

English-speaking community very concerned about Barrette reform bill

For Immediate Release

Montreal, September 25, 2014 – The Quebec Community Groups Network and its community stakeholders are concerned about a massive reorganization of the health care sector. We are apprehensive about the impact these profound changes will have on our community’s capacity to remain involved in institutions which are essential to our vitality and identity.

While Dr. Barrette stated that linguistic status for bilingual “installations” - no longer institutions - will be maintained as stipulated in article 29.1 of Quebec’s Charter of the French Language, hospitals will lose their Boards of Directors which may or may not be replaced with advisory boards that have absolutely no power. As written, the law says advisory boards will be set up if professionals in installations request them. If the boards are set up, they will be named by the minister, not chosen by our community.

“We are shocked that the proposed law removes the community from the governance of Jeffery Hale - Saint Brigid’s,” said Taylor Ireland, president of Voice of English-speaking Quebec that represents Quebec City’s English-speaking community. “For more than 150 years the English-speaking community has, and continues to be, at the heart of this institution which is directly tied to its vitality. Without this direct involvement at a decisional level our community will suffer as will services adapted to our cultural and linguistic reality.”

“Quebec’s English-speaking community has a long and proud history of building institutions that serve the needs of all Quebecers” said QCGN Director General Sylvia Martin-Laforge. “These institutions provide two functions. They ensure that services are available in our minority language, a critical need; especially for vulnerable populations like seniors. The governance of our institutions also gives us influence over how these services are provided and a sense of belonging and security. This control attracts volunteers and support, and extends the purpose of institutions beyond their day-to-day function to centres of community pride and identity. Appointed advisory boards without real power strip us of control over the health institutions our community has built over the span of Quebec’s history.”

Earlier this week, the QCGN wrote to Premier Philippe Couillard to share our concerns about media leaks that forecast Barrette's announcement of massive mergers as the government looks to save some \$220 million a year in health care costs.

"Our institutions are important not just as places where services are provided, but also as anchors for our community," QCGN President Dan Lamoureux told the Premier, noting there are no English institutions in Quebec. "The institutions that were founded and supported by English-speaking Quebecers are bilingual institutions that provide sensitive services to all Quebecers. If English-speaking Quebecers are no longer able to actively participate in the governance of our institutions to meet the needs of our community, this will inevitably lead to a reduction in access and quality of services which are culturally and linguistically accessible to our community."

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 41 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.

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