



College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

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NOTICE TO PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY MANAGERS

Date: JUNE 23, 2016

From: Susan Lessard-Friesen, Registrar

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All Pharmacy Managers are responsible for informing their pharmacy staff of the information below.

Update on Medical Assistance In Dying (MAID) (formerly physician assisted dying)

The Federal government gave Royal Assent to Bill C-14, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)* on June 17, 2016. This legislation is now in force and governs the provision of medical assistance in dying (MAID) across Canada. A major change in the new law is with respect to the criteria that must be met for a patient to be eligible for MAID. In the federal legislation (Bill C-14) it states that the person's "natural death must be reasonably foreseeable, taking into account all of their medical circumstances, without a prognosis necessarily having been made as to the specific length of time that they have remaining."

The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) is reviewing the new legislative framework in communication with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba and the provincial departments of Justice and Health. In the interim, although it is legally permissible for a person to receive MAID, physicians, nurses and **pharmacists are advised to seek legal advice to ensure that their involvement qualifies for exemption from criminal prosecution in that it complies with the criteria set out in the new legislation.** The Federal government may make regulations that will further clarify this new legislation. As there exists considerable uncertainty as to the exact interpretation of the new legislation at this time, **the College advises that pharmacists seek legal advice prior to engaging in the provision of this service.**

Currently, a Provincial Clinical Medical Team for the provision of MAID (MAID Expert Medical Team) exists and serves as a clinical services model for Manitoba. The MAID Expert Medical Team is composed of select physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare/social services professionals as required and is currently involved in guideline development for the provision of MAID including the injectable medications to be used. **At the present time, the MAID Expert Medical Team has determined that currently available oral medications are unsuitable for use in the provision of MAID.** Once the new legislation is better understood and guidelines for the province are established, education and training for health professionals providing this service will be made available. The MAID Expert Medical Team continues to function as a provincial resource and support centre for the provision of MAID in Manitoba.

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) has taken on a leadership role in the provision of MAID through the MAID Expert Medical Team and is supported by Manitoba Health. **Pharmacists should refer all inquiries from the public, patients or other health professionals, including prescribers writing prescriptions suspected for use in MAID, to the MAID Expert Medical Team at the WRHA by calling 204-926-1380 or email to maid@wrha.mb.ca.** The CPhM will keep pharmacists informed of further developments regarding the provision of MAID in Manitoba. Pharmacists may contact Susan Lessard-Friesen or Todd Mereniuk at the CPhM office at 204-233-1411.