

Quebec's top court rules assisted dying law can proceed

December 22 2015

Quebec's Court of Appeal ruled Tuesday that the right of terminally ill patients in the province to choose to die with medical help should stand. The law, passed late last year, was the first of its kind in Canada.

The three-judge Court of Appeal panel overturned a Dec. 1 Quebec Superior Court judgment aimed at suspending the implementation of the law, Bill 52, until certain provisions of the Criminal Code were changed.

The Quebec Court of Appeal ruled Tuesday that the law does not conflict with those provisions because those sections that ban assisted suicide were not valid after the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the federal law last February.

Quebec's legislation, which outlines how [terminally ill patients](#) can end their lives with medical help, was adopted by members of the national assembly in June 2014 and became law six months later.

A Quebec Superior Court justice ruled last month in favor of a group of doctors who were seeking to postpone implementation of the law until at least February.

Those in favor of temporarily blocking the end-of-life legislation argued that medically assisted death should be considered a criminal act until the federal government changed those provisions deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

They also tried to argue that medical help in dying infringes on the right to life enshrined in Canada's constitution.

However, the [appeals court](#) said Tuesday that Quebec's assisted-dying [law](#) fills a judicial void by allowing patients to exercise their rights granted to them by the Supreme Court.

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