

2022 ANNUAL REPORT **THE COURAGE TO LEAD**

IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.

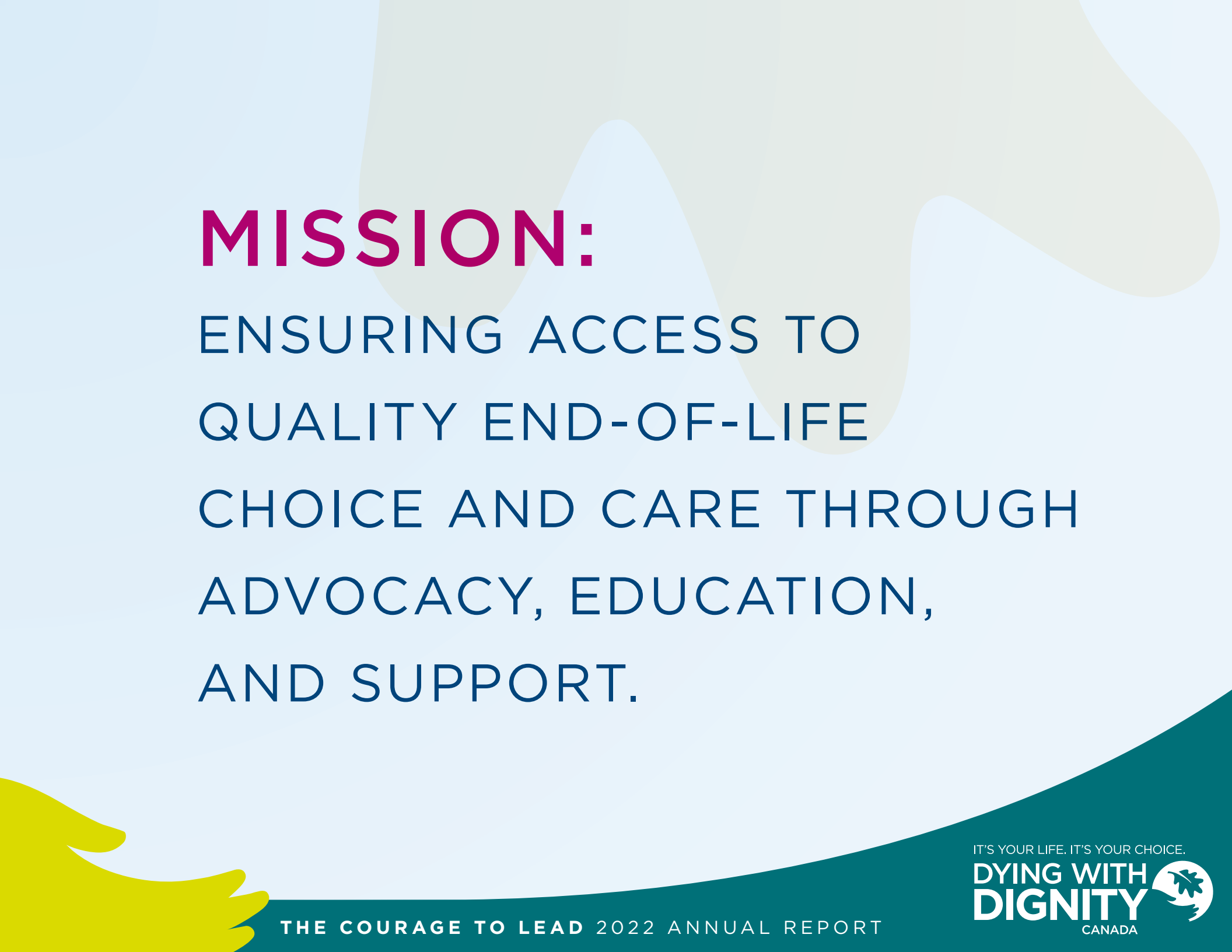
**DYING WITH
DIGNITY**
CANADA





VISION:

EVERYONE CAN
CHOOSE THEIR
GOOD DEATH.



MISSION:

ENSURING ACCESS TO
QUALITY END-OF-LIFE
CHOICE AND CARE THROUGH
ADVOCACY, EDUCATION,
AND SUPPORT.

