

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

Patient & Family Guide 2024

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Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)

This pamphlet is about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Prince Edward Island.

If you are thinking about MAiD, or have questions about it, it is important to talk with a health care provider who can explain your options, such as:

- › A Medical Doctor (MD)
- › A Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- › Another health care provider (for example, a pharmacist, nurse, spiritual care leader, and/or social worker)

If you do not have a primary health care provider or you have questions about MAiD, you can contact Health PEI's MAiD Team at the Provincial MAiD Clinic:

- › Phone: 902-288-1260
- › Email: pmc@ihis.org

The MAiD Clinic is open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. -4 p.m. (not including statutory holidays). The staff can provide information about MAiD and/or arrange for you to talk with a health care provider.

When someone is considering MAiD, questions and strong feelings can be felt by everyone involved, including the patient, family, friends, and health care providers. Health PEI is committed to ensuring you have support and access to information throughout your MAiD care. At any time in the process, you can change your mind altogether about MAiD or put your plans for MAiD on hold.

What is MAiD?

MAiD is a process where a person who meets **all** of the legal criteria is given medications at their request by a qualified health care provider to cause their death.

Canadian law defines Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) as:

“The administering by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request, that causes their death”.

or

“The prescribing or providing by a medical practitioner or nurse practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request, so that they may self-administer the substance and in doing so cause their own death”.

Who can have MAiD?

You must be assessed to find out if you are eligible or qualify) for MAiD. The health care provider responsible for your assessment must make sure that you meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- You are at least 18 years old
- You are capable of making decisions about your health
- You are eligible for health care services funded by the Government of Canada.
- You have a “grievous and irremediable medical condition.” This means that:
 - You have a serious and incurable illness, disease, or disability.
 - You are in an advanced state of irreversible decline, meaning that you will not get better from your medical condition.
 - The illness, disease, disability, or state of decline is causing you physical or psychological suffering that is intolerable (unbearable), that cannot be relieved under conditions that you consider acceptable.
 - If your death is not reasonably foreseeable, you must take part in at least a 90-day (3 month) evaluation period, during which further assessments will be done by your health care team. (“Reasonably foreseeable” means: taking into account all of your medical circumstances, your health care providers can reasonably predict when your natural death will happen).
- You are not being pressured or influenced to choose to die by another person.

- You have given informed consent to receive MAiD after having been informed of your medical diagnosis, available forms of treatment, and available options to try and relieve your suffering, including palliative care.
- There are also safeguards that must be met before a person can access MAiD. These safeguards include undergoing two independent medical assessments; submitting a written request that is signed by an independent witness; being informed of the right to withdraw the request for MAiD at any time; and providing final consent immediately before receiving MAiD.

Why do people choose a medically assisted death?

People choose MAiD for a variety of reasons. In the setting of a grievous and irremediable (not curable) medical condition, a person may have a low quality of life (no longer have the ability to enjoy life), they may feel a loss of independence, they may have physical or emotional symptoms that are not tolerable (or concern about future symptoms), and/or they may be experiencing a loss of dignity.

Which Health care providers can be involved in MAiD?

Medical Doctors (MDs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) are the only health care providers who can assess patients (MAiD Assessor) and provide MAiD (MAiD Provider).

Other health care providers (such as nurses, pharmacists, social workers, spiritual care leaders etc.) may also be involved, and can support you and your loved ones throughout the MAiD process.

Bereavement Counselling

Family members and friends of current and former clients of MAiD are welcome to access short-term bereavement counselling (grief counselling) at any time prior to and after their loved one's death (or in cases where MAiD is planned but not provided). Sessions are offered free of charge, via phone, video link or in-person and can be for an individual or small number of people. This work can also include making referrals to other appropriate services. Please contact the MAiD Social Worker to arrange for this support or to learn more.

Please call the MAiD Social Worker at 902-288-1260 any time during office hours, if you have questions or if we can help in any way.

What is the process involved in MAiD?

If you are considering MAiD, it is recommended that you speak to your health care provider or contact the MAiD Clinic (see page 9 for contact information) .

