 22, 2016. No reminders or follow-up emails were sent. Here is how CMA members responded.

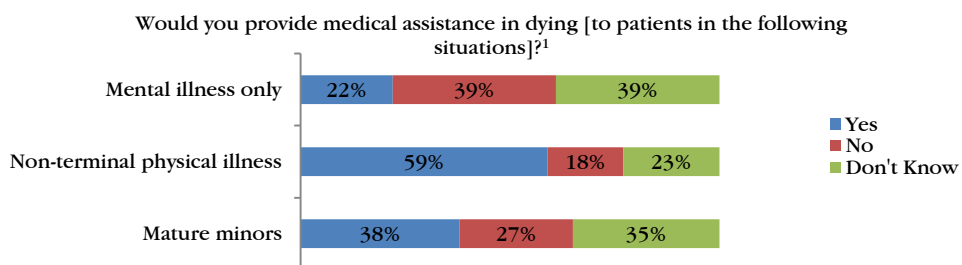
## Willingness to participate

- Approximately 25% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in assistance in dying for their patients. The majority of respondents indicated they would not participate (61%) or were not sure if they would (14%).



## Physicians willing to participate

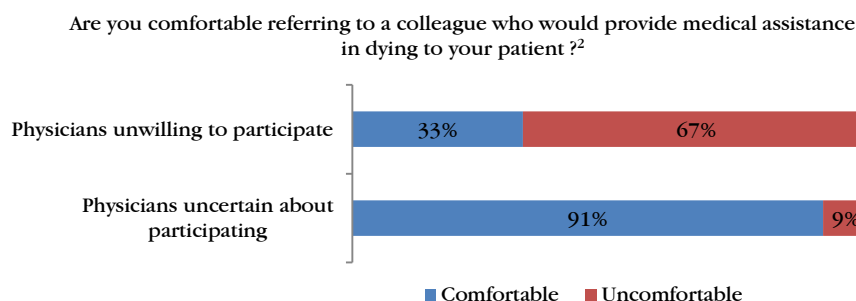
- Of those willing to participate, less than a quarter (22%) would consider providing it for patients whose sole diagnosis is mental illness, though 59% would provide it for non-terminal physical illness. Thirty eight percent would provide the service to mature minors.



- While male and female respondents were equally likely to agree they would participate in MAiD (25%), female physicians were less likely to agree to provide it for patients whose sole diagnosis is mental illness (16% of those willing to participate) compared to their male colleagues (28%). A similar comparison between female and males can be seen when it comes to patients with non-terminal illness (53% females and 64% males would provide the service) and mature minors (33% females, 42% males).

#### Physicians unwilling to participate or unsure about participation

- Of those who were definitive about not providing the service (61%), two thirds (67%) would also be uncomfortable referring to a colleague who would provide the service. Those who were uncertain as to their own participation (14%), on the other hand, were more likely to be comfortable making a referral with 91% saying so.



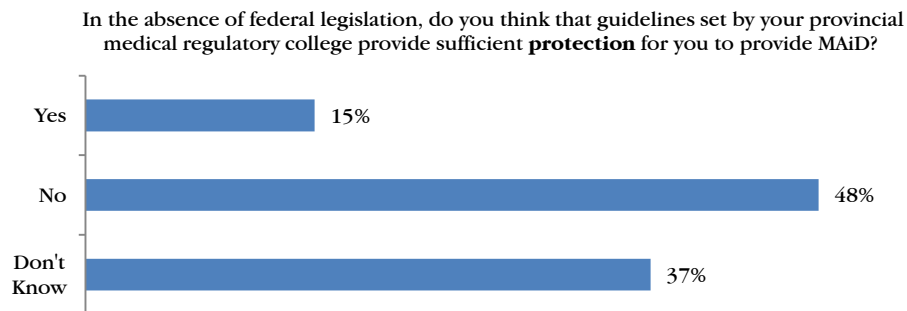
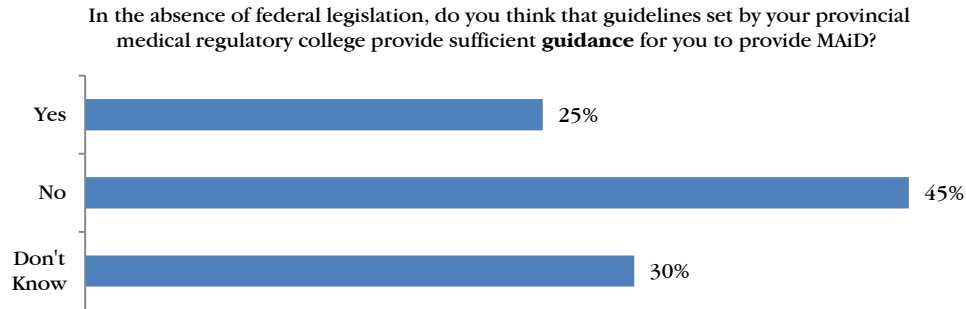
- Half of female physicians, who would not provide medical aid in dying themselves or were uncertain, indicated they would be comfortable referring, compared to 39% of male physicians in the same situation.