RESILIENCE. PERSEVERANCE. COMPASSION.



When the team at DWDC talked about the end of 2022 and how we were feeling, these were the words that came up over and over again. It was a difficult year – in many ways – but through it all, our staff, volunteers and supporters responded and continued to push ahead, and we are so grateful.



What helped us stay positive and motivated, were the many, many interactions we had with people across Canada requesting support, looking for information, or telling us their story. It's those interactions and stories that help shape our work and keep us focused on achieving results.

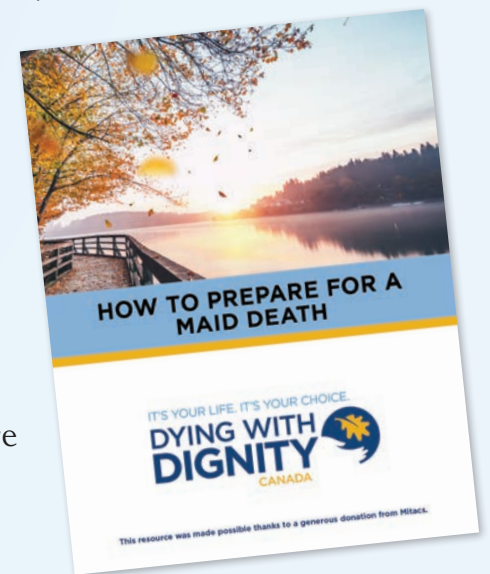
After the success of the passage of Bill C-7 in 2021, our federal advocacy focus in 2022 shifted to the Parliamentary Review of medical assistance in dying (MAID) and the work of the Special Joint Committee and the Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness. CEO Helen Long and Senator James Cowan testified before the Special Joint Committee on MAID (AMAD) in May, focusing on advance requests, and delivered a submission to the AMAD Committee.

Our advocacy efforts were strengthened by our Chapters, volunteers, and supporters. In collaboration with our Chapters in British Columbia, we launched a forced transfers campaign to advocate that all health care facilities in B.C. that receive taxpayer funding must permit MAID onsite. During all of our 2022 campaigns, our supporters sent thousands of letters to MLAs, MPs, Senators and Ministers in the provincial and federal government.

Change at the parliamentary level can take a significant amount of time, but what stood out to us throughout the year was the commitment of our supporters, volunteers, and staff to push forward and continue advocating for end-of-life rights, even when met with challenges such as unrelenting negative – and often inaccurate – media reporting.

In 2022, Dying With Dignity Canada engaged with the media 120 times, including 52 letters to the editor and opinion pieces in response to misinformation about MAID. We also answered many questions from supporters about the parliamentary process and misinformation they were seeing in the news. This prompted us to create a myths and facts page on our website that was viewed 13,041 times in 2022.

We prioritize sharing the correct information regarding MAID to ensure comprehensive and accurate understanding of this important health care option. Emails and calls about changes to the MAID legislation post Bill C-7 also increased substantially. Our support team was here to meet that increased demand. The team shares their experiences assisting people navigating their end-of-life options on **pages 8 to 11**.



We expanded our volunteer base with a new Chapter in Cowichan, B.C. Our Chapters hosted nine regional webinars and delivered over 45 Advance Care Planning and MAID presentations in their local communities. Read about one Chapter's educational outreach to under-served communities on **pages 25 to 26**. As part of the continuing discussion around MAID for those with a mental disorder as a sole underlying condition (MD-SUMC), we also formed an advisory council to help inform our position and advocacy efforts in this area.

Perhaps one of our most significant accomplishments in 2022 was developing our Strategic Plan. We included our Chapters, Board of Directors, supporters, and staff in the process, which resulted in a strong plan that establishes our priorities and will guide our work for the next three years. You can view our new Strategic Plan on **page 30**. This important exercise keeps everyone accountable to our mission.

We're so proud of our team at DWDC. With the urgency of the Parliamentary Review, 2022 was a busy and challenging year. But, with all hands-on-deck, we persevered to meet the needs of people across Canada and advance the end-of-life rights movement. And with resilience and compassion at our core, we will continue to advance even further in 2023.