In PEI, you can self-refer to the MAiD clinic or you can be referred by a Primary Care Provider or specialist involved in your care. Once the MAiD Coordinator is aware of your interest, they will assist by providing you further information on the program and the application process.

You will need to complete a [Medical Assistance in Dying \(MAiD\) Patient Request and Consent Form](#) .

This can be found on the [Health PEI MAiD website](#) or by contacting the MAiD office and requesting the form be sent to you.

The Patient Request & Consent Form is required as a first step in participating in the MAiD process. You are encouraged to complete this form before your MAiD assessment. The Patient Request & Consent Form must be signed and dated in the presence of one witness. The witness must be at least 18 years of age, understand what it means to have MAiD, and not knowingly benefit from your death (e.g. be a beneficiary in your Will). If you are unable to physically sign your name, another adult can sign the request form with your direction (act as your proxy). Your consent form can be withdrawn or cancelled at any time.

How is a MAiD procedure arranged?

Plan for the MAiD procedure:

- Once eligibility for MAiD has been confirmed, the MAiD Coordinator and the MAiD Assessors will work with you to plan the next steps. One of the MAiD Assessors will take on the role of the MAiD Provider. This will be discussed with you.
- **If your natural death is reasonably foreseeable**, there is no legally required waiting period before you can have your procedure. It will take time to choose the day and location of the procedure, confirm MAiD Provider availability, and get the medications needed. This can take several days to coordinate.
- You may or may not have a date and time in mind for MAiD. You may choose to wait for a period of time before acting on your request for MAiD. **This decision is entirely up to**

you, and you may change your mind at any time. If you decide to change the date or time of your procedure, we will work with you to make the necessary arrangements.

Note: MAiD is not available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and cannot always be arranged on an urgent basis.

- **If your death is not reasonably foreseeable**, there is a mandatory (required by law) 90-day period of further evaluation by your health care team that starts after your first assessment. This may include discussions about your health to make sure you have information about, and access to services that could help lessen your suffering. The MAiD Assessors will talk with you about this during the assessment process.

Planning specific details of the MAiD procedure.

The MAiD team will work with you (and any family and friends that you wish to involve) to plan the day, time, and location of the MAiD procedure.

- Some people prefer to have MAiD at home, and some do not. You can choose to have MAiD at:
 - Your home or the home of a friend or family member
 - Any Health PEI Facility. The MAiD team will talk with you about who you would like to be present at the time of the MAiD procedure.
- The MAiD Team will also discuss if you have any other end-of-life plans in place such as, having chosen a funeral home. This is especially important if you choose to have MAiD at home.
- Shortly before the procedure happens, two intravenous lines (IVs) will be inserted by a health care provider.
- On the day of the procedure, the MAiD Provider will confirm that you consent (fully agree) to the procedure, **unless you have signed a Waiver of Final Request Form.**
- After this final confirmation, the MAiD procedure can take place.

During the procedure, four medications are given through the IV. The first medication will cause you to fall into a deep sleep quite quickly, after which you will become unaware, and you will stay unaware until you die peacefully.

Oral (taken by mouth) liquid medications that you take yourself may be an option. Talk about this with your MAiD team if you would like more information about this.

May I choose a specific date for MAiD?

If you have been informed that you are eligible (qualify) for MAiD, you can then request a specific date for MAiD. MAiD providers will do their best to accommodate your request, but they often have to work around other responsibilities and the availability of the health care team members involved in the MAiD procedure.

You are not required to choose a date for MAiD immediately following your assessments. Your provider will discuss options and work with you to create a plan to suit your unique situation and needs.

What if I change my mind about receiving MAiD?

You have the right, at any point in time, to change your mind about receiving MAiD. The physician or nurse practitioner involved in your request for MAiD will ask you at various points throughout the process if you still wish to proceed.

You can withdraw your request at any time by using words, sounds or gestures that demonstrate your refusal to receive MAiD.

