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Summary:

Thank you for the opportunity to make my submission to this inquiry. I hope my insights help with the committees deliberations and support with the outcome of what this potential legislation will look like.

Questions:

1. Do you support making VAD legal in the NT?

I would like to voice my support for these changes in the Northern Territory. I believe every Territorian should have the opportunity to access this treatment should they wish too. It's important that these options aren't forced on to people that fall within the criteria. However it remains accessible to the community.

Ultimately, there may be some concern within the community about VAD however I do believe it is about choice. Not everyone has to make this choice, but there are people in the Northern Territory that would like to make this choice and I believe that this should be an option available whether you agree with it or not.

2. What eligibility criteria should a person need to meet before they can access VAD?

In addition to what has already been proposed and inline with other jurisdictions. I would like to see VAD extended to those that are living with complex and and long term suicidality. In addition to that there must be strict assessment and all treatment avenues must have been exhausted.

This would then provide the patient and their family the closure they could need in wrapping up their life of the chronic pain and dealing with the complex Health challenges. I think that this would then provide people greater certainty in being able to decide what is best for them. This could see a reduction in the stigma surrounding suicide. Creating the more open dialogue for people wanting to end their life due to the chronic pain being felt.

3. How could the NT make sure that an eligible person can access VAD in a safe and effective way, including people living in remote areas, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

As a First Nations person I can understand this is a sensitive topic in both the mainstream and cultural contexts. Potentially it would be all apart of the planning process. Once the person decides that they would like to access VAD. I feel this procedure **SHOULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN** in a remote community unless it is discussed and approved by the elders of the community and if it is approved. Then plenty of notice must be given to that community. So the community can prepare.

Potentially, if the patient has to travel into Darwin or Alice Springs as a main hub to access this treatment providing some support to families to be able to travel in with them so they are able to share those final moments.

4. How could the NT monitor the process to ensure VAD is delivered safely and effectively?

I think similar to what we have for medical professionals they (anyone conducting the procedure) should have ARPHA registration or a similar accreditation process like a working with children's check or an NDIS check.

All procedures should be done through NT Health. I don't believe that this should be privatised or be able to be outsourced to a third-party provider. I think that could lead to some potential risk especially with the concept being relatively new within the Northern Territory again. Once we build our knowledge base of this practice both in the Northern Territory and nationally I think then we can start looking at how we can increase the availability through external providers.