

September 21, 1998

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Hon. Lucien Bouchard  
Premier of Quebec  
Office of the Premier  
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Mr. Premier:

Alliance Quebec writes to express indignation and outrage about the failure of your cabinet to pass access plans for English-language services throughout the health and social services network of Quebec.

Once again, your government is stalling, violating the law, and depriving us of protection of our rights under Quebec law. To redirect the Access Plans for English health and social services to the Office de la Langue Française gives the approval of your high office to the continuation of an intolerable delay.

Let us recall a few facts:

- Bill 142 in 1986 guaranteed access to English health and social services and ordered regional health councils to develop Access Plans. Plans came in 1989.
- In 1991, Bill 120 required that .. Access Plans be revised every three years. In 1994, then Health Minister Lucienne Robillard set criteria for revised Access Plans and ordered they be submitted by the end of December 1995.
- Early in the mandate of your government, plans from the 16 regions were submitted to the École Nationale d'Administration Publique. The government then submitted the plans to the Office de la Langue Française:.. Neither body had any business examining those plans or recommending any changes in them.
- Your government promised plans by the end of 1996, and acknowledged that they were needed because of vast reforms taking place in the sector

Deputy Premier Bernard Landry, Louise Beaudoin and others have campaigned to limit and restrict English health services. Theirs is a shameless campaign of intimidation. Health Minister Jean Rochon promised that the

Cabinet would pass the Access Plans imminently. He repeats the promise about every two months, but nothing ever happens.

Our concern is understandable and pertinent: a) The Quebec government flouts its own law. The plans were to be ready by the latest at the end of 1996. nearly 21 months later, although ready, they are not approved by Cabinet. Moreover, b) The rights which should be protected under those plans, under Quebec law, are unprotected. If we do not stand up for those rights, they can be forfeited.

Our right to guaranteed access to English health and social services is now being put at risk by the government. The government claims that it can leave our right to health and social services in English unprotected by law. Then, our rights become mere concessions, revocable at will. Meanwhile, hundreds of English-speaking community volunteers, as well as health and social service professionals, are demoralized because their work in preparing the Access Plans has been repudiated.

There must be an end to intimidation, to the flouting of the law and the violation of rights, to promises being broken. There must be an end to the contempt expressed towards the hundred of thousands of people in the English-speaking community. If you fail to do your duty, we will seek to guarantee proper respect for Quebec law and for the rights to adequate health and social services in English. We want your response to our demand by October 19, failing which all potential solutions will be considered.

Sincerely,

William Johnson President