

## How do I make a formal request for Medical Assistance in Dying in Alberta?

### 1. What steps do I follow to make a request for medical assistance in dying?

We recommend you:

- a) Speak with your doctor or nurse practitioner about all care and end-of-life options, including palliative care, available to you.
- b) Have a conversation with your family and loved ones about your options.
- c) If you decide to explore Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID), your doctor or nurse practitioner can connect you to the Medical Assistance in Dying Care Coordination Service at [maid.careteam@ahs.ca](mailto:maid.careteam@ahs.ca) if you have not already been connected. When you reach out, please provide the best contact information to allow us to reach you.
- d) The Medical Assistance in Dying Care Coordination Service can provide you with information on the steps you will need to take to complete and submit a formal request for Medical Assistance in Dying.
- e) Once the formal request has been received by the Medical Assistance in Dying Care Coordination Service or your doctor or nurse practitioner, another meeting will be held to review all care and end-of-life options available. This is an important step to ensuring your symptoms, like pain, are managed as you explore Medical Assistance in Dying.

### 2. What happens after I submit my formal request?

Once a formal request has been received and reviewed, you will be assessed by two different independent practitioners to determine if you meet all eligibility criteria and that all the safeguards (both set out by the federal legislation) are met. Please note that the MAID process involves multiple steps, including assessment by two different practitioners, all of which can take some time. We do still try our best to accommodate patients as quickly as possible.

### 3. What types of assessments will be required?

Two mandatory eligibility assessments will be required to ensure that you have met the criteria for eligibility as identified by the legislation. The assessments will need to be provided by a doctor or nurse practitioner licensed to practice in Alberta.

### 4. What happens if I do not meet all the criteria for eligibility set out in the law?

If, following the two mandatory eligibility assessments, you are found to be ineligible for MAID, the doctor, nurse practitioner or Care Coordination Team will discuss the next steps available to you. You will then be able to make a decision about the services other than MAID that best fit your needs.

### 5. How far in advance can I plan for MAID after I have received a diagnosis?

All patients requesting MAID must meet all of the mandatory eligibility criteria at the time of the formal request and at the time of the provision of the service itself. This means that, under the law, you cannot pre-plan MAID based on how you believe you may feel in the future.

**a) I thought under Bill C-7 I do not need to provide final consent at the time of provision?**

On March 17, 2021 changes to the MAID Legislation allow you to waive the requirement for final consent, ONLY if the following conditions are met:

1. Your natural death is reasonably foreseeable; AND
2. While you had decision making capacity you:
  - were assessed and approved to receive MAID;
  - entered into a written arrangement with the providing practitioner who would administer a substance to cause your death on a specified day
  - has been informed by the providing practitioner that you are at risk of losing your capacity to consent to receive MAID
  - in the written arrangement you consented to receive MAID on or before the day specified in the arrangement if you lost your capacity to consent prior to that day

**6. What happens when my natural death is NOT reasonably foreseeable?**

If the practitioner(s) assessing your request for MAID determine that your death is not reasonably foreseeable, the following legislated safeguards must be met to be eligible to receive MAID:

- one of the two practitioners assessing your request for MAID must have expertise in the medical condition causing your suffering. If neither of the practitioners have the expertise, another practitioner with expertise in your medical condition that is causing your suffering must be consulted in the assessment process.
- you are informed of available and appropriate means to relieve your suffering, including counselling services, mental health and disability support services, community services, and palliative care, and you must be offered consultations with professionals who provide those services.
- both assessors have discussed the reasonable and available means to relieve your suffering, and both agree that you have seriously considered those means.
- the assessment period must take a minimum of 90 days, unless the assessments have been completed sooner and you are at imminent risk of losing your capacity to consent.
- immediately before providing MAID, the practitioner must give you an opportunity to withdraw your request and ensure you give express consent to receive MAID

**7. How is it determined if my natural death is reasonably foreseeable or not?**

Reasonably foreseeable natural death is a clinical determination, which is assessed on a case by case basis. The practitioner takes into account your complete medical history and circumstances. Although reasonably foreseeable natural death is not defined by a maximum and minimum prognosis, it does require a temporal link to death in the sense that you are approaching the end of your life in the near term.

**8. If my natural death is NOT reasonably foreseeable, when does my 90 day assessment period start?**

Your assessment period begins on the day on which a practitioner begins the first assessment of whether you meet the MAID eligibility criteria.

## **9. What else do I need to know as I plan my end of life journey?**

The Alberta Government has created a guide to assist patients and families with planning at end of life. The link to the *Saying Farewell* document can be found on the AHS Medical Assistance in Dying Webpage: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page14380.aspx>.

## **10. What is Palliative Care?**

The Palliative and End-of-Life Care (PEOLC) program aims to relieve symptoms and improve the quality of living and dying for a person and/or family living with a life threatening illness.

## **11. How are Palliative Care services delivered in Alberta?**

PEOLC services are delivered by an interdisciplinary team comprised of nurses, rehabilitation therapists, and social workers, along with volunteers and support service providers. Twenty-four hour on-call nursing support is also available.

## **12. Who can I contact to learn more about Palliative Care services in Alberta?**

The PEOLC Consultant team works in partnership with family physicians and Palliative Home Care to address distressing symptoms experienced by a client or to access Palliative Hospice. For assistance and information send your questions to: [palliative.care@ahs](mailto:palliative.care@ahs).

## **13. Can I access Palliative Care services while I explore MAID?**

Yes. Palliative care services may be a very important part of your end-of-life journey. The Palliative Care team will work with you, your family and your doctor or nurse practitioner to manage your pain or symptoms to support improving your quality of life.

## **14. How do I know if Palliative Care is right for me?**

The doctor or nurse practitioner you see regularly for your care will be happy to discuss all the options with you. These options will include palliative care. To learn more about the Palliative Care services available to you please visit this link: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/HealthTopics/Palliative-Care>.

## **15. Where can I find more information?**

For assistance and information send your questions to the Alberta Health Services Medical Assistance in Dying Care Coordination Service at: [Maid.careteam@ahs.ca](mailto:Maid.careteam@ahs.ca).

You can also find information and resources on the Alberta Health Services (AHS) website at [www.AHS.ca/MAID](http://www.AHS.ca/MAID).