

Information

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CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale
www.ciusss-capitalenationale.gouv.qc.ca

Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec
www.iucpq.qc.ca/en

Users' Committee

References

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec
www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/health-insurance/issue-directives-case-incapacity

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Guide for Users and their Families

Palliative and End-of-Life Care

The law specifies the rights of a person regarding end-of-life care as well as the organization and supervision of care, in particular:

- Palliative care;
- Advance medical directives;
- Continuous palliative sedation therapy;
- Medical assistance in dying.

What are palliative care

It is the care provided by health professionals to a person with a serious and life-threatening illness to reduce symptoms and relieve suffering. The aim is to provide the best possible quality of life and to provide the necessary support to his or her relatives. The actions of healthcare personnel are based on the following principles:

- Prevent and relieve suffering;
- Increase physical and psychological comfort;
- Act on other physical symptoms;
- Accompany the person and his or her relatives and provide them with psychological and spiritual assistance.

Palliative and end-of-life care support

Palliative and end-of-life care are provided at home and in all health network environments in the Capitale-Nationale Region (including Portneuf and Charlevoix). All staff are trained in palliative and end-of-life care and work in collaboration with various health professionals.

The team is made of different health professionals:

- Nurses;
- Specialized nurse practitioners;
- Licensed practical nurses;
- Social workers;
- Auxiliaries to health and social services/orderlies;
- Occupational therapists;
- Physiotherapists;
- Nutritionists;
- Doctors;
- Pharmacists;
- Palliative care providers.

The rights of a person at the end of life

The respect for a person at the end of life and the recognition of his or her rights and freedoms must inspire every action:

- Right to receive end-of-life care
- Right to refuse or stop treatment
- Right to be represented
- Right to express one's wishes

For more information on your rights, you can contact the Users' Committee.

Symptoms Relief

The primary purpose of palliative care is to relieve discomfort, regardless of its nature. In collaboration with the user, the various professionals, in accordance with their expertise, will adjust their interventions to ensure a better quality of life.

Continuous Palliative Sedation Therapy

This care refers to the administration of medication to relieve suffering by continuously lowering the level of consciousness until death. Continuous palliative sedation therapy is used in an end-of-life context when usual treatments fail to provide adequate relief.

Medical Assistance in Dying

What is medical assistance in dying?

Despite the quality of care and support provided to people living with a critical and incurable illness (which cannot be cured), palliative care may not be able to satisfactorily relieve some suffering. The End-of-Life Care Act and the Criminal Code allow medical assistance to be provided to those individuals for whom all therapeutic, curative and palliative options have been deemed unsatisfactory and who would rather die than continue to suffer. Medical assistance in dying consists of administering medication that relieves suffering and leads to death. This medical procedure is performed by a doctor or a specialized nurse practitioner at the person's request. The End-of-Life Care Act and the Criminal Code regulate the assessment of the individual's eligibility for medical assistance in dying by a rigorous process.

What are the Eligibility Criteria for Medical Assistance in Dying?

- Be assured within the meaning of the Québec Health Insurance Act.
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have the ability to consent to care, that is, to understand the situation and the information provided by health professionals and to make decisions.
- Have a serious and incurable disease (which cannot be cured) or a serious physical impairment resulting in significant and persistent disability.
- Have a medical situation characterized by an advanced and irreversible decline in ability.
- Experience unbearable constant physical or psychological suffering that cannot be alleviated under conditions considered tolerable.

Need More Information?

For more information on medical assistance in dying, talk to your doctor or a member of your healthcare team. These professionals will answer your questions and give you more detail about the process.

Any discussion surrounding a request for medical assistance in dying is important. The doctor and other professionals will therefore carry a special attention.

This step is intended to inform you and clarify your wishes. It does not commit you to anything, and you can change your decisions at any time.

For more information, you can refer to the guide *Aide médicale à mourir – Pour en savoir plus*.



The Expression of Your Wishes Through Advance Medical Directives

Advance medical directives are a way of applying your wishes to certain care in case you eventually become disabled to consent to it. They consist of a form by which you can tell in advance whether you accept or refuse, for example, to be reanimated. These directives will be classified to your medical record and will be followed, no matter where you receive care. Advance medical directives have legal value and take precedence over any other document.

To allow you to write your advance medical directives, a form is available on the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec Website (ramq.gouv.qc.ca). You can send it to the RAMQ once completed; it will then be included in the National Registry.

Also, you have the possibility to dial one of the following numbers:

- Québec Region: 418 644-4545
- Montreal Region: 514 644-4545
- Elsewhere in Québec: 1 877 644-4545 (free of charge)
- ATS: 1 800 361-9596 (free of charge)

You can write or cancel your advance medical directives at any time without constraint!

Note that you cannot request medical aid in dying in advance medical directives.