BEV HEIM-MYERS

Chair of the Board of Directors
Dying With Dignity Canada



HELEN LONG

CEO
Dying With Dignity Canada

SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

MOST ACCESSED RESOURCES



14,282
ACP KITS



3,600
PATIENT
RIGHTS
GUIDES



4,124
MAID
REQUEST
FORMS

SUPPORT TEAM SPOTLIGHT



“FACTS AND
EMPATHY
ARE THE
HALLMARK
OF OUR
WORK.”

We offer information on end-of-life options, patient rights, navigating a request for medical assistance in dying (MAID), Independent Witnessing for MAID, and local resources in your community.

DWDC has offered support to people across Canada since 2005. The team provides information about end-of-life choice and care, and helps people

navigate those choices. We interviewed **Kelsey Goforth** - Director of Programs, **Melissa Muller** – Program Specialist, and **Amanda Coventry-Berridge** – Program Coordinator about the help they provide through our education and support services, including the increased demand since the passage of Bill C-7 in 2021. The changes minimized barriers and improved access to MAID; they also generated many questions for people across Canada, some of which were directed to Dying With Dignity Canada’s (DWDC) Support Team.

Please provide an overview of Dying With Dignity Canada’s support services and how they have evolved over the years.

When Bill C-14 passed in 2016, the increase in support requests was significant because some of the people who had been advocating for MAID for decades were now able to apply. We also had many questions about the definition of a reasonably foreseeable death.



*SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
INCLUDE CALLS AND
EMAILS WITH INDIVIDUALS
REQUESTING END-OF-LIFE
SUPPORT (ONE INDIVIDUAL
COULD HAVE MULTIPLE
ACTIVITIES)

After Bill C-7 and the removal of the reasonably foreseeable death criteria (Track 2), our support requests increased even more – in fact, they doubled from 2021 to 2022. The addition of Track 2 increased questions and the need for clarity about eligibility and how to start the MAID process.

Unfortunately, some of the increase in support requests was due to misinformation about MAID circulating in the media, and our supporters wanted clarity on the issues. For example, the headlines that suggested people were being approved for MAID because they were unhoused. This is frustrating because the eligibility criteria for MAID is clear, and a lack of social supports would not make someone eligible for MAID.

Our team also manages the educational programming for DWDC. We develop resources and webinars based on current end-of-life issues and the questions we receive from supporters. Support and education go hand-in-hand because we can direct people to a past webinar for a deep-dive into a topic. For example, we get many questions about MAID and dementia, so we can share links to our webinars on that topic.

What role does the Support team play in managing questions about MAID for mental disorders?

Because MAID for those with a mental disorder as a sole underlying condition has been delayed until March 2024, we mostly offer updates on where things stand, as well as provide empathy for the person's suffering and their feelings that the current exclusion is discriminatory. While the preparation for MAID and mental disorders is underway, we act as a resource for information, and a place to turn to because we understand their suffering and frustration.

For those navigating a request for MAID, what is the most common support you offer?

The most common question we get is, “How do I start the process of requesting a MAID assessment?” Some people don’t currently have a family doctor, or if they do, their doctor isn’t familiar with the process, or they may not be in favour of MAID. Where do those people turn? Most of the time, we help connect that person to their provincial or territorial MAID team, as well as provide the MAID request form. We also share other end-of-life resources that enable choice, such as our [***Advance Care Planning Kits***](#) and our [***Patient Rights Guide***](#). It’s very gratifying to give someone information that can help inform their next health care decision; people are very appreciative.

What DWDC resources do you find most helpful for the people you support?

As soon as someone reaches out asking how they can apply for MAID, we send them a link to the [***Navigating a request for MAID***](#) video specific to their province/territory. They are such helpful resources; the local contact information, the request form for their province/territory, and extra resources are all accessible from the link. We also find the [***Get the facts on MAID***](#) webpage addresses common questions.

We send out many Advance Care Planning Kits to those who want to get their Advance Directives in order. It is intended to provoke thinking, conversation, and planning, and to encourage communication among you, your loved ones, and your health care providers.

We also have so many incredibly useful webinar recordings that we can share with people who want more insight into an end-of-life topic. Listening to an expert offers so much more context into a subject.

Independent Witnessing is a crucial step in a MAID request. You help folks who need an Independent Witness either online or in person. Tell us about the network of volunteers you work with and how you and the Chapters help coordinate this program.

