

95.15EM Emergency Resolution: Dying with Dignity

Whereas, Technological developments now allow physicians to maintain and extend life in previously unimagined ways, creating dilemmas and unrealistic expectations for the dying; and,
Whereas, At the present time only an estimated 5% of the dying in Canada have access to palliative care; and,
Whereas, The presentations to the Senate Committee on Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia have emphasized that if quality palliative care were available to the dying across Canada, the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia would abate; and,
Whereas, The legality of certain procedures that are considered a part of palliative care lie in a gray area of interpretation under the Criminal Code, including the withdrawing of life support systems and the prescribing of analgesics in doses that may shorten the life of a patient; and,
Whereas, Even with the best palliative care, there would still remain a core of dying patients in Canada who would experience extreme suffering that could not be relieved; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to give full and effective consideration to the contribution of palliative care in the implementation of the new Canada Health and Social Transfer payments given to the provinces; and be it further,
RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation to protect physicians from criminal charges who, upon request of a terminally ill patient or the patient's family, if the patient is unable to respond, carries out palliative care that may shorten the life of ; including the use of futile and/or aggressive treatment, the withdrawing of life support systems, and the prescribing of analgesics in large doses for pain; and be it further,
RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada encourage the Provincial and Local Councils to urge their respective provincial governments to give legal consideration to living wills.