

Select Committee on the Evolution of the Act respecting end-of-life care
At a hearing, the AQDMD calls for progress on medical assistance in dying

Montreal, August 13, 2021 • The Association québécoise pour le droit de mourir dans la dignité (AQDMD) was heard on Thursday, August 12, during consultations conducted by the Select Committee on the Evolution of the Act respecting end-of-life care. The AQDMD stated that it is in favour of opening advance medical directives for people with cognitive neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, in accordance with the expressed wishes of the Quebecers. The AQDMD also strongly reiterated that medical assistance in dying must be extended to people whose sole condition is a mental illness, once specific eligibility criteria have been established.

The AQDMD made a case for the right to make advance requests for MAID

Represented by its president, neurosurgeon Georges L'Espérance, the AQDMD asked that advance requests be allowed for people suffering from a cognitive neurodegenerative disease like Alzheimer's disease. The AQDMD believes that **if a person suffering from a cognitive neurodegenerative disease wants to opt for MAID administered at a later date, the person must be allowed to make this choice, as long as they have the capacity to consent, even if they may have lost their cognitive function by the time the decision is to be applied.**

"This will save these patients an end of life that goes against their values and their dignity, which is unfortunately inevitable, due to the known progression of these types of diseases. It will also afford patients some peace of mind and, above all, avoid the need to consider a hasty end of life," explained Georges L'Espérance. Here is the current state of affairs: because the capacity to consent is required to receive MAID, patients who wish to receive MAID and who are facing these challenges have no other choice but to get it while they are still lucid, thus losing several months and precious moments with their loved ones.

The AQDMD recommends expanding MAID to include people whose sole medical condition is a mental illness

For now, people whose sole condition is a mental illness cannot access MAID. Given this **discriminatory exclusion**, the AQDMD requested that MAID be expanded to include these patients." There is no reason that people suffering from a mental illness should not benefit, like other citizens, from MAID. **Patients whose mental illness is treatment resistant must be allowed to shorten their suffering if they wish to do so,**" argued Georges L'Espérance. The AQDMD recommends that experts and stakeholder groups be contacted to establish strict criteria for access to MAID.

Mature minors and specialized nurse practitioners (SNP) among the demands

This hearing also provided the opportunity to address other core issues related to MAID in Quebec. The President of the AQDMD requested **opening MAID to mature minors**. He also asked that **SNPs be authorized to assess patients and provide MAID**, as is the case elsewhere in Canada. These matters will need to be addressed again in future discussions about MAID. As a first step, the Committee's report should be delivered no later than November 19th.

To find AQDMD briefs: [click here](#).

To listen to hearing in which Dr. Georges L'Espérance addressed the Committee: [click here](#).

About the AQDMD

Founded in 2007, the Association québécoise pour le droit de mourir dans la dignité (AQDMD) works to ensure that legislation allows every citizen to choose and receive end-of-life care that includes medical assistance in dying, in accordance with their personal concept of dignity. For more information: <https://aqdmd.org/>

- 30 -

Information: Laurie Marcellesi - Wink Strategies
laurie.marcellesi@winkstrategies.com - 514-558-3703

Sources:

Georges L'Espérance, President of the AQDMD - [https://aqdmd.org/
National Assembly](https://aqdmd.org/National Assembly)