 College of Community and Global Health

Bold Ideas Colloquium Speaker Series
Friday, February 13, 2026, 12:00 – 1 PM via Zoom:

https://umanitoba.zoom.us/j/64216859137?pwd=RDlLtw2jdckSXpaj0A6rvbaAicbZiG.1

Examining the implications of evolving "Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) practices and policies on vulnerable Canadians

 Salina Pirzada, PhD Candidate, College of Community and Global Health

Abstract: Canada's rapid uptake of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) has significantly reshaped the healthcare landscape. In 2021, Canada reported the highest number of assisted deaths globally, surpassing all other jurisdictions in annual MAiD cases. This steady normalization of assisted death is unfolding alongside a national mental health crisis, persistent shortages in palliative care, and rising poverty rates, with approximately one in five Canadians living in poverty. Canada thus stands at a critical juncture: it is imperative to examine whether requests for assisted death reflect autonomous end-of-life decision-making, or whether they are shaped, in part, by systemic inequities, inadequate social and health supports, or forms of dignity-related suffering rooted in structural vulnerability.

Talk Learning Objectives: 1. Describe history of MAiD legislation in Canada; 2. Examine how factors such as poverty, mental health gaps and limited palliative care may shape requests for MAiD; 3. Discuss MAiD for mental illness

Biography: Salina Pirzada is a clinical researcher who completed an Honours Bachelor of Science Degree at the UofT and a MSc in the Neuroscience Research Program at the UofMB. Currently is a Doctoral candidate in the College of Community and Global Health. Her research examines the evolving landscape of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) legislation in Canada and its implications for structurally vulnerable populations. Her patient-centred research focuses on patients in intensive care, palliative care and psychiatric settings to understand end-of-life decision-making across diverse and complex clinical contexts. Salina has secured over $45,000 in research funding, has published widely (e.g., recently a book chapter on the role of artificial intelligence in preventing mental illness in *Artificial Intelligence in Mental Healthcare),* presented at national and international conferences, has been invited to speak at the 20th World Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care in Prague in May 2026, and is an Undergraduate Sessional Instructor in the College of Community and Global Health.