

Policy Title:	Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)	
Applies To:	Physicians, Regulated Health Professionals, Unregulated Health Care Providers, Managers, and Contracted Providers	
Related Procedure(s):	Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) - Procedure - CL-AP-010.1	
Approved:	Effective:	Next Review:
July 18, 2022	August 9, 2022	July 18, 2026
Sponsor:	Executive Leadership Team	
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to support and provide direction to those involved in Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) in Nova Scotia Health.

The Criminal Code of Canada, and related amendments to other Acts allow for legal provision of [MAID in Canada](#). Nova Scotia Health is compliant with this legislation (hereafter referred to as the Act) and serves to provide MAID to eligible individuals in Nova Scotia.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Nova Scotia Health is committed to ensuring access to MAID information and to facilitating access to MAID assessments and procedures across Nova Scotia.
 - Patients and Families/Primary Support Person(s) are supported through the provision of information and Patient-Centered Care during all phases of the MAID process.
 - Patients requesting MAID will be supported to receive MAID assessments and procedures (if eligible) as close to their home or requested location as reasonably possible, including approved Community and Nova Scotia Health facilities.
2. The Nova Scotia Health Executive Leadership Team will review this Policy as needed, in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Health MAID Advisory Committee to evaluate its implementation and effectiveness and make recommendations to improve the processes and practices contained or referenced in this Policy.
3. Regulated Health Professionals must remain compliant with the standard of care outlined by their respective regulatory bodies:
 - [College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia \(CPSNS\)](#)
 - [Nova Scotia College of Nursing \(NSCN\)](#)
 - [Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists \(NSCP\)](#)
4. Regulated Health Professionals (with the exception of Physicians and Nurse Practitioners) and Unregulated Health Care Providers are **not** permitted to **initiate** discussions about MAID but must respond professionally to requests made by Patients and offer to connect the Patient with an appropriate Physician/NP.
 - 4.1. Regulated Health Professionals and Unregulated Health Care Providers who are unable to continue to participate in the provision of MAID services for any reason must continue to care for the Patient until an appropriate referral or transfer of care can be made to meet the Patient's needs.
5. Physicians and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) discussing treatment options for Patients experiencing intolerable suffering from their health condition should inform the Patient of all options available to them to help alleviate their suffering, as appropriate to the Patient's clinical circumstances, including palliative and end of life care, palliative sedation, and MAID.

- The purpose of including MAID in these discussions is to ensure that the Patient is aware of all possible end-of-life options, so that they can make an informed decision about their health care.
 - The timing of these conversations should be tailored to the individual Patient and delivered with great care and empathy, recognizing the power imbalance that may exist between the Clinician and the Patient. MAID should be clearly presented as an option, not a recommendation.
 - Physicians or NPs who are unavailable, unable, or unwilling to initiate MAID discussions and/or processes, for any reason including reasons of religion or conscience, or complete an effective referral, must adhere to their [respective college standard](#) regarding MAID and arrange for an effective transfer of care; they must continue to care for the Patient until alternative care arrangements can be made to meet the Patient's needs.
6. Physicians, NPs, and Pharmacists involved in the MAID process are responsible to ensure all appropriate documents (including Death Certificates) are completed as per their [regulatory guidelines](#) (see MAID Procedure #12 for Documentation).

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

1. Accountability

- 1.1. The Act recognizes the need for processes to ensure accountability and oversight of MAID assessment and provision, including documentation. Nova Scotia Health proactively monitors all aspects of the MAID process on an ongoing basis and responds to concerns in collaboration with the MAID Access and Resource Team when they arise.
- 1.2. Nova Scotia Health adheres to legislative regulatory requirements in relation to oversight of MAID processes and responds and updates the MAID Policy as required by law. The MAID Access and Resources Team monitors concerns about equity and access on an ongoing basis.
- 1.3. This Policy aligns with MAID-related Policies/Guidelines of the:
 - [CPSNS](#)
 - [NSCN](#)
 - [NSCP](#)

2. Respect for Persons

- Respecting persons involves respecting individuals' rights to make their own choices. Nova Scotia Health:
 - Promotes care that respects personal autonomy and fosters the person's sense of self-determination.

