

THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE RIGHT TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN ENGLISH

The Government of Québec imposes absolutely no linguistic conditions in healthcare settings before providing healthcare in English to anyone who requests it. Every English-speaking individual in Québec has the right to receive health and social services in English, as per section 15 of the *Act respecting health services and social services*. This right is clear and in no way is being called into question.

The *Charter of the French language* confirms and upholds the right to health and social services in English. The adoption of the *Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec* (formerly known as Bill 96), which amended the Charter, does not change the availability of health and social services in English. Moreover, the Regional Access Plans requested by the English community have been approved by the government.

The recent directive published by the Ministry of Health and Social Services does not limit the circumstances under which users have the right to receive health and social services in English. Any suggestion to the contrary is false. Organizations in the health and social services network do not request documentation or proof from users for the provision of care in a particular language.

The directive also recognizes the special status of health and social service establishments, such as the Jewish General and Santa Cabrini hospitals, which was also recognized by the Office québécois de la langue française.

The Government of Québec's intention has never been to restrict access to healthcare for English speakers in Québec. We understand that many people are concerned about the directive. We will be meeting with representatives of the English-speaking community to hear their concerns and reassure them of our desire to provide healthcare to Quebecers without linguistic requirements. We are open to clarifying the directive to make it clear that there will never be language requirements in Québec to treat a patient.

Jean-François Roberge is the minister of the French language, and the minister responsible for Canadian relations and the Canadian Francophonie, for democratic institutions, for access to information and privacy, and for laicity.

Eric Girard is the minister of finance and the minister responsible for relations with English-speaking Quebecers.

Christian Dubé is the minister of health.

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