In a video statement played to members of Parliament, a Victoria woman, diagnosed with Lou Gehrig disease in 1991, asked legislators to change the law banning assisted suicide. “If I cannot give consent to my own death, whose body is this? Who owns my life?” she said. The Supreme Court of Canada ultimately ruled against the appellant, but her struggle galvanized the public. Sue Rodriguez committed suicide in 1994 with assistance from an unknown MD.

Assisted suicide remains an offence in Canada, but it is becoming more frequently permitted in other communities—for example, in Switzerland, where assisted suicide is open to visitors from other countries, who often must travel unaccompanied lest a companion be charged with assisting the process upon return to her or his own jurisdiction. A guest editorial this issue written by Dr. David Benatar asks, “Should there be a legal right to die?” In Benatar’s thought-provoking essay, he argues that the right to die is simply an extension of the right to live. Comments and letters on this issue from our readership are greatly welcomed, and I look forward to presenting them in a future issue of the journal.

A second guest editorial comes from Dr. Steve Narod, who writes on personalized medicine. He points out, for example, that although tamoxifen may be effective as a chemopreventive in BRCA1 carriers, the benefit in Ontario is likely to be limited to no more than a single patient from among 8000 new breast cancer cases recorded annually. His recommendations for improving what he calls “personalized prevention” make considerable sense.