

Statement: Physician Assisted Death

Covenant Health embodies the long standing moral tradition in Catholic health care that neither prolongs dying nor hastens death, while also championing quality, compassionate care to all. This tradition is consistent with other Catholic health care providers around the world, and indeed, from the very beginning when the Sisters founded health care in Alberta. [Today's statement](#) from the Bishops of Alberta reaffirms and reminds us of this tradition.

Covenant Health has, and will continue to provide quality, palliative end-of-life care, serving people of all cultures, traditions, and circumstances. We will respond with compassion and respect as we have consistently done to anyone who verbalizes a request to end their lives. Our response seeks to understand the nature of the person's request, ensuring appropriate pain and symptom management and psychosocial-spiritual care consistent with our values, and the holistic model of palliative care that does not include physician hastened death.

Given the unprecedented and momentous change the Supreme Court ruling has at this point in Canadian history, we all are, in humility, working together with others across the country, and with our physicians, the Colleges, our funder, Alberta Health Services, and the Bishops of Alberta, as our Catholic sponsor, to navigate this issue, respecting the rights of conscience and the principle of non-abandonment.

Throughout this process we are committed to upholding the right of both personal and institutional conscience. This will be important for all organizations as they grapple with the same issues of safe and timely co-ordination of care between institutions without abandoning the person in care when their own medical staff conscientiously object. Together we can all learn at this time and benefit from mutual dialogue and thoughtful, ethical reflection.

We are confident we will find a way to respond respectfully and compassionately to requests for physician assisted death that does not abandon the person in our care nor compromise the values of care providers or our organization.

Dr. Gordon Self
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