We work with a large network of Independent Witnesses for MAID across the country. They are a dedicated group who help people at a very significant and sometimes difficult time in their life. They are often able to accommodate immediate requests, and occasionally have to be flexible when plans change. We offer approximately 70% virtual and 30% in-person requests, depending on the patient's needs.



Your team has an ambitious webinar schedule. What 2022 topics were the most popular and what kind of feedback did you receive from viewers?

Content that covers MAID eligibility, as well as updates on MAID legislation are always popular topics. **10 things you should know about MAID** with Jocelyn Downie was by far the most well-received webinar. Our **101 Series** was very popular last year as well; we covered a variety of topics including patient rights, grief, palliative care, MAID and capacity, and MAID eligibility. Most of the feedback was positive and generally asked for more content, so that's a good sign.

It's important to note that while we do provide education to people across Canada, we are also continuously learning and growing as a staff team. In 2022, we attended a workshop with the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) where we learned about the trauma-informed approach, fostering a psychologically-safe environment, and building resiliency. We value continuous education and know that we need to continue learning in order to provide the best support to our clients.

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



36

WEBINARS
DELIVERED
BY CHAPTERS & NATIONAL



13,041
PAGE
VIEWS



NEW
RESOURCES

- MAID NAVIGATION GUIDE
- WHAT IS MAID?
- NAVIGATING A REQUEST FOR MAID VIDEOS (11)
- MAID ASSESSMENT GUIDE

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT

Educating people across Canada about end-of-life choice is part of our mission, and there is no more impactful way to convey this information than through people's lived experience. In 2022, Judith Rockert opened her heart and home to us so we could share her decision to have an assisted death with people across Canada through a video interview.



Ten days before Judith's "choiceful death date," three DWDC employees and one cameraperson were invited into her home to talk about her choice to have an assisted death. She agreed because she wanted to be part of our efforts to educate people about their choices; we ended up with so much more than that.

"I learned a long time ago. You can either live in fear or love, and I chose to live in love. And so, I've surrounded myself with incredibly loving people, bright people, consciousness-raising people. I understand what I do and why I do it."

“IT’S VERY
IMPORTANT
FOR ME TO
SPREAD
THE WORD.
THAT’S WHY
I’M DOING
THIS. I WANT
EVERYBODY
TO KNOW
THAT THERE
IS AN
OPTION.”

At 84, Judith lived with multiple health issues, including a progressing lung cancer and a life-threatening allergy to most medications that made her unable to consider many drugs and treatment options. However, the conviction in her decision was clear.

“I don’t want chemo. I don’t want radiation. I don’t want anything. Let me die peacefully. I’ve had the most incredible life. I have had adventures, wonderful people coming and going, and I have no regrets at all. None, I’m ready.”

Judith shared with us that her only goal for her remaining days was to experience “escalating bliss” through interactions with family and friends. She showed us a social calendar so full it needed additional space on sticky notes for all her phone calls, video calls, and in-person visitors.

“For years, my calendar was empty. I never went out. I never saw anybody, like everybody else during COVID. But now, it is just incredible; tomorrow I have a phone call with a friend in Dubai and in the afternoon, a friend who I met in Aruba, who now lives in South Africa. People from all over the world, it’s just miraculous and they’re all incredibly spiritual and loving people. I’m just getting so much nourishment. I said I really wanted the last days of my life to be escalating bliss, and I am getting it. I am overflowing. It’s just yummy.”

Judith's choiceful death date was June 27, 2022, at 11:15 a.m. We were so grateful to have met her 10 days before, and to be able to share her story publicly. The response from DWDC's supporters was overwhelming. Comments on Judith's video included:



“What an incredible woman. Her story shows her strength and thoughtfulness. I, too, hope to be so clear when my time comes to make such an informed decision for myself.”

“She clearly demonstrates the peace one has when they have control over their death. Such an articulate and beautiful lady.”

“I’m so happy for MAID. It came a year too late for my husband but it’s here now and has helped and will continue to help so many people. I saw what dying of lung cancer looked like and Judith has made a wise and selfless choice.”



You can watch the video with Judith on our website.

