



Factum

Eight in Ten (80%) Albertans Support Notion that All Publicly-Funded Hospitals in Alberta Be Required to Allow Medically-Assisted Dying on their Premises

Majority of every demographic group studied – including those with religious identity – support access in all publicly-funded facilities

Calgary, AB, March 21, 2019 — Eight in ten (80%) Albertans ‘support’ (47% strongly/33% somewhat) the notion that all publicly-funded hospitals in Alberta should be required to allow medically-assisted dying on their premises. Just two in ten (20%) oppose (9% strongly/11% somewhat) such an idea, according to an Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Dying With Dignity.

A majority of every demographic group studied supports access to medically-assisted dying in all publicly-funded facilities, including those in Calgary (82%), Edmonton (77%) and outside of these two cities (88%), men (80%) and women (80%), Millennials (86%), Gen Xers (76%) and Boomers (78%). Perhaps most interestingly, support remains high even among NDP (88%) and UCP supporters (70%), and among those with no religious identity (86%) or a religious identity (75%), including Catholics (76%), Protestants (70%), and those who identify with another faith (84%). In short, public support is approaching a consensus.

It is now legal in Canada for a person who is suffering intolerably from an incurable medical condition to end their life with the help of a doctor or nurse practitioner, as long as certain criteria are met. On this relatively newly-granted right, most (86%) Canadians ‘support’ (51% strongly/35% somewhat) it, while just 14% oppose (7% strongly/8% somewhat) it. Once again, a strong majority of every demographic group studied supports this law.

However, some publicly-funded hospitals in Alberta refuse to allow or provide medically-assisted dying on-site because of their beliefs or religious affiliations. These hospitals say they have a right to not provide treatments that don’t align with their views, and that patients must go elsewhere to access these services. Other have argued that all hospitals that receive public funds have an obligation to provide a full range of legal health-care services, as long as they have the proper equipment and staff to do so.

Reflecting on these two competing positions, a majority (77%) believes that all hospitals that receive public funds have an obligation to provide the full range of legal health care services, as long as they have the proper equipment and staff to do so. Conversely, a minority (23%) believes that hospitals should not be required to allow or provide medically-assisted dying on site if it’s against their values or religious beliefs, and patients should go elsewhere to access these services. Once again, a majority of every demographic group studied, including those with a religious identity (72% total; 74% of Catholics, 66% of Protestants, 83% of those with another religious affiliation) support the position that all publicly-funded hospitals have an obligation to provide these services.

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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between February 14 to 18, 2019, on behalf of Dying with Dignity. For this survey, a sample of 800 adults living in Alberta was polled. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Albertan adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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