Even if you make the request, and change your mind, you will continue to receive all the health care you need from your physician or nurse practitioner.

Can I receive urgent MAiD services?

While our providers will do their best to accommodate all MAiD requests, it is not always possible to coordinate MAiD services on short notice. MAiD is **not** considered to be an emergency service.

Organizing MAiD requires collaboration with intravenous (IV) access teams, pharmacy and other health care providers, so it is best to leave at least 5-7 days to enable planning a MAiD procedure date.

Please contact the MAiD clinic team to assist in coordinating your assessments and procedure date, unless you have been otherwise directed by your MAiD provider.

What are other options available for end-of-life care?

If you are considering MAiD, and your natural death is reasonably foreseeable, you may also wish to ask your health care provider about palliative care as another end-of-life care option. The goal of palliative care is to improve the quality of life of people living with life-limiting illnesses through good pain and symptom management, and to help support the patients loved ones.

Your primary health care provider may work with the palliative care team and other health care providers to help you and your family understand and manage your illness and symptoms. Choosing MAiD does not prevent you from accessing palliative care. Your MAiD team and your palliative care team can work together to provide support and care for you.

Will having MAiD impact my insurance policy?

NO. Death by MAiD is considered a natural death. Insurance contracts will be honored as long as MAiD follows the law.

Is there a fee to receive MAiD?

NO, there is no fee to be assessed for, or to receive MAiD.

Can someone else request MAiD on my behalf?

NO. It is common for a family member or support person to connect individuals with the MAiD team initially, but the actual request **must** come from the individual considering MAiD. To seek MAiD, you are required to be competent at the time of the request. A substitute decision-maker (such as court-appointed guardians, or health care proxies under a Health Care Directive) **cannot** make the decision to request MAiD on your behalf if you are no longer competent to make your own healthcare decisions.

Can I ask for MAiD in my personal directive?

NO. Written advanced directives about MAiD are not currently legal in Canada.

What if I lose capacity (ability to make medical decisions for myself)?

You must provide written consent before receiving MAiD. People whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable, who have qualified for MAiD and are at risk of losing the ability to make decisions about their health care, have the option to complete a Waiver of Final Consent form.

If the MAiD Assessors feel that you are at risk of losing the ability to make decisions about your health care (“losing capacity”), they will talk with you about completing a Waiver of Final Consent. This means that you would agree to have MAiD on or before a specific date, even if you have lost the ability to make health care decisions by that date. **This option is only available to people whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable.**

What about my privacy? Do my loved ones need to know about my MAiD decision?

You do not have to include family members in your health care decisions if you do not wish to do so. The MAiD team is available to help provide communication and support to your loved ones about the option of MAiD, and we can help address any concerns they may have. Health PEI is committed to ensuring that MAiD conforms to accepted Health PEI policies and standards regarding confidentiality for both patients and health care providers.

How do I contact the MAiD team?

The MAiD Clinic is open from Monday to Friday from 8:00 am- 4:00 pm. Please see the contact information below. During clinic hours, the staff is available to answer any questions you may have about MAiD. They can also arrange to connect you with a MAiD provider as appropriate.

Contact Information:

Provincial MAiD Program

22 St. Peters Road
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 5N4

Telephone: 902-288-1260

Email: pmc@ihis.org

Fax: 902-288-1049

Resources

MAiD RESOURCES:

Bridge C-14

- Website: www.bridgec14.org

Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers

- Website: <https://camapcanada.ca/for-the-public/>
- Email: info@camapcanada.ca

Medical Assistance in Dying – Canada

- Website: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.ca
- Telephone: **613-957-2991 / Toll free: 1-866-225-0709**
- Email: hcinfo.infosc@canada.ca

MAiD House

- Website: www.MAiDhouse.ca
- Telephone: **647-427-0136**
- Email: info@MAiDhouse.ca

GRIEF RESOURCES

Dying With Dignity

- Website: www.dyingwithdignity.ca
 - Telephone: **416-486-3998 / Toll free: 1-800-495-6156**
- Email: info@dyingwithdignity.ca