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS



70+ MEETINGS
& COMMUNICATIONS
WITH **MPs**

117+ MEETINGS
& COMMUNICATIONS
WITH **SENATORS**



CAMPAIGNS

- REINITIATE THE PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW
- ADVANCE REQUESTS
- MAID AND MENTAL DISORDERS
- ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS
- B.C. FORCED TRANSFERS



1 NATIONAL
IPSOS
POLL

ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

“Unfortunately, the stress and strain of months of simply trying to get this request together only added to what was already a situation of severe chronic pain. I am amazed at how difficult it has been to get to the stage of being able to have a simple, peaceful, dignified assisted passing.” ~ Ron



In June of 2022, Lori shared a story she wrote – ***The Last Soup*** – about her husband Ron’s decision to have an assisted death and her experience navigating life leading up to his provision date. Both Ron and Lori were interested in speaking publicly about assisted dying, Track 2, and the challenges Ron experienced accessing MAID. In the end, they shared three blog posts, one educational video, and Lori lent her voice and name to one of our fundraising appeals.

Stories like Ron’s – about issues of eligibility and access – motivated Dying With Dignity Canada to launch an advocacy campaign in 2022 about removing unfair barriers to MAID access. Overall, 2,569 people signed this campaign in 2022 – a testament to the compassion that exists for people like Ron.

We are always so grateful to those who, even through their grief, share their stories with the DWDC community; Lori has agreed to share one more time in this Annual Report.

Addressing barriers to access to end-of-life choice and care is a focus of our work. After Bill C-7 passed, Ron was relieved that he might be able to end his unbearable suffering. Why was his assessment process so challenging, and how did that impact him?

Ron tried to access MAID in November 2021, which was not that long after Bill C-7 passed. His challenge was to get one of his many doctors to support his application. He started approaching doctors in November 2021, and it wasn't until March of 2022 that his application was submitted properly. He really didn't feel like his doctors believed he was suffering as much as he was; it was demoralizing to not be believed. After many attempts, he ended up writing a MAID coordinator at one of the health boards in Quebec, and finally, with her help, he could get the ball rolling. Luckily Ron was a resourceful and persistent person, but navigating the health care system is not easy when you are in pain.

As his caregiver, how did the challenges to access impact you? The MAID assessment process is understandably focused on the individual, but how were you able to support him?

At one point, Ron's challenges finding a supportive clinician made me doubt he was a candidate for MAID, even though I knew his suffering was becoming unbearable.

With Track 2, maybe it's not as clear what the threshold of pain needs to be, but of course, I could see that he suffered daily. It was frustrating to see him be hurt by his doctors and not believed, and to be given silly suggestions like to read a book on pain; he was beyond books.

I think because he didn't want to seem incapacitated, he didn't ask me for much help. I let him take the lead on most of it but supported him when he asked.

Both you and Ron generously shared your time, words, and experiences with us at DWDC. What motivated you? What do you think motivated Ron?

Ron wanted people to know the challenges he had gone through. He had kept his decision to have MAID from many people, I think, to protect his family and because he was a private person. He did it to leave a legacy of help for other people struggling to get a proper diagnosis and being able to access MAID, especially being so new in Track 2.

My impetus for sharing my story is because that's what I do, I write. I have been writing non-stop since Ron's MAID provision. That day making Ron's last soup turned into a piece of writing that I shared with Dying With Dignity Canada and started the whole process of both Ron and I sharing our lived experience.

Ron's MAID provision was in July 2022. How are you doing? What grief support do you have in place? What would you say to someone whose loved one is considering MAID?

I have good days and bad days. Ron's three daughters, his two brothers and I all still light a candle every month on the 11th to remember him. We still have lots of tears,

and that is very similar to any natural death. With MAID, there is an appointment with death that is palpable and leading up to that date is very stressful. But, the alternative was not a good option; Ron had suffered for a year and half quite terribly. Am I glad he's gone? No. But am I glad he was able to get what he wanted and end his suffering? Yes.



Leading up to Ron's death, I participated in some workshops with Bridge C-14 as well as a grief workshop after his death. A group of us decided that 10 weeks wasn't enough, so we continue to meet and support each other.

My advice is to get lots of good sleep because it's a long, emotional ride. I would also say to support that person as best you can. By the time they have made the decision and been approved, they have given it a great deal of thought and are nervous about telling their family, so just be there with them and honour their decision.

