



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 CS01 A Call for Full Inclusion and Pastoral Support for Individuals Accessing MAID Under Tract Two for Summer 2025**

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## **1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

The United Church of Canada has historically supported compassionate end-of-life choices, including Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID). However, with the expansion of MAID legislation in Canada, there is a need for the church to deepen its theological understanding and pastoral support for individuals seeking MAID under Tract Two. This includes individuals whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, such as those suffering from severe psychological or mental health conditions. Forthcoming legislation may also allow MAID for mature minors and through advance requests. Without an updated and inclusive response, individuals and families may feel unsupported in their discernment and decision-making.

## **2. What is happening now?**

The United Church has previously affirmed compassionate responses to end-of-life choices but has not specifically addressed the implications of Tract Two. Current church statements and resources do not fully engage with MAID for those whose death is not imminent or for those suffering from mental health conditions. As legislation evolves, there is a growing gap in pastoral care, theological reflection, and congregational guidance, leaving some members

without clear support from their faith community.

### **3. What is the recommendation?**

The General Council of the United Church of Canada should:

1. Align its stance on all legal aspects of MAID as per current laws in Canada.
2. Develop a revised theological statement affirming the dignity and autonomy of individuals who meet the legal criteria for MAID, including those under Tract Two.
3. Provide education and resources to clergy and congregations to support individuals discerning or seeking MAID, particularly those with mental health conditions or those making advance requests.
4. Advocate for compassionate and inclusive pastoral care, ensuring that individuals exercising their legal rights to MAID are met with respect and inclusion within the life of the church.
5. Convene a task group to engage in further theological reflection on the implications of MAID for minors and those suffering from psychological conditions.

### **4. Background information:**

MAID is a legally recognized medical practice in Canada, grounded in principles of dignity, autonomy, and compassionate care. Canadian law distinguishes between Tract One (where natural death is foreseeable) and Tract Two (where suffering is intolerable but death is not imminent). The church's engagement with MAID has largely focused on Tract One, while Tract Two remains an emerging and complex area requiring further reflection.

The Canadian government is also considering legislation that would allow for advance requests for MAID, ensuring that individuals with degenerative illnesses can make informed decisions before they lose capacity. Additionally, discussions continue regarding the potential for MAID access for mature minors. These developments necessitate theological and ethical engagement from the church to provide clear and compassionate guidance.

### **5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?**

This proposal aligns with the United Church's commitments to justice, inclusion, and pastoral care by ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their end-of-life choices, are fully embraced within the faith community. It affirms the dignity and autonomy of individuals facing suffering and recognizes that mental health conditions require the same level of pastoral care and theological reflection as physical illness. By addressing these issues proactively, the church demonstrates its commitment to being a place of welcome, compassion, and justice for all.

**For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Disagree and forwarding to the General Council

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: [GCinfo@united-church.ca](mailto:GCinfo@united-church.ca)

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