

## **STATEMENT**

### **Canadian Mental Health Association and its Centre for Suicide Prevention Respond to CCA Report on Medical Assistance in Dying**

**Calgary, AB, December 17, 2019:** The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP), a branch of CMHA, commend the Canadian Council of the Academies (CCA) for not recommending, in its December 12, 2018 report, an expansion of the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation in its current state to people whose underlying cause is mental illness.

Our position, [released August 2017](#), remains unchanged.

Namely,

As a recovery-oriented organization, CMHA does not believe that mental illnesses are irremediable, though they may be grievous or unbearable.

We recognize that people with mental illnesses can experience unbearable psychological suffering as a result of their illness, but there is always the hope of recovery.

CMHA's position on medical assistance in dying in Canada is that people with a mental health problem or illness should be assisted to live and thrive.

Additionally, CSP asserts:

CSP does not believe that suicidal ideation, crisis and attempts are irremediable, though they may be grievous or unbearable. With appropriate supports, hope for recovery always exists.

Further, we call on the Government of Canada to increase access to community mental health care: to ensure that the accessibility of evidence-based mental illness treatment options is commensurate with the accessibility of treatments for physical illness by introducing a *Mental Health Parity Act*. There is a need to bring mental health care in to balance with physical health care to provide people with mental illness with the necessary supports and services they need to recover and flourish.

For more information, please contact:

Crystal Walker  
Communications Coordinator  
Centre for Suicide Prevention  
(403) 245-3900 ext. 229  
[crystal@suicideinfo.ca](mailto:crystal@suicideinfo.ca)

Katherine Janson  
National Director of Communications  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
(416) 646-5557 ext. 24923  
[kjanson@cmha.ca](mailto:kjanson@cmha.ca)