

OTTAWA (CCN)—Keep euthanasia and assisted suicide out of any provision of palliative care, Canada's Catholic bishops said to a national consultation with Health Canada May 7 to July 13.

"We have to speak up and express our opinion, otherwise other lobbies and other groups will influence the government," said bio-ethics expert Bishop Noel Simard of Valleyfield, concerning the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' (CCCCB) submission published Aug. 3.

Canada

X Other lobbies are trying to influence the government to include so-called Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD) in palliative care, said Bishop Simard, who is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life and of a national committee on palliative care established by the CCCC.

"It is important to express clearly our opposition to Medical Aid in Dying and to euthanasia and how it is opposed to true palliative care," he said.

"It is so urgent, because there are other issues at stake, the pressure made by the government on hospices to offer euthanasia, or to accept that physicians go into the institutions or hospice to perform euthanasia without respecting the objections or the right of the institutional conscience," said Bishop Simard. "You cannot force or oblige an institution to offer something against its values."

The government is pressuring institutions and hospices to permit physicians to euthanize patients at their location, Bishop Simard said. "If you accept this, it means you are an accomplice."

He likened it to his accepting a physician coming into his office "to perform an abortion in front of me."



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