

Psychiatrist Sounds Alarm: Canadian Government Triggering ‘Suicide Contagion’ Crisis

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A renowned Canadian psychiatrist is sounding the alarm over the country’s expanding euthanasia regime, warning lawmakers that the government’s plan to begin euthanizing those with mental illness is triggering a dangerous “suicide contagion” and pushing vulnerable patients toward death instead of treatment.

Dr. John Maher, a psychiatrist specializing in severe mental illness, delivered the stark warning during testimony before Parliament’s Special Joint Committee on “Medical Assistance in Dying” (MAiD).

During his [testimony](#), Dr. Maher issued a chilling alert that the push to euthanize the public is creating an alarming new culture where vulnerable people “doctor-shop until dead” rather than seek treatment.

‘It’s Been Normalized’: Alarm Over Growing Suicide Culture

Maher told lawmakers that the normalization of assisted suicide is already taking hold, even among patients who could be treated.

He described a recent case involving a patient with schizophrenia who casually discussed seeking euthanasia if his life circumstances didn’t improve.

Maher said his patient told him that he would apply for MAiD “if he didn’t get a job and a girlfriend.”

“It’s been normalized,” Maher warned.

“It’s suicide contagion.”

He cautioned that expanding euthanasia to include mental illness would accelerate what experts call the “Werther Effect,” where exposure to suicide increases the likelihood of others following the same path.

‘Doctor-Shop Until Dead’

Maher issued a particularly chilling warning about what could happen if the policy moves forward.

“Patients will doctor-shop until dead,” he told the committee, arguing that vulnerable individuals may seek out providers willing to approve assisted suicide instead of pursuing treatment.

“People need lifeguards, not someone to push [them] under,” he added.

Maher emphasized that mental illness is treatable, pointing to decades of experience helping patients recover even after being told they could not improve.

“For the last 23 years, I’ve treated patients that other psychiatrists told me could not get better, and they get better,” he said.

Expansion Set for 2027

Canada is currently [on track to expand](#) euthanasia eligibility to individuals with mental illness in 2027 under Bill C-7.

In response, some lawmakers are backing legislation aimed at stopping the expansion, including Bill C-218.

Conservative MP [Andrew Lawton](#) is among the few voices on the committee advocating against broadening access to assisted suicide.

Meanwhile, other figures have pushed in the opposite direction.

Psychiatrist Dr. Mona Gupta told lawmakers that individuals suffering from conditions such as depression or [eating disorders](#) should be eligible for state-sanctioned lethal injections.

Mounting Evidence of a Slippery Slope

Critics argue that the expansion of euthanasia in Canada is already moving far beyond its original intent.

Maher testified that some individuals with mental illness are already being approved for assisted suicide under what he described as “flimsy medical excuses.”

Recent [reports](#) have also highlighted troubling cases, including [elderly patients being pressured](#) into euthanasia despite not being terminally ill, and individuals approved for assisted death over non-life-threatening conditions.

Euthanasia has rapidly expanded in Canada since legalization in 2016, with the program now among the fastest-growing in the world.

Global Concerns Intensify

The debate is not confined to Canada.

Recent cases around the world have raised similar alarms, including [reports](#) of perfectly healthy individuals being euthanized for emotional distress rather than terminal illness.

Critics [warn](#) that once assisted suicide is legalized, the criteria tend to expand over time.

“Once you legalize assisted killing, it is only a matter of who is eligible,” said Alistair Thompson of the advocacy group Care Not Killing.

A Growing National Debate

As Canada moves closer to expanding euthanasia eligibility, the country is facing an increasingly heated debate over the role of government, medicine, and ethics in end-of-life decisions.

For critics like Maher, concerns are growing that a system originally framed as compassionate care risks evolving into something far more dangerous.

It has now become a system that steers vulnerable people toward death rather than recovery.

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