

## True Impact of Bill 96 on English-speaking Community Now Abundantly Clear

**MONTREAL, October 20, 2021** – Following months of repeated assurances to the contrary, Quebec Premier François Legault this morning confirmed that under Bill 96, he intends to restrict access to Quebec government services in English to members of the English-speaking community eligible to receive English education under Bill 101.

Among the effects, this would remove the existing right to access health care and social services in English from between 300,000 and 500,000 members of Quebec’s English-speaking community.

Until this morning, we had been repeatedly reassured by Premier Legault, Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette, and MNA Christopher Skeete, Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, that Bill 96 would not adversely affect the English-speaking community. Restricting services in the way Premier Legault suggests would add an additional barrier for those who are already vulnerable, those who already have trouble accessing services, and those who have the least influence in the National Assembly to sound the alarm.

“It is well established that communication is essential to the safety, efficacy and quality of health and social services,” the QCGN’s Health and Social Services Committee noted in its recent Bill 96 brief: “Health and social services are an end in themselves and not the place or means for imposing social integration. After French, the second major language used by over 1 million Quebecers is English. For these citizens the ability to express their health and social service needs and understand the implications of consent and the treatments and interventions proposed is not only a matter of personal comfort but also of the efficacy and safety of those treatments and interventions.”

This morning’s statement by the Premier is totally opposite to what he and his leadership team had been solemnly insisting all along, to the QCGN, to all members of our community, and to all of Quebec. Now, the true intent and full impact underlying the CAQ’s use of the term “historic English-speaking community” has – finally -- been made crystal clear.

What Lucien Bouchard said in 1996 applied then, remains true now, and should be the standard that continues to be applied: “When you go to the hospital and you are in pain, you may need a blood test, but you certainly don’t need a language test.”

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores, and addresses strategic issues affecting the

development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions, and leaders.

**For further information:**

Rita Legault, Director of Communications | [rita.legault@qcgq.ca](mailto:rita.legault@qcgq.ca)

Telephone: 514-868-9044, ext. 223, cellular: 514-912-6555