Adoption of Regional Access Plans: AQ to Monitor Process

Montreal, Thursday, July 8, 1999 – Alliance Quebec notes that the Government of Quebec has finally acted and approved the remaining two regional access plans for Montreal and l'Estrie. The fact is the government stalled adopting these plans for more than four years. That necessitated legal action on the part of Alliance Quebec.

"The decision to go to court is vindicated by getting quick response from the moment we actually appeared in court," stated AQ President William Johnson. "Not one single access plan was approved until after Alliance Quebec deposited the Writ of *Mandamus* before the Superior Court of Quebec on January 20, 1999."

"Moreover, we have heard from several sources that the access plans would have been much diminished from what they are now had we not shown our determination to defend our rights," continued Johnson.

Meanwhile, Alliance Quebec's court action continues.

During this process of approval, the Régies régionales have been subjected to great pressure from the government to reduce the level of accessibility to services and the number of institutions serving the English-speaking community of Quebec. Alliance Quebec is deeply concerned about the quality of the approved access plans and will focus its attention on examining all 16 regional access plans to determine whether the rights of English-speaking Quebecers are maintained in accordance with the *Health and Social Services Act of Quebec*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (article 7) and *La charte des droits et libertés de la personne* (article 1).

"Alliance Quebec wants to see the implementation of the new access plans," stated Alliance Quebec Vice President Anthony Housefather. "We also call on the Government of Quebec to sign the Canada-Quebec Agreement."

The Agreement provides federal funds to hire Regional Co-ordinators to oversee the implementation of regional access plans and to act as liaison between the English-speaking community and the network of institutions.