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Thursday, March 17th, 2016

## **CHRISTIAN LEGAL FELLOWSHIP ENDORSES THE VULNERABLE PERSONS STANDARD**

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Momentum continues to grow in support of the Vulnerable Persons Standard both by individuals and organizations. Today we bring focus to the faith-based communities that support and are interested in the Vulnerable Persons Standard, including Catholic Health Alliance of Canada, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and Canadian Council of Imams.

We are pleased to announce that the [Christian Legal Fellowship](#) has endorsed the Standard and will be promoting it with their members. With this endorsement, the Christian Legal Fellowship has joined our call to Parliamentarians to ensure that the Standard's safeguards are incorporated into federal legislation concerning physician-assisted dying.

Derek Ross, Executive Director of the Christian Legal Fellowship, says, "As the Supreme Court of Canada recognized, permitting physician-assisted death presents inherent risks for vulnerable people. This should be of deep concern to all Canadians. While we believe a complete ban remains the only way to eliminate such risks, the Standard contains important measures to help minimize them, consistent with a 'carefully-designed system imposing stringent limits' as contemplated by the Court."

The Vulnerable Persons Standard was developed by a group of advisors with expertise in medicine, ethics, law, public policy and needs of vulnerable persons. The Standard balances equitable access to physician-assisted dying with important safeguards to protect vulnerable people.

To learn more about the more than 35 organizations and nearly 700 individuals supporting the Standard, please visit us at [www.vps-npv.ca](http://www.vps-npv.ca).

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## DID YOU KNOW:

The Standard restricts access to physician-assisted death to end-of-life conditions. The Supreme Court of Canada has determined that adults who 'may be vulnerable to committing suicide in a time of weakness' should be protected.

In its *Carter* decision, the Supreme Court adopted the language introduced by the lower court. The legal phrase "grievous and irremediable" was defined by the lower court in its finding as an "advanced state of weakening capacities", with "no chance of improvement". In granting Gloria Taylor a constitutional exemption from the law prohibiting an assisted death, the trial judge stated that physician-assisted death was justified only where the adult was "terminally ill and near death, and there is no hope of her recovering". The criteria were intentionally restricted to end-of-life conditions with no hope of recovery in order to protect vulnerable persons who have unmet needs for treatment and support.

Therefore, if people are not at the end-of-life with medical conditions that cause enduring and intolerable suffering, then their request to die must be considered as an expression of their vulnerability - an intolerable level of unmet need that requires response.

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## IN THE NEWS:

The Catholic Register continues to show interest in learning more about the Vulnerable Persons Standard. Read Michael Bach's, Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Association for Community Living and Adjunct Professor, Disability Studies, at Ryerson University, interview in [The Catholic Register](#).

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The Vulnerable Persons Standard is a series of evidence-based safeguards intended to protect the lives of Canadians. These safeguards will help to ensure that Canadians requesting assistance from physicians to end their life can do so without jeopardizing the lives of vulnerable persons who may be

subject to coercion and abuse.

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