

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New language directives in health a welcome, significant step, QCGN says**

**MONTREAL, Monday, September 23, 2024** – The Quebec Community Groups Network is heartened to see significant progress on the divisive issue of how English and other languages may be used in Quebec's health and social services network.

"The revised directives on language permissions go a long way toward assuaging the fears and concerns of the 1.3-million member English-speaking community of Quebec," said QCGN President Eva Ludvig. "They also more closely reflect the promises this and previous governments have made that changes to language legislation would not affect the availability of nor access to health and social services in English," she said.

"Critically, they clearly confirm that the only card you need when you visit a doctor or go to the hospital is a health card, not an identity card. They heard what we said.

"We feel our persistence on this issue, which has been criticized, sometimes sharply, in certain circles, has paid off," she said.

"As we have demanded, the new directives more closely reflect the language and intent of the Charter of the French language that elevates health, public safety and natural justice above legal technicalities that could refuse care or services to a citizen at a crucial time.

"They are thus more in line with the long-standing Quebec tradition that access to health and social services is a human health matter and not a language matter," Ludvig said.

Added QCGN Director-General, Sylvia Martin-Laforge: "We understand there may be more details to come on the administrative side of the directives, with which we might not find favour.

"We will address any further concerns with Health and Social Services Minister Christian Dubé because, as we have maintained since this issue arose in July, we believe it is first and foremost a health issue, not a language issue. We are always ready to work co-operatively and in good faith."

Underlining a key point, Ludvig noted: "We will always maintain, however, that there should really be only one directive when it comes to languages used in the delivery of health and social services in Quebec: The health of patients takes precedence, and health-care professionals should make every effort to accommodate patients' needs. In health care, language of communication is really between a doctor, nurse or other professional and the patient. Period."

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together English-language community organizations and individuals across Quebec. Its mission is to

identify, explore, and address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration.

**For further information:**

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