CPhA Pharmacy Community Survey: Assisted Dying

October 5th – 18th, 2015
CPhA Asked Pharmacists for their Input on Assisted Dying

Last month CPhA conducted an online survey of nearly 1000 individual members of the Canadian pharmacy community to seek their input on assisted dying:

- **8 questions** dealing with protection of conscience, pharmacist participation, pharmacist counseling and drug information issues
- **978 respondents** (majority community and hospital pharmacists)
- Representation from **every province and territory**
- Diverse views on a contentious and emotional issue
Key Findings

• Pharmacists do not wish to be obligated to participate in assisted dying

• Pharmacists strongly believe that any federal legislation which protects physicians’ freedom of conscience should apply equally to pharmacists

• Similar to other health care professionals, pharmacists are divided on the obligation to refer

• Pharmacists are strongly in favour of a requirement in legislation for pharmacist counseling to the patient, physician, or patient’s family as part of dispensing lethal medication

• Pharmacists strongly agree that in dispensing lethal medication, they should have access to the patient’s diagnosis and care plan
Additional Considerations

• Pharmacists expressed concern that they presently lack the training to dispense prescriptions for lethal medication and provide appropriate counseling

• Pharmacists highlighted the need to consider the unique practice environments of hospital and community pharmacists

• Pharmacists expressed concerns about limiting liability associated with their participation

• Pharmacists were divided on whether or not a requirement to refer is adequate protection for those who object to participate for reasons of conscience.
Should pharmacists be obligated to participate in assisted dying?

CPhA Assisted Dying Survey (October 2015)
Should federal legislation to protect physicians’ freedom of conscience apply equally to pharmacists?

- Strongly Agree: 75.05%
- Somewhat Agree: 12.88%
- Neutral: 4.7%
- Somewhat Disagree: 1.43%
- Strongly Disagree: 3.68%
- NA: 2.25%

CPhA Assisted Dying Survey (October 2015)
Should pharmacists be obligated to refer patients to another pharmacist who will fulfill the request?
Should a federal legislative framework for assisted dying require pharmacist counseling as part of dispensing lethal medications?

CPhA Assisted Dying Survey (October 2015)
Should a federal legislative framework for assisted dying require that pharmacists have access to a patient’s diagnosis and care plan?

- Somewhat Disagree 2.15%
- Neutral 4.5%
- Strongly Disagree 4.6%
- NA 6.15%
- Somewhat Agree 11.66%
- Strongly Agree 70.96%
What is your province or territory of practice?

Total number of respondents: 978

- British Columbia: 27%
- Alberta: 26.5%
- Saskatchewan: 10.75%
- Manitoba: 3.5%
- Ontario: 18.5%
- Newfoundland: 2.65%
- New Brunswick: 4%
- PEI: 0.5%
- Nova Scotia: 4.5%
- Yukon Territory: 0.5%
- Northwest Territories: 0.5%
- Nunavut: 0.1%

CPhA Assisted Dying Survey (October 2015)
What occupation best describes your pharmacy background?

Total number of respondents: 978

- Hospital Pharmacist: 179
- Community Pharmacist: 686
- Academic/Research: 25
- Pharmacy Technician: 10
- Advocacy/Public Affairs: 9
- Other: 62