#### Physicians' perceptions about provincial/federal guidelines

- A quarter of respondents felt that guidelines set by their provincial medical regulatory college provide sufficient **guidance** for them to provide MAiD, while 15% felt they provided enough **protection**.

<sup>1</sup> Asked only of those who indicated they would participate directly in providing medical assistance in dying for patients (n = 682)

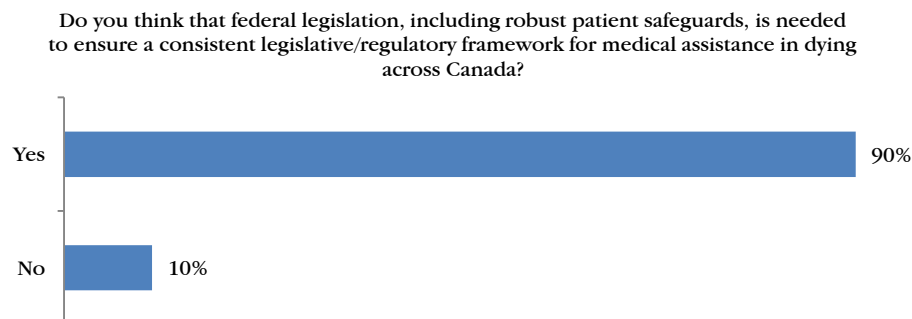
<sup>2</sup> Asked only those who indicated they would NOT participate directly in providing medical assistance in dying for patients or did not know if they would (n = 2085)



- A greater proportion of respondents from Quebec (43%) were confident that guidelines set by their provincial medical regulatory college provide sufficient guidance for them to provide MAiD, while respondents from New Brunswick were least likely to feel this way (11%).
- With respect to protection, again Quebec members agreed in greater proportions (31%) that provincial guidelines were sufficient while those in New Brunswick were again least likely to respond positively (7%).

Physicians’ perceptions about federal legislation

- On average, 90% of respondents felt there was a need for federal legislation, including robust patient safeguards, to ensure a consistent legislative/regulatory framework for MAiD across Canada, but results varied slightly across the country. In Newfoundland almost all respondents (98%) felt this way while in Quebec 84% agreed to the need for federal legislation.



### All national level results

1. Now that medical assistance in dying is legal under certain circumstances, will you elect to participate directly in providing it for your patients? ( $n=2779$ )

Yes – 24.7%

*Yes, I will participate – 12.4%*

*Yes, in some cases – 12.3%*

No, I will not participate – 61.5%

I don't know – 13.8%

- A) Would you provide medical assistance in dying for patients whose sole diagnosis is mental illness?<sup>1</sup>

Yes – 22.5%

No – 38.9%

I don't know – 38.6%

- B) Would you provide medical assistance in dying for patients with a non-terminal (i.e. life-limiting) physical illness?<sup>1</sup>

Yes – 58.8%

No – 17.8%

I don't know – 23.4%

- C) Would you provide medical assistance in dying for mature minors?<sup>1</sup>

Yes – 38.5%

No – 26.6%

I don't know – 34.9%

- D) Would you implement an advance care directive that includes medical assistance in dying?<sup>1</sup>

Yes – 77.4%

No – 5.1%

I don't know – 17.4%

- E) Would you feel comfortable referring a patient to a colleague who would provide medical assistance in dying to your patient?<sup>2</sup>

Very comfortable – 22.7%

Somewhat comfortable – 21.2%

Not very comfortable – 16.2%

Not at all comfortable – 39.9%

<sup>1</sup> Asked only of those who indicated they would participate directly in providing medical assistance in dying for patients ( $n = 682$ )

<sup>2</sup> Asked only those who indicated they would NOT participate directly in providing medical assistance in dying for patients or did not know if they would ( $n = 2085$ )

2. A) In the absence of federal legislation, do you think that guidelines set by your provincial medical regulatory college provide sufficient guidance for you to provide medical assistance in dying? (*n* = 2708)

Yes – 25.0%

No – 45.0%

I don't know – 30.1%

- B) In the absence of federal legislation, do you think that guidelines set by your provincial medical regulatory college provide sufficient protection for you to provide medical assistance in dying? (*n* = 2708)

Yes – 15.1%

No – 48.3%

I don't know – 36.6%

3. Do you think that federal legislation, including robust patient safeguards, is needed to ensure a consistent legislative/regulatory framework for medical assistance in dying across Canada? (*n* = 2704)

Yes – 89.7%

No – 10.3%

Prepared by the Canadian Medical Association  
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