- Recognizes that decision-making can be complex and may take place in the context of relationships with others and can therefore involve discussions with Family/Primary Support Person(s), with consent of the Patient.
- Ensures that a person's decision making is supported and strives to ensure that the person is not being coerced into making a decision against their will.

3. Freedom from Stigma related to MAID

- Patients who inquire about or request MAID should be free from Stigma, experiencing negative attitudes and responses that leave them feeling unwanted or shamed, and negatively affect their relationships with others or the health care system.

4. Respect for Health Care Provider Values

- Nova Scotia Health recognizes that care must be provided in a context that respects the values of the Nova Scotia Health, Health Care Provider.
- No Health Care Provider should experience stigma or disadvantage based on having participated or not participated in providing MAID.

5. Respect for Patient and Health Care Provider Safety

- Nova Scotia Health recognizes that care must be provided in a context that respects the physical and psychological safety of both the Patient and the Nova Scotia Health, Health Care Provider.
- No individual involved in the MAID assessment or provision process should find themselves in a circumstance that threatens their physical or psychological safety, or health. Nova Scotia Health ensures access to the appropriate safety and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as required by the clinical circumstances.

6. Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

- Nova Scotia Health acknowledges that all health care, including MAID, follows accepted Nova Scotia Health policies and standards regarding privacy and confidentiality for both Patients and Health Care Providers, and is respectful of the Patient's Circle of Care.

7. Protection for Vulnerable Persons

- This policy recognizes that protection for Vulnerable Persons is of great importance and that procedures and processes, will be adhered to, in accordance with the Act, to prevent harm from undue influence of others.

8. Freedom from Discrimination

Nova Scotia Health is committed to offering care that is free from judgment and discrimination based on:

- | | |
|------------|----------------------|
| ● Age | ● Creed |
| ● Race | ● Sex |
| ● Colour | ● Sexual orientation |
| ● Religion | ● Gender identity |

- Gender expression
- Physical disability or mental disability
- An irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease
- Ethnic, national, or aboriginal origin
- Family status
- Marital status
- Source of income
- Political belief
- Affiliation or activity
- Individual's association with another individual or class of individuals having characteristics listed above.
(See [Human Rights Act Chapter 214](#))

REFERENCES

Legislative Acts

An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying), Statutes of Canada (2020-03-27). Retrieved from the Justice Laws website: <https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-7/royal-assent#ID0EBBBA>

Other

College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia. (2021). Medical assistance in dying. Retrieved from: <https://cpsns.ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Professional-Standard-Regarding-Medical-Assistance-in-Dying-April-26-2021-amended-May-5-2021.pdf>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (2021). Guideline for nurse practitioners: Medical assistance in dying. Retrieved from: <https://www.nscn.ca/professional-practice/practice-support/practice-support-tools/medical-assistance-dying-maid/medical-assistance-dying-practice-guideline-nurses>

Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists. (2020). *Standards of practice: Medical assistance in dying*. Retrieved from https://www.nspharmacists.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SOP_MedicalAssistanceInDying.pdf

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Resource Links

[Nova Scotia Health Website MAID](#)

Procedure

[Medical Assistance in Dying \(MAiD\) - Procedure - CL-AP-010.1](#)

Forms

[Assistance in Dying \(MAID\) Referral Form](#)

[MAID Request and Consent Form – Reasonably Foreseeable Natural Death \(RFND\)](#)

[MAID Request and Consent Form – Non-Reasonably Foreseeable Natural Death \(Non-RFND\)](#)

[MAID Assessment Form](#)

[MAID Advance Consent Agreement Form](#)

[Procedure Documentation](#)

Other Forms

Death Certificates are available from MAID Access and Resource Team and Nova Scotia Health Inpatient and Emergency Departments. Death Certificates for Patients who have had a MAID procedure must be completed in accordance with the vital statistics guidelines for MAID.

