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The Problem

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) is a controversial procedure that has been permitted by the Supreme Court of Canada and Parliament. It involves directly ending a patient's life by lethal injection. Some caregivers believe that it is morally acceptable to end the life of a patient upon request, while others do not. Some go further and believe that all caregivers must help willing patients to end their lives prematurely. In Ontario, medical regulators require physicians to provide an "effective referral". If physicians are unable to do so because of their conscience, they are advised to restrict their practices to sleep medicine, obesity medicine and hair loss medicine.

The Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience represents more than 110 healthcare facilities (with almost 18,000 care beds and 60,000 staff) and more than 5,000 physicians across Canada.

Our members come from diverse perspectives, but all agree that taking a patient's life or referring for this procedure violates at least one of the following:

- The Hippocratic Oath;
- Our religious convictions;
- Our mission and values;
- Our professional ethics;
- Our creed; or,
- Our deeply held conviction that healthcare should heal people, not hasten death.

Our position is supported by Evangelical Christian, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Jewish theologians and moral authorities.

Our right to freedom of conscience and religion is enshrined in s. 2 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Our right to protection against discrimination is enshrined in s.15.

Jurisdictions outside of Canada that allow assisted suicide or euthanasia do not require doctors to make an effective referral. Many other provinces, such as Alberta, have adopted alternatives for patient access, such as a care coordination system.

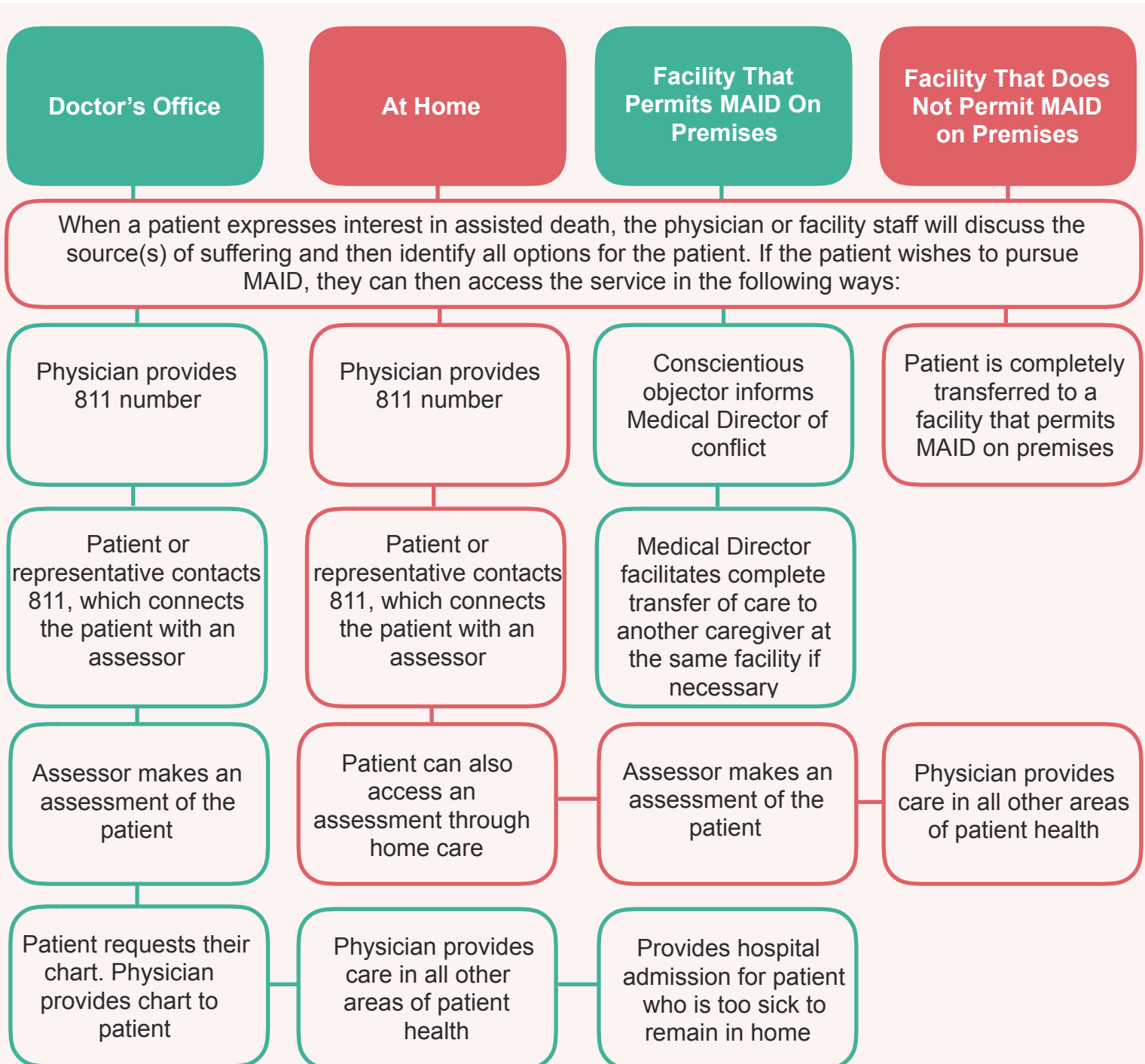
In November 2017, the Manitoba legislature passed legislation which protects the conscience rights of doctors, nurses, and pharmacists by ensuring that no healthcare professional can be required to provide or aid in the provision of MAID. In addition, it states that their professional regulatory bodies must not make policies requiring them to provide or aid in the provision of MAID, nor discipline their members based on those policies.

The Saskatchewan government has the opportunity to protect the conscience rights of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and other medical professionals by passing legislation to protect healthcare professionals from being forced to participate in or refer for medical assistance in dying. Conscientious objectors need to be able to continue to care for their patients.

The Solution

1. Pass legislation to protect physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals from being forced to refer for, perform, or assist in MAID, or being discriminated against for taking this stand.
2. Create a Care Coordination Service consistent with the approach of Alberta, which protects both patients and healthcare professionals.

How Access is Provided in Saskatchewan in Different Settings while Protecting Conscientious Objectors



Legislative protection along with use of a Care Coordination Service that does not require physician referral would provide patient access while allowing physicians to continue to serve their patients. In order for this to work, conscientious objection must be legally protected.