

## Fact Sheet 31 Quebec: Bill 52 - An Act respecting end-of-life care

On June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 the National Assembly in Quebec passed Bill 52, *An Act respecting end-of-life care* following a vote with no abstentions (94-22). This had been presented by Veronique Hivon, member of the National Assembly, outlining the conditions under which terminally ill Quebecers can request to receive medical aid in dying. The Parti Québécois (PQ) had tabled the bill the preceding year after years of work from both the PQ and the previous Liberal government.

### Main features:

- ❖ **Purpose-** The purpose of the Act is 'to ensure that end-of-life patients are provided care that is respectful of their dignity and their autonomy. The Act establishes the rights of such patients as well as the organization of and a framework for end-of-life care so that everyone may have access, throughout the continuum of care, to quality care that is appropriate to their needs, including prevention and relief of suffering'.
  
- ❖ **Principles:**
  - (1) respect for end-of-life patients and recognition of their rights and freedoms must inspire every act performed in their regard;
  - (2) end-of-life patients must be treated, at all times, with understanding, compassion, courtesy and fairness, and with respect for their dignity, autonomy, needs and safety; and
  - (3) the healthcare team providing care to end-of-life patients must establish and maintain open and transparent communication with them.
  
- ❖ The Act provides for palliative care, continuous palliative sedation and medical aid in dying (by provision and administration of medication).
  - **Criteria** for medical aid in dying- A person must be:
    - (1) insured within the meaning of the Health Insurance Act;
    - (2) of full age and capable of giving consent to care;
    - (3) at the end of life;
    - (4) suffering from a serious and incurable illness;
    - (5) in an advanced state of irreversible decline in capability; and
    - (6) experiencing constant and unbearable physical or psychological suffering which cannot be relieved in a manner the patient deems tolerable.
  - The patient must personally request medical aid in dying in a free and informed manner, and after obtaining the opinion of a second, independent physician.
  - A commission on end-of-life care is established with a mandate to examine all matters relating to end-of-life care and to oversee the application of specific requirements relating to medical aid in dying.
  - An advance medical directives regime is established (which does not include medical aid in dying) and the Act specifies the binding conditions.

A copy of the Act is available at: <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1183429-bill-52-an-act-respecting-end-of-life-care.html>