



Alliance Quebec demands that people receive health and social services in the language they choose to use

There has been much community concern over the past few days regarding a directive delivered to employees of the joint Montreal General and Royal Victoria Hospitals. The directive calls on employees to greet callers in French and only switch to English after the caller has done so. Alliance Quebec has already expressed its strong objections to this measure, noting that the Quebec government has been improperly pressuring institutions to limit English access to services, even beyond the restrictions set out in Bill 101.

While Alliance Quebec recognizes the good faith of the joint hospital in seeking to serve clients in their preferred language, this directive clearly fails to honor that promise. *Clients must know -- as soon as they are greeted at either hospital -- that they will be served in English should they wish.* As we have advised the administration of the hospitals, there is a simple and effective solution: The Royal Victoria and the Montreal General must correct the directive to employees by clearly noting that every person will be greeted in English and in French, not only in French.

We are very confident that they will recognize the good sense of this proposal, and will implement it without delay. This is not, ultimately, a question of language but one of service to the public. It is absolutely essential that individuals know that they will always receive quality health and social services in their preferred language when they deal with these key community institutions.

The “Vic” and the “General” are proud and essential public establishments, identified with and largely built by English-speaking Quebecers. Everything must be done to honor and safeguard their commitment to serve us in our language.