Resources

Canadian Virtual Hospice

- Website: www.virtualhospice.ca

Kids Grief

- Website: www.kidsgrief.ca
- Email: info@virtualhospice.ca

ADVANCED CARE PLANNING & PALLIATIVE CARE RESOURCES

Advance Care Planning

- Health PEI Advanced Care Planning

www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/advance-care-planning

Health PEI Advanced Care Planning Workbook

- Website:
www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/advance_care_planning_workbook.pdf

Health PEI Palliative Care Program

- Website: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/palliative-care-program>

Glossary of Terms:

<p>MAID Assessor</p>	<p>A Medical Doctor (MD) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) who is licensed under a Legislative Act within PEI, specific to their profession, to complete MAID assessments and provide MAID.</p> <p>College of Physicians & Surgeons of PEI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › https://www.cpspei.ca/ <p>PEI College of Nursing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › https://crnpei.ca/
<p>Family/ Primary support person</p>	<p>A person(s) who is related (biologically, legally, emotionally, etc.) to the patient. This includes immediate relatives and others in the patient’s support network. Family may include extended family, partners, friends, advocates, guardians, and others. Each patient has the right to choose their Family/Primary support person(s). They have the right to include or not include family members in their care, and change who they have identified as their family over time.</p>
<p>Health care provider</p>	<p>For the purpose of this document, health care provider means a Medical Doctor (MD), Nurse Practitioner (NP), Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Pharmacist, Social Worker, Spiritual Care Leader, or unregulated (not licensed or regulated by government) health care provider.</p>
<p>Independent witness</p>	<p>An independent witness is a person who is at least 18 years of age and who understands the nature of the patient’s request for MAID. Anyone who meets these criteria may act as an independent witness, unless they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › know of or believe that they are a beneficiary under the Will of the patient, or a recipient, in any other way, of financial or other material benefit resulting from the patient’s death. › are an owner or operator of any health care facility at which the patient is being treated or any facility in which the patient lives. › Are an MD or NP (MAID Assessor) involved in your MAID assessments or procedure. <p>Note: A member of your health care team (such as a nurse, social worker, etc.) who meets the above criteria can act as your</p>

	witness. An unpaid caregiver cannot act as your witness. Contact the MAiD Coordinator if you have questions or concerns about witnessing forms, including the availability of witnesses.
MAiD Coordinator	A Health PEI employee who works with the MAiD Medical Affairs Advisor, MAiD Medical Director, and health care providers to plan, carry out, and evaluate (assess) the delivery of MAiD. They are responsible for informing patients, families, and health care providers about the MAiD process. They work closely with health care providers to address the needs of each patient and their family.
MAiD procedure	The action that takes place on the day you receive medications to bring about your death.
MAiD Provider	A Medical Doctor (MD) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) who is licensed to complete MAiD assessments and provide MAiD under an Act of PEI, specific to their profession.
Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD)	<p>MAiD is a process where a person who meets all criteria is given medications at their request by a qualified health care provider to cause their death.</p> <p>There are 2 types of MAiD provisions available to Canadians:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The administering by a Medical Doctor or Nurse Practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request, which causes their death, 2. The prescribing or providing by a Medical Doctor or Nurse Practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request, so that the person may self-administer (give to themselves) the substance (oral liquid medications) and in doing so cause their own death.
Patient	A person who receives or has requested health care or services from Health PEI and its health care providers.
Primary/Most Responsible Health Care Provider	The health care provider (Medical Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, or specialist) who is most responsible for coordinating the patient's health care. This is usually the primary health care provider (Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner) who orders tests, coordinates health care, makes referrals (as needed), and maintains the patient's medical records.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/health-pej>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/libraries-and-archives>

Connect with a registered nurse in PEI any time: call 811 or visit
<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/811-telehealth>

Health PEI promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

With gratitude to the MAiD NS Team for their permission to adapt their
MAiD Patient Information Guide

This pamphlet was published July 2024 and will be reviewed and updated every 3 years or earlier as deemed necessary.