



Alliance Quebec Petitions Information Commission for Answers on OLF Health Report

Alliance Quebec today deposited a request with the Access to Information Commission for a copy of the report drafted by the Office de la langue française on access plans to English health and social services.

The Office was asked with great fanfare by Health and Social Services Minister Jean Rochon in January to review the access plans. Alliance Quebec mobilized an extensive community protest against this measure in late winter. As the Alliance then noted, these plans had already been approved by Quebec's elected regional health boards. Nevertheless, the Minister took the unprecedented step of involving the OLF to make sure that they did not infringe the Charter of the French Language.

Despite repeated requests by Alliance Quebec, neither the Office nor the Ministry has revealed the contents of the Office report.

"The English-speaking communities have a right to know what the Office is saying about the access plans," stated Alliance Quebec President Michael Hamelin. "The public needs to know that English services will not be reduced because of some bureaucratic whim. These English services have been recommended by health professionals and approved by the institutions that will offer offer them. We want to know if the Office is working to change those plans.

"The Minister said in January that the plans would be adopted by the end of spring. Now, we are hearing that the government won't adopt them until the end of the summer. We have a legal right to English-language services. How long will we have to wait to know if that right will be respected?"

The regional health boards started work on these plans in September 1994. The final plans were submitted to the Ministry in December 1996.