

Politics

# RCMP called to investigate multiple cases of veterans being offered medically assisted death

Veterans Affairs Minister Lawrence MacAulay apologizes for 'appalling interactions'

[Murray Brewster](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 24, 2022 11:30 PM EST | Last Updated: November 25, 2022



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Four — perhaps even five — Canadian military veterans were given the option of medically-assisted death (MAID) by a now-suspended Veterans Affairs Canada caseworker, the country's veterans minister told a House of Commons committee late Thursday.

Lawrence MacAulay said the matter is now being turned over to the RCMP for investigation and his department's internal review is ongoing.

"We expect all Veterans Affairs candidate employees to interact with veterans with care, compassion and respect and the actions of this one employee is simply disgusting," MacAulay told the veterans affairs committee. "And I condemn this behaviour in the strongest terms."

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- [Years after medical assistance in dying became legal, the debate rages on](#)

He went on to say there was "no way to justify" the actions and he wasn't about to defend the employee.

Last summer, Global News first reported a case where a veteran claimed to have been pressured by a veterans affairs case worker to consider medically assisted dying.

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Veterans Affairs Minister Lawrence MacAulay said the matter is now being turned over to the RCMP for investigation. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press)

That prompted MacAulay to order an internal investigation, which has now uncovered a total of four cases where veterans were allegedly offered MAID — all apparently by the same caseworker.

Earlier Thursday, the National Post reported on a possible fifth case involving a still-serving member of the military who told the podcast *Tango Romeo* that he was also unexpectedly offered MAID by a caseworker in November of last year.

MacAulay told the all-party committee that the most recent revelation was not among the cases his staff has uncovered and he urged the veteran who spoke in the

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Conservative MP — and veterans committee vice-chair — Blake Richards questioned whether the minister and the veterans department had a clear indication on the scope of the problem.

## Cause for alarm, says Tory MP

The fact the fifth case may have escaped the attention of the department review is cause for alarm, he said

"So in that case, either something was missed in this investigation, or there is another employee involved," Richards said. "Now, it's a matter of determining which of those two things it is. In either case, that's concerning."

Based upon what he sees, Richard said he believes the veterans department "investigation is not nearly thorough enough."

He said that might mean "there's a need for an outside investigation."

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MacAulay walked the committee through what his department knew, thus far, saying the first case that came to light occurred last summer where the caseworker repeatedly pushed the notion of MAID to an unnamed veteran who had called seeking help with post-traumatic stress.

A second occasion reported happened last May where the same caseworker provided assisted dying information to a veteran.

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# Minister apologizes

The fourth known case apparently happened in 2019, where a veteran called VAC specifically asking for information about assistance in taking his own life.

MacAulay offered an apology.

"I am sorry you had to endure these appalling interactions, and we're doing everything we can to ensure this never happens again," the minister said.

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