WFRTDS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



200+
REGISTRANTS

“I THOUGHT
THIS CONFERENCE
WAS INCREDIBLY
WELL DONE AND
I THOROUGHLY
ENJOYED MYSELF.
THANK YOU!”

**17**
COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

WFRTDS/CONFERENCE

2022

Global Perspectives on End-of-Life Choice



“Quite frankly, I thought you did a brilliant job – the right mix of information, interesting speakers and networking in a good location.”



In November 2022, Dying With Dignity Canada hosted the World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRTDS) Conference in downtown Toronto. The five-day conference was attended by over 200 people representing 17 countries.

“It was such a pleasure to come together with so many like-minded people, especially as we all emerged from COVID, to share experiences and strategies about end-of-life rights,” shared Janie Lazar, End of Life Ireland president, and host of the 2024 WFRTDS conference.

The event kicked off with a reception hosted by the WFRTDS President, Asunción Álvarez, where she revealed the World of Champions – a map telling the stories of the family members, activists, doctors, supporters, and volunteers who are working to make dying with dignity possible from all corners of the globe.

Seminar topics included accurate language in law reform, panels about assisted dying around the world, a presentation from health law expert Rose Carter about the Expert Panel on MAID and Mental Illness' Final Report, grief and bereavement in relation to MAID, assisted dying and dementia, the Canadian Association of MAID Assessors and Providers (CAMAP) curriculum development project, and many more.

“What stood out to me was how much conference registrants engaged before, between, and after the seminars. There was a real sense of community, an interest in learning from each other and sharing information,” explained **Silvan Luley** from DIGNITAS – To live with dignity – To die with dignity in Switzerland.

It was an honour for DWDC to host this international conference and continue the work to secure and protect the rights of individuals at the end of life.



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS



260+
VOLUNTEERS



1 NEW
CHAPTER
COWICHAN, B.C.



1 NEW
ADVISORY
COUNCIL
MD-SUMC ADVISORY COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

WINNIPEG EDUCATION OUTREACH

In September 2021, the Winnipeg Chapter of Dying With Dignity Canada applied for and received a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation - the oldest community foundation



in Canada dedicated to the social improvement of Winnipeg. The Chapter wanted to host workshops on Advance Care Planning for marginalized and under-served communities in the city. The grant's mandate stated that the money was to be used to fund a healthy lunch, refreshments, the printed materials, and the facility rental. When the opportunity came to make a presentation to the Deaf Centre Manitoba, they were able to allocate some funds from these areas and paid for the needed interpreters.

“The cost of the printed materials is prohibitive for some. By covering all the costs and providing lunch, we remove the barriers to access and offer a welcoming activity for anyone who wants to attend,” explained **Carolyn Rickey**, DWDC volunteer and fundraiser.



Advance Care Planning and considering end-of-life wishes are oftentimes not a priority for those from marginalized communities. **Dorothy Stephens**, a DWDC volunteer and facilitator said, “As a retired nurse, I know how few people have their Health Care Directives in order. These communities are often not aware of the various documents used in the health care system, and more importantly, their rights as patients. These workshops are often the first time folks are learning about end-of-life choices, care, and rights.”

For the workshop that occurred at the Deaf Centre Manitoba, because the primary language used is American Sign Language (ASL), interpreters were hired to translate the presentation. “We learned so much about the deaf community, and how to adjust our presentation to accommodate the participants who were focusing on the interpreters. A visually impaired participant also joined the event, and additional assistants were required to help them with the content. It was a great introduction for us on how to present to persons with disabilities,” Dorothy shared.

The other presentations were at a women’s shelter and a senior’s centre. The participants were provided with the DWDC Advance Care Planning Kit and Patient Rights Guide, Health Care Directive forms, and Manitoba’s ERIK Kit (Emergency Response Information Kit). There is still one more presentation to go that is part of the grant’s mandate. “This grant gave us the opportunity to present to communities we haven’t reached before. We hope to raise more funds in the near future to continue this work,” said **Lori Blande**, the Winnipeg Chapter’s events and presentation coordinator.

DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS



9,410
TOTAL
DONORS



3,174
NEW
DONORS



4,341
MONTHLY
DONORS



Our full 2022 donor list is on our website.

