



**Presented by: Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DAWN Canada**

**Topic: Women with Disabilities and GBV - MAID Track2 is not a Health Care Option!**

**Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma-and Violence-Informed Health  
Promotion Conference**

**October 2, 2025**

# Women with Disabilities and GBV - MAiD Track2 is not a Health Care Option!

[Thirty percent of women in Canada live with a disability](#). We already face the highest rates of gender-based violence and poverty. And now, under Track 2 MAiD, women with disabilities are being offered death instead of support to live.

Since 2021, MAiD has been expanded to include people with disabilities whose deaths are not imminent, data now shows its deadly impact on low-income women with disabilities.

A review by the Ontario Coroner's MAiD Death Review Panel found that recipients of Track 2 MAiD, those whose natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, are more likely to come from marginalized groups. This includes higher proportions of people experiencing material deprivation, housing instability, and low labour force participation compared to Track 1 recipients.

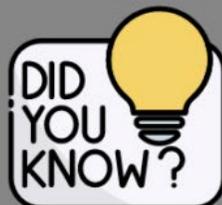
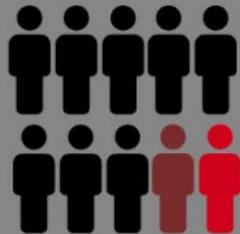
In 2023, over 58% of MAiD Track 2 recipients were women - many living with long-term with disabilities and facing systemic poverty, raising red flags about the equity of this program. ([Government of Canada, The Conversation](#))



# The Data: Access to Disability Supports.

## 87%

Health Canada assures us that in 2021, 9 out of 10 people who required disability supports received them before dying by MAiD.



Disability income is considered disability support. People like Denise, Richard, and Alexis, who have considered MAiD because they live in poverty on ODSP, would be counted as "receiving disability support" if they died by MAiD.

And what about those who didn't have access to necessary disability supports?

## In 2021...

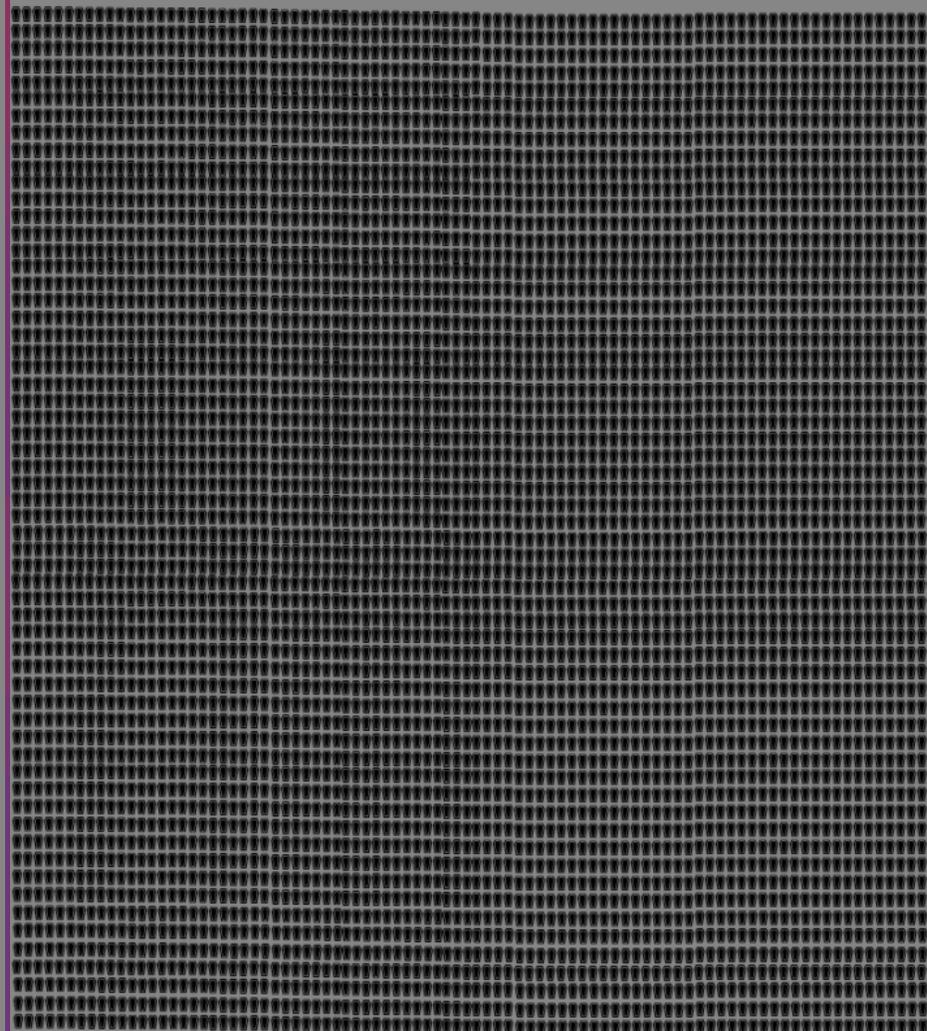
In 2021, **179 people** who died by MAiD required but did not receive disability supports.

