

## Complaint dismissed against physician who euthanized patient

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC) dismissed the complaint against Dr. Ellen Wiebe for euthanizing a patient at Vancouver's Louis Brier Home and Hospital in June 2017 against the Orthodox Jewish policies of the facility.

Wiebe, who knew that the Orthodox Jewish nursing home forbids euthanasia, secretly entered the facility after hours to fatally inject a cancer patient.

Management of the Louis Brier Home were incensed and filed a complaint against the doctor.

"There needs to be some kind of pushback," said Dr. Will Johnston, a family physician and president of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition-BC.

"The medical regulatory community in general is having trouble balancing the interests of the community against aggressive, radical autonomy... It should be obvious that when someone wants to be killed by the state and this has been allowed by law, that they should not have the right to specify the exact location."



**Barry Bussey**

Barry Bussey, director of legal affairs for the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, called the college's decision "a dagger at the heart of the Catholic hospital system" and "a further indication of the absolute disregard for the rights of religious organizations to be able to determine for themselves their

own religious culture, faith tradition and practices.”

“When you have a physician who knows the policy of the nursing home, as well as the family knowing the policies, to have this physician surreptitiously bring these drugs into the nursing home, in violation of the policies, and then she goes ahead and commits the act of MAiD shows an absolute disregard and lack of respect for the greater religious community,” Bussey said.

Catholic health facilities do not allow euthanasia on their premises.

David Keselman, the chief executive officer of Louis Brier, said the institution is not planning to ask for a judicial review of the CPSBC decision.

“We have no faith or hope it would go anywhere or the outcome would be any different,” Keselman said.

He added, however, the response of the College “absolutely scares me.”

“What they’ve done is basically say: ‘It’s OK for any physician to go in and do something and do something similar. It’s a precedent, regardless of the organizations policies and procedures, physicians can go ahead and do it.’”

Many of the residents of Louis Brier are Holocaust survivors are “emotionally distraught” by “a physician sneaking in in the middle of the night,” to bring about the patient’s requested death, against the policies of the home, Keselman said.

The doors of the facility are closed at 6 pm so someone had to let the doctor in.

“Somebody barricaded the door in case someone would come. This is horror science fiction,” Keselman said. “Anyone who chooses to come here and is entertaining the thought of Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD) is told up front: ‘This is not something we do here.’”

Keselman said Louis Brier allows those requesting MAiD to be assessed on site, but asks they move to another facility because “it can’t happen on site.”

“The way it’s been done scares me,” Keselman said.