

## **AHPCA - Statement on Assisted or Hastened Death**

### **Background**

The February 6, 2015 Supreme Court of Canada's ruling to end the prohibition against assisted or hastened death for people who are suffering intolerably from serious incurable health conditions is a major development in relation to death and dying in Canada.

### **Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA)**

The AHPCA engages in education, advocacy, and provision of resources to achieve comprehensive and quality hospice palliative and end of life care for all Albertans.

The roles of the AHPCA are based on the World Health Organization's definition of hospice/palliative care as an "approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual" (Sepúlveda, Marlin, Yoshida, and Ullrich, 2002, p. 94).

The AHPCA advocates for access to hospice palliative care for all Albertans.

### **Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association (AHPCA) Statement**

The AHPCA recognizes that every individual has different needs and wishes for their end of life. Care efforts must recognize and successfully address these needs and wishes.

The AHPCA recognizes that some individuals will ask for and receive assistance to end their life early.

All persons who are terminally ill or dying, including those who seek assisted or hastened death, require care and support to prevent and reduce suffering of all kind.

### **References**

Sepúlveda, C., Marlin, A., Yoshida, T., and Ullrich, A. (2002). Palliative Care: The World Health Organization's Global Perspective. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, Vol. 24 (No. 2), 91-96.

Supreme Court of Canada. (2015). *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2015 SCC 5, [2015] 1 S.C.R. 331. Docket: 35591. Retrieved from <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14637/index.do>