Dear Minister:

We are writing to you on behalf of the Faith and Life Sciences Reference Group of The Canadian Council of Churches regarding the proposed change to medical assistance in dying (MAiD) that would allow persons whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness to be eligible for MAiD.

As Christians representing many different member churches, we are united in having serious concerns about this expansion. In a world where vulnerable people are often considered bereft of dignity or treated in undignified ways, we believe that God has given all human beings intrinsic dignity that cannot be taken away or lost. Therefore, we agree with the 2026 Report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying's[1] recommendation that the Criminal Code be amended to indefinitely exclude this expansion.

We also share many of the Committee's practical concerns:

1. There is no consensus among health care professionals on the irremediability of mental illness, meaning that any clinical judgement about patient eligibility for MAiD would be unacceptably subjective. Such subjectivity has the potential to damage the patient-physician relationship needed for effective treatment.

2. Mental illness can affect a person's ability to make sound and stable judgments. This impacts their ability to offer free, informed, and enduring consent to MAiD, especially since suicidal ideation can be a symptom of mental illness.

3. Our final and most pressing concern is that this expansion would make a group of already vulnerable Canadians more vulnerable. Currently, mental health care in Canada is underfunded and under-resourced, which can increase the suffering of those with mental illness, further limiting their freedom to make meaningful choices.

As Christians, we recognize that human suffering is complex and that it can take different forms. Identifying these forms of suffering helps us develop the kinds of care people with mental illness need. Not only do people with mental illness suffer from the difficulty of accessing adequate mental health care, they can also suffer from poverty, inadequate housing, discrimination, stigma, isolation, and other forces that render them uniquely vulnerable. We invite all Canadians, including government leaders, to work towards a society that provides whole person care for those with mental illness, recognizing their dignity and protecting their quality of life.[2]

With this in mind, we urge our government to reject the proposed expansion of eligibility for MAiD to persons whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness.

Signatories (in alphabetical order),

[1] Parliament of Canada, Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, *Report 1: Medical Assistance in Dying and Mental Disorder as the Sole Underlying Condition*, June 2026.

[2] Canadian Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Witness, *Towards Wellbeing: Mental Wholeness in Church, Person, and Community*, June 2025. [Also in French].

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- **Dr. Cory Andrew Labrecque,** Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Québec City, QC. PhD, Associate Professor of Theological Ethics and Bioethics, Director of Graduate Studies in Theology, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Université Laval.
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