Brochures

[MAID Patient and Family Guide](#)

[Organ and Tissue Donation for MAID, Patient Information](#)

Appendices

[Appendix A](#) – Definitions

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Appendix A: Definitions

Circle of Care	The group of healthcare providers involved in assessing and managing a Patient's care, as identified in discussion with the patient.
Community	Includes private nursing care facilities, and Patient and family residences
Contracted Providers	Any contracted service provider of Nova Scotia Health. (e.g. Victorian Order of Nurses)
Effective Transfer of Care	A transfer by one practitioner in good faith to another practitioner who is available to accept the transfer, who is accessible to the Patient, and willing to provide medical assistance in dying to the Patient if the eligibility criteria are met. (See Policy Statement #3 for Regulated Health Profession Guideline details for effective transfer of care.)
Health Care Provider	For the purpose of this policy, Health Care Provider means Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse, Social Worker, Pharmacist, or other paid Unregulated Health Care Provider.
MAID Advisory Committee	The Nova Scotia Health MAID Advisory Committee is comprised of MAID Assessors, Providers and other stakeholders from across the province and assists those Physicians, Nurse Practitioners and Pharmacists taking part in the MAID program in Nova Scotia. The committee monitors best practices in the provision of MAID and recommends actions as appropriate.
MAID Access and Resource Team	Centralized team within Nova Scotia Health which supports access to MAID information and facilitates access to MAID assessments and procedures across Nova Scotia. Contact Information: MAID office Fax 902-454-0379 and phone numbers 1-833-903-6243 (toll-free long distance)/902-491-5892 (local Halifax area).
MAID Nurse Navigator	A Nova Scotia Health Employee who works collaboratively as part of the MAID Access and Resource and is responsible for the transfer of information regarding MAID services to Patients, families and Health Care Providers from the contemplation phase to the care after death phase. The MAID Nurse Navigator works closely with care providers, establishing relationships and addressing the individual needs of Patients and family.
Manager/Designate	Includes Health Services Manager, Charge Nurse and Manager of Care Facility in Community.

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)	<p>There are two types of medical assistance in dying available to Canadians. They each must include a physician or nurse practitioner.</p> <p>The administering by a physician or nurse practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request, that causes their death</p> <p>The prescribing or providing by a physician or nurse practitioner of a substance to a person, at their request (when such a substance is available) so that they may self-administer the substance and in doing so cause their own death.</p>
Patient	All individuals including clients, residents, and members of the public who receive or have requested health care or services from Nova Scotia Health and its Health Care Providers.
Patient-Centered Care	<p>An approach that guides all aspects of planning, delivering and evaluating services. The focus is on creating and nurturing mutually beneficial partnerships among the organization's staff and the clients and families they serve. Providing client and family centered care means working collaboratively with clients and their families to provide care that is respectful, compassionate, culturally appropriate, and competent care that responds to the needs, values, beliefs, and preferences of clients and their family members. (Accreditation Canada 2017. Adapted from the Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care 2008 and Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.)</p>
Personal Protective Equipment	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is protective clothing, helmets, goggles, or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection.
Provider	Physician or Nurse Practitioner who delivers the MAID procedure.
Regulated Health Professional/Licensed Health care Professional	<p>A health professional who is licensed or registered to provide health care under an Act of the Province specific to his or her profession and who provides health care or who is a member of a class of persons prescribed as regulated health professionals.</p> <p><i>(Personal Health Information Act, 2010)</i></p> <p>Specific to this policy we are referring to Physician, Nurse Practitioner (NP), Registered Nurse (RN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Pharmacist, and Social Worker.</p>
Sponsor	Person (usually a Vice President, Zone Operations Executive Director, Senior Director or Director), division, portfolio or the Nova Scotia Health standing committee that is accountable for the development, implementation and maintenance of a Policy.

Stigma	Refers to prejudice and discrimination towards certain groups of people or Patient populations.
Unregulated Health Care Providers	Unregulated care providers are paid providers who are neither registered nor licensed by a regulatory body. They include, but are not limited to, Personal Care Workers, Continuing Care Assistants, Care Team Assistants, spiritual care practitioners, MAID Access and Resource Team member, Administrative employees.

DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY POLICIES BEING REPLACED

N/A

VERSION HISTORY

Version:	Effective:	Approved by:	What's changed:
Original Approval: March 18, 2019	2019-08-07	Executive Leadership Team	N/A
Major Revision	2022-08-09	Board Administrator	N/A