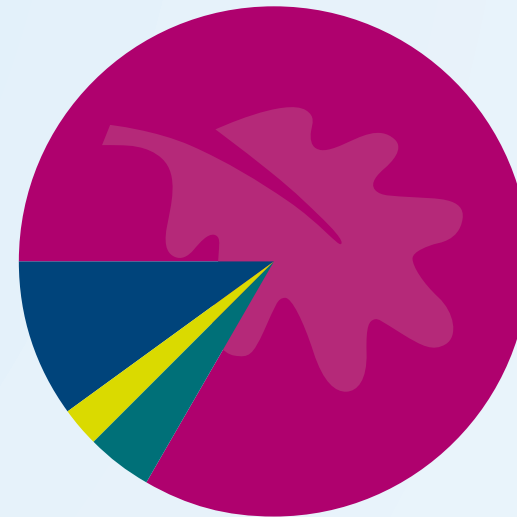
EXPENSES

For the year ending Dec 31

	2022	2021
Advertising and promotions	793,408	665,520
Amortization of property and equipment	7,793	4,446
Bank charges	80,607	35,077
Computer	69,518	59,177
Financial support	32,769	40,929
Insurance	13,097	8,261
Meetings	128,689	9,510
Office and general	59,622	19,627
Professional fees	43,229	34,738
Professional services	114,693	69,145
Rent and occupancy	168,990	202,986
Salaries and benefits	1,240,622	1,091,292
Telecommunications	14,932	19,072
Travel	25,145	17
\$ TOTAL	2,793,114	2,259,797

REVENUES

For the year ending Dec 31



	2022	2021
Donations	2,248,467	1,801,330
Bequests	263,085	60,500
Contributions in kind	113,954	72,203
Miscellaneous	69,548	13,940
\$ TOTAL	2,695,054	1,947,973



Full, audited financial statements are available on our website.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bev Heim-Myers	CHAIR
Susan Desjardins	VICE-CHAIR
Ryan A. Webster	TREASURER
Roslyn Goldner	SECRETARY
Quinn Bennett	MEMBER
Wayne Cochrane	MEMBER
James Cowan	PAST CHAIR, MEMBER
Prof. Daphne Gilbert	MEMBER
Dr. Chantal Perrot	MEMBER
Tammy Pham	MEMBER
Elyse Rosen	MEMBER
Shira Zipursky	MEMBER

BOARD COMMITTEES

Finance and Audit

- Investment Sub-Committee

Governance

Human Resources

DWDC ADVISORY GROUPS

Clinicians Advisory Council

MD-SUMC Advisory Council

Note: We work with a variety of people whose professional and lived experience guide our work. We reinvigorate and initiate advisory councils to support our efforts, on an as-needed basis.

STRATEGIC PLAN

In June 2022, the Dying With Dignity Canada (DWDC) Board of Directors met to develop a multi-year Strategic Plan – providing direction and guidance to the work of the organization. As part of this planning process, a robust stakeholder feedback initiative was undertaken. Throughout the months of May and June, a survey was administered to more than 7,000 DWDC supporters, donors, members, and volunteers to get a broad understanding of the perceptions of – and desires for – the organization. Along with this survey, focus groups were held with the broader staff team, the senior staff, and with Chapter Chairs and Co-Chairs from across the country to gather stakeholder-specific feedback.

This Strategic Plan reflects the organization's new mission, vision, and strategic goals to guide DWDC through 2023-2025.

- 1 Nurture a more inclusive and diverse end-of-life rights movement: DWDC will seek out, listen to, and integrate more perspectives in the work that we do.**
- 2 Address barriers to accessing a good death: DWDC will lead national advocacy efforts to eliminate obstacles to end-of-life choice, including access to advance requests and end forced transfers.**
- 3 Deliver high quality, relevant programs and services: DWDC will provide information, education, and support to individuals, families, and clinicians across Canada.**
- 4 Ensure sustainability, resiliency, and mission success: DWDC will invest in the growth and development of the organization and its people.**



You can read the full Strategic Plan on our website.

IT'S YOUR LIFE. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.



www.dyingwithdignity.ca

 DWDCanada  @dwdcanada  @dwdcanada