



Sometimes, despite palliative care and the accompaniment offered to those at the last stage of life, certain pains are not relieved satisfactorily. Then, medical assistance when dying may become an option worth considering for someone for whom, all options were deemed unsatisfactory and who would prefer to die rather than to continue suffering.

What is medical assistance when dying?

The Act respecting end-of-life care, which entered in effect on December 10th, 2015, defines medical assistance when dying as "care consisting of administration of medicine or substance by a physician to an end-of-life patient, at the patient's request, in order to relieve their suffering by accelerating death."

CENTRE INTÉGRÉ DE SANTÉ ET DE SERVICES SOCIAUX DE LA CÔTE-NORD

The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de la Côte-Nord serves a population of about 95 000 residents, on a territory spread from Tadoussac to Blanc-Sablon (nearly 1300 km of coastline), including Anticosti Island and the northern cities of Fermont and Schefferville.

The CISSS de la Côte-Nord is in charge of planning, coordinating, organizing and offering social and health services to the entire population of the region. It includes about fifty facilities and 3 600 employees.

For more details, you may also visit the following website:

<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/systeme-et-services-de-sante/soins-de-fin-de-vie/aide-medicale-a-mourir/>

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Centre intégré
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de la Côte-Nord



MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WHEN DYING

CARE REGULATED BY THE ACT
RESPECTING END-OF-LIFE CARE

DIRECTION DES SERVICES
PROFESSIONNELS ET DE
L'ENSEIGNEMENT UNIVERSITAIRE



WHO CAN RECEIVE IT ?

The Act respecting end-of-life care provides the criteria to allow recourse to medical assistance when dying. The person must:

- ◆ Be covered under the Health Insurance Act (Sun Card).
- ◆ Be of age and capable of giving consent to care.
- ◆ Be at the end of life.
- ◆ Suffer from a serious and incurable illness.
- ◆ Be in an advanced state of irreversible decline in capabilities.
- ◆ Experience constant and unbearable physical or psychological pain, that cannot be relieved in a manner the patient deems tolerable.

**Only a patient who meets
all the criteria can obtain medical
aid when dying**

The request must be made on a volunteer basis and an informed manner by the concerned person.

With some exceptions, the Act provides for a minimum of 10 days between the moment you sign the request and the moment the medical aid is administered to you.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO TAKE TO GET MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WHEN DYING ?

Know that you can withdraw your request and end the process at any time along the way.

1. The information request

You can ask a member of the care team (physician, nurse, social worker, etc.) for information on medical assistance when dying at any time. The health professional must answer your questions on the process or refer you to a colleague who will be able to do so.

2. The written request

If you want to make an official request, there is a form provided for that purpose. You must sign and date it in the presence of a health professional and two independent witnesses. Ask a health professional to accompany you for this step.

3. The medical evaluation

In the days following the signature, you will be evaluated by two physicians who must confirm that you can receive medical assistance when dying. Do not hesitate to ask them questions or share your concerns with them. If one of the physicians judges that you are not eligible, your request will be refused.

THE PLANNING

A social worker will be assigned to your file, to accompany you and your relatives through the entire process.

In collaboration with your care team, you will be able to plan the day on which you want it to happen, the place (home, hospital, etc.), the number of relatives, and if you want any rituals in particular.

It is important to make sure your legal documents are completed according to your will.

THE DAY OF THE ADMINISTRATION

A few hours before, the nurse will install an intravenous line in order to administer the medication.

When the time comes, the physician will validate your capability to give consent and will ask you if you still want to receive medical assistance in dying. After having obtained your consent, the physician will administer three intravenous medications:

- ◆ The first one is to relax you.
- ◆ The second one causes a state of deep induced coma.
- ◆ The third one causes respiratory arrest, cardiac arrest and death.

The physician will remain at your bedside until your death.