



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF LAW

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Canada's Headlong Assisted Death Expansion: Compassionate Medical Assistance in Dying, or Negligent Social Suicide Promotion?

Commentator: Dr. Derryck H. Smith,
Clinical Professor Emeritus, Department
of Psychiatry, University of British
Columbia

Thursday, October 28, 2021 12:30 -
2:00
Online event. Registration required:
events.law@utoronto.ca

Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS)/Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) has been legalized or decriminalized in well over a dozen jurisdictions around the world, and policies continue to evolve rapidly. Many others are exploring whether to introduce assisted dying laws, or expand existing laws. There is wide variation between PAS/MAiD frameworks, including how policies address potential applications for assisted dying for mental illness. PAS for sole criterion mental illness is available in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland, and recent Canadian legislation will permit psychiatric euthanasia by 2023.

This session will explore medicolegal, scientific, ethical and public policy issues related to PAS/MAiD, focusing on the particular challenges posed with mental illnesses in the context of PAS/MAiD. This will include review of the Canadian experience and significant policy developments, exploration of differences between different groups who seek PAS/MAiD for different reasons, and potential impacts of expanding PAS/MAiD laws on marginalized populations suffering from life distress.

Dr. Gaind is a full Professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto (U of T) and Chief of Psychiatry at Humber River Hospital. He is co-Director of the U of T Adult Psychiatry & Health Systems Division and a University Governor, an Honorary Member of the World Psychiatric Association, an Executive Member and Medical Practice & Tariff Chair of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) Section on Psychiatry and Chair of the OMA Relativity Advisory Committee, and a Past-President of both the Ontario Psychiatric Association and of PAIRO. He has testified in front of various parliamentary and other committees related to MAiD. He was a member of the Council of Canadians Expert Panel on Mental Disorders and Assisted Dying and he was an expert witness for the Attorney General in the Truchon case.