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Dear Church Leaders,

I wanted to let you know of a conversation I had recently with a medical doctor and the President of the CMDA (Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada). They described to me the difficult situation our Ontario medical professionals are in following the most recent amendments to Bill C-7. They are asking for our support in the protection of their conscience rights.

*In a recent communication the CMDA wrote, "In June 2016, Canada legalized euthanasia/assisted suicide (referred to in legislation as Medical Assistance in Dying or MAiD), with more than 20,000 Canadians seeking assisted death since that time. In Ontario there was a 33% increase in 2020 with 2,378 reported euthanasia deaths over previous years. In 2016, there were 189 deaths by euthanasia, another 841 in 2018, and 1,789 patients died by euthanasia in 2019. The House of Commons has recently passed new legislation (Bill C-7), making it easier to end one's life by lethal injection. The new bill removes the "reasonably foreseeable death" criteria, allowing people with a non-terminal diagnosis like a chronic illness or a disability to meet the eligibility requirements, a change strongly opposed by the disability rights community. The updated legislation also "fast tracks" the ability for an individual whose diagnosis is terminal to seek euthanasia, removing a 10-day waiting period present in the original legislation.*

*The federal government is expanding that access, making it available for many vulnerable people, including those who are not dying. This puts people with disabilities, including those whose sole qualifying diagnosis is mental health related, at risk of choosing euthanasia at a low point in their lives.*

*And further, there is no legislative protection of conscience rights for healthcare professionals in Ontario. In a recent Ontario court case, the court held that doctors who have conscientious objections to helping patients access euthanasia must leave family medicine, palliative care and other specialties and move to pathology or laboratory medicine. This effectively leaves only 5% of all medical positions available to them. Many doctors and nurses in Ontario have left the province, retired, or can no longer assist patients in palliative care. We can't afford to lose these dedicated healthcare professionals. We must also encourage those who will choose this vocation in the future."*

Our Christian medical community needs our help. They are asking us, as church leaders, to let our congregations know how they can contact the Ontario government to help protect doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals whose faith or conscience won't allow them to participate in assisted suicide and euthanasia. The Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience has a simple way to email the Ontario government, and it can be easily accessed through their website: [www.canadiansforconscience.ca/ontario](http://www.canadiansforconscience.ca/ontario)

To help you share this information with your congregation, they have prepared a video of healthcare professionals explaining why they cannot participate in euthanasia or assisted suicide and describing the need for conscience protection: [bit.ly/2021ConscienceVideo](http://bit.ly/2021ConscienceVideo)

A variety of other resources can be found at this link: [bit.ly/2021ConscienceCampaign](http://bit.ly/2021ConscienceCampaign) There is a sample letter to send to your congregation, social media graphics for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and more background information about assisted suicide and euthanasia. Also included is the Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience privacy policy.

We have been told that when ordinary citizens write letters to our government leaders, it is far more impacting than when organizations write on their behalf. We urge you to encourage the people of your church to actively engage their MPP regarding this conscience issue. Thank you for prayerfully considering how we as a Fellowship of churches can support our medical community during this critical time.

Blessings,  
Rick Buck  
Regional Director  
FEB Central Ministries