
From: Therese Smeal (South Western Sydney LHD)
Sent: Thursday, 27 January 2022 6:16 PM
To: Law
Cc: Linda Hansen
Subject: CM: RE: Provisions of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021 - Post-hearing responses - 13 December 2021

Record Number: D22/03236

Dear Madeleine,

In answer to question one I have no further information, data or analysis to provide to the Standing Committee on behalf of PCNA.

In answer to question two:

As I noted in brief during the hearing that as an experienced Palliative Care clinician I had not witnessed any clear evidence of subtle or overt coercion or subtle persuasion. The bulk of my work has not related to patients with dementia and so I am speaking in the context of all other life limiting illness's excepting dementia.

When I have listened to carers discussing the rationale as to why there is not any form of VAD (pre VAD bill presentation) my experience is that this has not been in hearing of the patient, that carers would not want their dying family member/friend to hear them broach this and my observation is that this discussion is in response to:

- their emotional distress and their preparation of preparing to lose a family member,
- carer fatigue when the person's terminal phase is perhaps longer than was initially prognosticated and communicated to them
- or a genuine belief that their family member/friend is physically or existentially suffering

My experience has shown me that patients themselves may get very distressed as they perceive the care burden they "are causing" to their family members/friends is perhaps overbearing and they the patient may verbalise the concept of VAD in this context.

Regards Therese Smeal