In 2021, **358 people** who required disability supports died by MAiD without the government knowing whether they received them.

In 2021, **1968 people** died by MAiD without the government knowing if they even required disability supports.

# And...

Taking all the unknowns into account, 5,340 people who died by MAiD between 2019 and 2021 may not have had access to necessary disability supports.



...Three and a half times more deaths than when the Titanic sunk.

# Charter Challenge on MAiD (2024)

In September 2024, a coalition of disability rights organizations including Inclusion Canada, DAWN Canada, the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), and Indigenous Disability Canada (IDC/BCANDS), alongside two individuals personally affected by MAiD, filed a Charter challenge against Track 2 of Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) law.

- **Issue:** Track 2 allows assisted death for people with disabilities whose natural death is not “reasonably foreseeable.”
- The coalition argues this provision is discriminatory, unconstitutional, and reinforces stigma against people with disabilities.
- **Goal:** To strike down Track 2, ensuring that MAiD is only accessible when natural death is reasonably foreseeable.



(L-R) Krista Carr, Executive Vice-President of Inclusion Canada, Bonnie Brayton, CEO of DAWN Canada, and Heather Walkus, Chair of CCD delivering their remarks at today's press conference challenging discriminatory sections of Canada's assisted dying law in court. (CNW Group/Inclusion Canada)

# Rushing to death in Canada's MAiD regime: Ramona Coelho for Inside Policy



"Barriers to care persist but access to **MAiD** keeps expanding..."

Coelho, Ramona. "Rushing to Death in Canada's MAiD Regime," Inside Policy, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, April 7, 2025.





We know that girls and women with disabilities experience gender-based violence at 2 to 3 times the rate that non-disabled women and girls experience but are not accessing shelters and GBV front line services in the numbers this would suggest.

## Gender-Based Violence and Poverty

- **Vulnerability of Women:** Women and girls with disabilities face gender-based violence at rates two to three times higher than their non-disabled peers. The data show that many do not seek help from shelters or support services, which is often attributed to systemic barriers and societal stigma, highlighting an urgent need for changes in how we serve and support women, girls and gender-divers people with disabilities experiencing GBV.
- **Rooting Resilience,** DAWN Canada's core GBV curriculum is deeply rooted in peer-support and peer-led system navigation.
- **Poverty Link:** Research suggests a correlation between poverty and the decision to seek MAID, with many women accessing MAID Track 2 often living in economically disadvantaged circumstances. This connection points to a larger issue of socioeconomic inequality influencing life-and-death decisions.

# MAiD Track 2 is not an option

- Track 2 is rooted not in terminal illness, but in ableist assumptions that disability equals suffering - a position firmly rejected by the UN CRPD. ([inclusioncanada.ca](http://inclusioncanada.ca))
- Ontario coroner data show Track 2 recipients often lack housing, counseling, or disability support - suggesting our social systems are failing before MAiD becomes an option. ([OCSWSSW](#), [BMJ Blogs](#), [AP News](#))
- Health Canada's **Fifth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada (2023)** states that **58.5% of Track 2 recipients were women**, compared to 41.5% men ([Government of Canada](#)).
- Statista (citing Statistics Canada data) also confirms that in 2023, females constituted the majority of Track 2 MAiD recipients at **58.5%** ([Statista](#)).
- Additionally, the 2022 data from Health Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus tables indicates **59.0% of non-reasonably foreseeable natural deaths (i.e., Track 2)** were women ([Government of Canada](#)).
- MAiD Track2 is being presented broadly in health care promotion messaging and has become normalized as part of the 'healthcare system'. Evidence is beginning to emerge that access to MAiD Track2 is easier to access than actual health care, housing or disability supports.



**DAWN Canada and our partners urge our Government(s) F/P/T to make investments in affordable and accessible housing, in health care, including mental health services, and gender-based violence protections and pathways to leadership —not more pathways to death.**

# Additional Resources

- [Canada's assisted dying regime should not be expanded to include children](#)
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/2/16/canadas-assisted-dying-regime-should-not-be-expanded-to-include-children>
- [Re-examining medical assistance in dying for mature minors in Canada: Reflections for health leaders](#)
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10133781/>
- [Mature minors and MAID: Insight from PhD candidate Sydney Campbell](#)
- [https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/blog/pr\\_mature\\_minors/](https://www.dyingwithdignity.ca/blog/pr_mature_minors/)
- [Medical Aid in Dying and the "Slippery Slope" Argument](#)



# Let's stay in touch!



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