



# 88%

of palliative  
care doctors are

# OPPOSED TO ASSISTED SUICIDE.

So are people  
with disabilities.

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SEE 6 REASONS WHY

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DON'T  
assist  
suicide 

Image credit: notdeadyetuk.org

While the country grapples with a national Covid crisis, politicians are trying to sneak in a law that ends the lives of the vulnerable and the elderly.

Assisted Suicide means a doctor can give someone a lethal injection or pill to kill them - to help them end their lives.

But did you know that doctors and people with disabilities are hugely **opposed** to assisted suicide? And that, shockingly, others see assisted suicide as a way to cut health costs.



## 6 REASONS TO STOP ASSISTED SUICIDE

### 1 Medical experts strongly oppose assisted suicide, and say pain can be managed

Irish doctors want to care for patients, not kill them. The Irish Palliative Medicine Consultants' Association (IPMCA) are the medical experts who focus on managing and relieving pain, especially at end-of-life.

They say we already have **'dignity in dying'** in Ireland and that pain can be managed and minimised. They say that modern medicine can manage end-of-life distress and pain. The claim that assisted suicide is needed for 'unbearable pain' is **not medically sound**.

A 2020 survey by the IPMCA showed that 88% of palliative medicine doctors are opposed to assisted suicide. In Britain, a 2019 survey found that 84% of doctors there felt the same.

The Royal College of Physicians in Ireland says assisted suicide "is contrary to best medical practice". It prefers a compassionate approach to caring for patients who may be approaching the end of their life.

Prof Tony O'Brien told the High Court in the Fleming case that doctors should not seek to "kill pain by killing patients".

**Doctors can do better than assisted suicide. So can Ireland.**

## 2 Vulnerable people are endangered & can feel pressured to end life

Some 56% of people who died by assisted suicide said that being a burden on family, friends and caregivers was a reason to end their lives, according to a 2017 study in Washington State. In Oregon, 54% felt that way. These are shocking and deeply saddening statistics.

In Holland it's estimated that

**1 in 5** patients  
who sought euthanasia came  
**UNDER PRESSURE  
TO END THEIR LIVES.**

A survey by the Dutch medics' federation KNMG found that 70% of doctors had felt pressure to grant euthanasia.

### Safeguards are 'impossible'

The High Court in the Fleming case ruled that: "even with the most rigorous systems of legislative checks and safeguards, it would be impossible to ensure that the aged, disabled, poor, unwanted, rejected, lonely, impulsive, financially compromised and emotionally vulnerable would not avail of this option to avoid a sense of being a burden to their family and society."

- Washington State Death With Dignity Act. Report March 2018
- DUTCH NEWS - Pressure on Patients is cause for Concern

## 3 Assisted suicide is strongly opposed by disability groups

Disability groups are some of the strongest voices against assisted suicide. As activist Mark Davis Pickup who has MS says, his healthy neighbours will get suicide prevention while he'll be offered assisted suicide.

The Royal College of Physicians notes: "All major UK advocacy groups for disability have rejected assisted suicide." The American Association of People with Disabilities says assisted suicide laws also give "insurance companies and physicians new rights too – the legal means to deny treatment".

In Canada, a UN disabilities advocate [said](#) she had "received worrisome claims about persons with disabilities in institutions being pressured to seek medical assistance in dying, and practitioners not formally reporting cases involving persons with disabilities."

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**Suicide is not  
seen as socially  
desirable, so why  
is assisted suicide  
seen as compas-  
sionate when it's  
for ill or disabled  
people?**

**Liz Carr**  
Disability activist  
and actress



## 4 All about the money?

While campaigners insist this is about choice, in reality **insurance companies, budget committees and others are looking at cost savings.**

After Assisted Suicide was legalised in Canada, a medical [paper](#) in a leading journal claimed that millions of dollars could be saved in health care spending by 'assisting' people to die. It "could result in substantial savings", the paper noted approvingly.

A Canadian budget [report](#) said \$149 million could be saved on the annual cost of end-of-life care by assisted suicide.



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**In California, health insurers refused to pay for Stephanie Packer's pulmonary fibrosis treatment, but offered to pay for cheap drugs to assist her suicide.**

## 5 Deaths shoot up

In Canada,

**THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AVAILING OF ASSISTED SUICIDE HAS INCREASED**

**5 FOLD IN 4 YEARS** since 2015

In Belgium, euthanasia cases have increased by a **factor of ten** since 2003. In the Netherlands, almost **1 in 20** of all deaths are now by assisted suicide. Belgium and Holland also now allow children to be euthanized.

