



Written by [David Kelly](#) on February 13, 2023

Growing Number of States Following Canada's Lead With Lax Euthanasia Laws

Canada is a country led by liberals known for open-mindedness and tolerance, which has led them to allow the most permissive rules on euthanasia, or medical assistance in dying ([MAID](#)), in the world. Some U.S. states where assisted suicide is legal are now following Canada's lead, making the practice much easier — even allowing patients suffering from eating disorders to receive prescribed lethal doses to end their lives.

Daily Mail [shared](#) that “euthanasia laws in the US are nothing like those of its neighbor to the north. But American acceptance of the practice has been growing for decades despite warnings that legalized suicide is a slippery slope toward a calamitous debasement of human life.”



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MAID laws in Canada were revised in March 2021, with the government [sharing](#) that assisted suicide is a “complex and deeply personal issue” and that the government is committed “to ensuring our laws reflect Canadians’ needs, protect those who may be vulnerable, and support autonomy and freedom of choice.”

The Canadian “Superior Court [found](#) the ‘reasonable foreseeability of natural death’ eligibility criterion in the *Criminal Code*, as well as the ‘end-of-life’ criterion from Québec’s *Act Respecting End-of-Life Care*, to be unconstitutional.” With that new ruling, the MAID “law no longer requires a person’s natural death to be reasonably foreseeable as an eligibility requirement” for assisted suicide. The law states that if you are over 18 and have decision-making capacity, you can check out for a wide variety of reasons — from serious and incurable illness, disease or disability to having “enduring and intolerable physical or psychological suffering that cannot be alleviated under conditions” you find acceptable.

In the more traditional and conservative United States, federal law, in line with the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution, allows states to make their own laws regarding assisted suicide (also sometimes known as “death with dignity” or “the right to die”). Although assisted suicide is illegal in most states, it is [currently legal](#) in California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Vermont, Washington state, and Washington, D.C.

Some states that already allow MAID are [reported](#) to be revising their rules “by cutting wait times, [by] letting nurses join doctors in prescribing lethal drugs, and by letting out-of-staters visit to end their lives.” Oregon is America’s first “[death tourism](#)” destination, where terminally ill people from [Texas](#) and other states that have outlawed assisted suicide have begun traveling to spend their final days.

All you need to do is “spend at least 15 days in Oregon to process the paperwork, which requires sign-offs from two doctors and witnesses, before administering the fatal dose themselves,” [says](#) the *Mail*.



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Not all those choosing to end their lives are doing so because of pain, suffering, and/or the loss of bodily autonomy. “Only about 27 percent of Oregon’s assisted deaths in 2021 involved people who said they were in too much pain, while more than half said they felt like a burden on loved ones, and 8 percent were fretting about money,” [reported](#) the *Mail*.

The lax end-of-life law in Colorado allowed Dr. Jennifer Gaudiani, who treats eating disorders, to [prescribe](#) lethal doses last year to “three patients with anorexia nervosa — a mental health and body image condition that often sees sufferers starve themselves.”

The Colorado Sun [shared](#) that in February 2021, Gaudiani published a paper in the [Journal of Eating Disorders](#) in which she “advocates for allowing patients who are dying from anorexia to end their lives on their own terms. She writes that, although anorexia doesn’t have delineated levels of severity like cancer, which has stages of progression and a terminal phase, it can be brutally lethal. It is widely believed to have the second-highest mortality rate of all mental illnesses, behind only substance use disorders.”

The drugs used for MAID patients have also led to concern over the ease of ending one’s life. Most people [reportedly](#) “died within 30 minutes, but others took more than 100 hours to perish. A report last year in the British Medical Bulletin found that it was not always a ‘Hollywood-style peaceful and painless death,’ citing the example of a Colorado cancer sufferer who took nine hours to die after much ‘choking and coughing.’”

“Unlike in Canada, physicians are not always present when US patients take the deadly dose. Some families have been left in an anguished limbo as a loved one takes hours, perhaps even days, to stop breathing. Where euthanasia takes place in private homes without a doctor present, it is not always clear whether the drugs — or a pillow — was the cause of death.”

There are people and groups like the [Patients Rights Action Fund](#) that don’t agree with government-approved MAID laws, as they claim “assisted suicide law perpetuates discriminatory attitudes toward people with disabilities and vulnerable constituencies, and the safeguards fail to provide meaningful protection against mistakes, coercion and abuse.”

“Instead of expanding assisted suicide laws, we should instead look to improve end of life care for the terminally ill and create better access and care for persons with disabilities,” [said](#) Matt Vallière, director of the group. “As public policy, assisted suicide laws only exacerbate the problems they try to fix.”

The United States had a [reported](#) 1,300 assisted suicide deaths in 2021, compared to more than 10,000 in Canada, whose total population compares with California. “Over three percent of all deaths there ... ended their lives via euthanasia, an increase of a third on the previous year. And it’s likely to keep rising: next year, Canada is set to allow people to die exclusively for mental health reasons,” the *Mail* [said](#).

It will only be a matter of time before more liberal-led states such as Oregon will catch up with Canada’s euthanasia free-for-all. Plus, the list of states approving MAID is likely to grow, as Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia are weighing whether to pass their own doctor-assisted-suicide laws this year.



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