

## **Life's Vision Assisted Suicide**

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the pro-life group, Life's Vision Winnipeg, invited Dr Larry Rados to discuss the risks of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

At the pro-life Life's Vision Winnipeg's annual luncheon, February 7<sup>th</sup>, focused on the questions of assisted suicide, euthanasia and palliative care, Dr Larry Rados, M.D., who has been a physician in Winnipeg for 25 years, and an active pro-life advocate, led the discussions for about 200 attendees.

As the Supreme Court of Canada has lifted the moratorium on assisted suicide, the Parliament of Canada has only a year to propose revised legislation concerning assisted suicide and euthanasia for Canada as a whole. "We should not commit ourselves to choose this slippery slope, for many reasons" affirmed Dr Rados.

Among his arguments, he related the state of affairs in countries which have already authorised assisted suicide and euthanasia, such as Switzerland, the Netherlands and Belgium. "Each year, in the Netherlands, hundreds of people are euthanized without their consent!" he warned. "In Belgium, this translates into 32% who have not asked for or given their consent to this procedure. It is very disturbing".

He noted that in Switzerland, "... 16% of euthanized persons did not have a medical condition warranting the procedure." This was the case for Pietro d'Emico, an Italian patient who had received a diagnosis of a terminal medical condition. He asked to be euthanized, but after the fact, it was discovered the diagnosis was faulty!

Dr Larry Rados fears the lack of clarity about who will have the right to assisted suicide. "A Dutch ethics expert, Theo Boer, a former advocate of euthanasia, who has now changed his opinion, says the very existence of a law permitting assisted suicide encourages its acceptance as a normal way of dying," says the speaker. "People do not realize that assisted suicide is not

always used as a last resort!” He shared the case of an 80-year old Dutch woman who asked to be euthanized because she didn’t want to live in an assisted-care facility.

Even for sick people, “What is a terminal illness? There are many ways to respond to this question!” states Dr Larry Rados. “For Dr Kevorkian, pioneer of euthanasia advocacy in the United States, it is any sickness which shortens life, even for one day. Therefore, many illnesses are terminal.”

Finally, Larry Rados shared his fears that if a law is adopted he, as a doctor, will be forced to “... refer patients to doctors who practice euthanasia if requested, even though it is contrary to my moral and religious convictions, as is the case in Holland. The fact that the Supreme Court has lifted the moratorium on euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada is sad and terrifying”, concluded Dr Larry Rados.

In the Canadian Parliament, the quadriplegic Manitoba member, Steven Fletcher, has already proposed two pieces of legislation supporting medically-assisted death for all competent adults aged 18 and over. This proposed legislation will be debated before Fall 2015.