## 6 Other suicides increase

Does assisted suicide seriously undermine the anti-suicide messages society has worked so hard to build?

Professor Theo Boer, a leading Dutch expert who sat on euthanasia review panels for almost a decade, has shown that after euthanasia was legalised in the Netherlands the number of other suicides went up - with a **rise of almost 34% in less than a decade.**

Research in the U.S., found that legalising assisted suicide "has been associated with an increased rate of total suicides".

- Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada, 2019
- The Belgian Commission Fédérale de Contrôle et d'Évaluation de l'Euthanasie; Dutch Regional Euthanasia Review Committees
- Prof Theo Boer, Legalising assisted dying can actually increase suicides, 2020

- Trachtenberg AJ, Manns B. Cost analysis of medical assistance in dying in Canada. CMAJ. 2017
- Cost Estimate for Bill C-7 "Medical Assistance in Dying, October 2020
- Jones DA, Paton D. How Does Legalisation of Physician-Assisted Suicide Affect Rates of Suicide? South Med J. 2015

# DISTURBING CASES

Candice  
Lewis



## NETHER- LANDS

In the Netherlands a woman living with dementia had expressed a wish to be euthanised, but also said that she wanted to determine the right time. As her dementia progressed, doctors made the decision for her. A sedative was put in her coffee, but she then woke up and began to struggle. Doctors asked her family to hold her down as they gave the woman the lethal injection. A Dutch court found that they had acted within the law.

## CANADA

In 2018, Roger Foley from Ontario, who suffers from an incurable neurological disease, made audio recordings of hospital staff offering him medically assisted death, although he had repeatedly asked for assistance to live at home. A [disability envoy](#) from the United Nations raised concerns that patients were being pressured to undergo medically assisted deaths.

## CANADA

Candice Lewis suffered from a variety of medical conditions, including spina bifida and cerebral palsy. At her local hospital in Canada in November 2016, the doctor pulled her mother, Sheila Elson, aside to offer assisted suicide for Candice. When Sheila refused, the doctor told her she was being selfish, even though Candice had expressed no wish to die, nor requested assisted suicide.

## BEL- GIUM

In Belgium, Tine Nys, a 38-year-old Belgian woman was euthanised on grounds of 'unbearable suffering'. Her sisters are adamant she was not terminally ill, as Belgian law requires, but suffering from the stress of a broken relationship, and had not, in fact, undergone psychiatric treatment for 15 years.

## USA

In Oregon, Barbara Wagner sought chemotherapy treatment to treat advanced lung cancer. Health insurers refused to pay for the costly treatment, but offered to pay \$50 for the drugs to assist her suicide. Ms Wagner said "To say to someone, 'we'll pay for you to die, but not pay for you to live,' it's cruel."

- Courthousenews, "Dutch doctor on trial in landmark euthanasia case".
- CTV News, "Chronically ill man releases audio of hospital staff offering assisted death."
- CBC News: "Mother says doctor brought up assisted suicide option as sick daughter was within earshot"

- BBC, " Belgium euthanasia: 3 doctors accused in unprecedented trial"
- TIME, " There's Nothing Progressive About Physician-Assisted Suicide"



# PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

With Covid-19 distracting the country, TDs rushed through the first votes on a Bill from Gino Kenny TD seeking to legalise assisted suicide. But while they claimed it was required for people in “unbearable pain”, there is, in fact, **NO requirement that a person seeking a doctor to end their life is experiencing unbearable pain or suffering.**

The Bill says to avail of assisted suicide a person must be “terminally ill”, defined as “having an incurable and progressive illness which cannot be reversed by treatment”. This broad definition could include heart disease, Parkinsons, dementia and many other conditions. **There is no requirement that the person be at the end-of-life.** Once a diagnosis is received, assisted suicide can be requested.

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## DON'T ASSIST SUICIDE: JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

1. **Call/write** your TD and tell them to vote NO to this Bill
2. Help **distribute leaflets** like this in your area, call us on 01 8730465 for more info.
3. See more information and personal stories at **[thelifeinstitute.net](http://thelifeinstitute.net)**