

2020 Annual Report

Who We Are

Founded in 2007, the Association québécoise pour le droit de mourir dans la dignité (AQDMD) is a volunteer citizen association that has both medical and legal expertise related to medical assistance in dying (MAID). Our members include people affected by this issue. We defend a reality that we understand well and act as a key player in providing information and advancing the legal framework surrounding MAID. We share our expertise with decision makers and with our society's information providers.

Our Vision

All Quebecers with the capacity to consent can decide how to carry out their end of life. In keeping with legal criteria, they must therefore be allowed to opt for a solution that aligns with their values.

Our Mission

The AQDMD works to ensure that each citizen can, legally, choose and receive end-of-life care that includes medical assistance in dying, in accordance with their own concept of dignity.

Our Values

Commitment, empathy, expertise, and autonomy.

AQDMD Members

Becoming a member means wanting to stay informed about the right to die with dignity, defending its legitimacy and advocating for its legality.

Becoming a member means showing your support in furthering the causes that we defend and the debates surrounding them.

Becoming a member means committing to civic action that will make your voice heard.

Becoming a member means endorsing the AQDMD philosophy and paying your membership fee to access member benefits.

AQDMD Projects — 2020 Highlights

I. Defending the rights of citizens

A. Gladu-Truchon trial (2019)

Mr. Jean Truchon and Ms. Nicole Gladu, two adults with the capacity to consent, were suffering from grievous, irreversible disabilities that caused intolerable suffering, but did not limit their life expectancy. In 2017, they filed a judicial application to obtain a declaration of unconstitutionality regarding the restrictive temporal criteria in both federal and Quebec law. The plaintiffs claimed that federal Act and the Quebec Act both infringed on their right to life, liberty, and security, in accordance with section 7 of the Charter, as well as their right to equality in accordance with section 15 of the Charter.

The AQDMD was present during the trial and supported the plaintiffs' claims, acting as an intervener in the case, alongside Dying with Dignity Canada (DWDC).

A.1 Judgment issued by Judge Christine Baudouin of the Superior Court of Quebec on September 11, 2019

The Court eventually ruled in favour of the plaintiffs and interveners AQDMD and DWDC, stating that the federal and provincial criteria were unconstitutional. The declaration of unconstitutionality was suspended for six months and the plaintiffs were granted a constitutional exemption, notwithstanding an appeal, allowing them access to MAID at the time of their choosing.

B. Bill C-7 (Initiated following the Gladu/Truchon judgment)

B.1 Consultations and forum (January 2020)

The AQDMD was summoned by the federal government during consultations with specific people and organizations affected by MAID and C-14 changes. The AQDMD was also invited to attend the forum on medical assistance in dying for persons who do not have the capacity to consent, a forum that was set up by the government of Quebec.

B.2 The AQDMD speaks at hearings on Bill C-7 (November 2020)

When federal hearings on Bill C-7 resumed, the AQDMD was invited to comment (via Zoom) and to present its brief, first to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights in the House of Commons, on November 3, 2020, and then to a Senate committee on November 23, 2020.

Statement from the AQDMD following the work carried out on Bill C-7 in 2020: our position has been heard, as was the case for other activist groups in favour of expanding access to MAID, according to criteria issued by the Supreme Court of Canada in February 2015.

B.3 Bill C-7 is passed, amending C-14

- First extension granted to the government by the Superior Court of Quebec until July 12, 2020, due to the election campaign.
- Second extension granted to the government by the Superior Court of Quebec until December 18, 2020, due to the health emergency caused by COVID-19.
- Third extension granted to the government by the Superior Court of Quebec until February 26, 2021, due to the health emergency caused by COVID-19.

II. Informing the public

Despite the pandemic, the AQDMD maintained its efforts to educate the public in 2020, through interviews and conferences offered by its president, Dr. Georges L'Espérance, primarily focusing on eligibility criteria for MAID and advance medical directives.



Summary

Date	Location	Leader	Event	Audience
January 23, 2020	Candiac	G. L'Espérance	Conference - MAID & Advance Requests	Bénévoles Rive-sud
January 30, 2020	Ste-Julie	G. L'Espérance	Conference - MAID & Advance Requests	Informal caregivers
February 19, 2020	Lévis	G. L'Espérance	Conference - MAID & Advance Requests	Care centre
Public education initiatives ceased, due to the pandemic (March to September 2020)				
September 17, 2020	Virtual, Zoom	G. L'Espérance	Conference - MAID & Advance Requests	Association humaniste du Québec
November 22, 2020	Virtual, Zoom	G. L'Espérance	Conference - MAID & Advance Requests	Association SEPHYR (multiple sclerosis - caregivers)
November 25, 2020	Montreal, live	G. L'Espérance	1-hour podcast interview	Salon de la mort, Ms. Phoudsady Vanny
December 1, 2020	Virtual, Zoom	G. L'Espérance	Conference—MAID, a medical update	Quebec Bar (organized by Langlois-Mtl)

AQDMD Weaknesses in 2020

- New organization, in the start-up phase.
- Administration work is done only by members of the board of directors (volunteers).
- Limited visibility.
- Challenges in following-up with membership renewal.
- National representation remains underdeveloped.
- Network and partnerships remain underdeveloped.
- A part of the population lacks information about MAID, which sometimes leads to misinformation and confusion.

AQDMD Priorities for 2021

- **Priority #1**
Increase public sources of information about protecting the rights of citizens when it comes to MAID.
- **Priority #2**
Increase AQDMD membership numbers and encourage community mobilization.
- **Priority #3**
Actively work to expand the criteria for MAID eligibility, especially for advance requests made by patients with a neurocognitive degenerative disease.