



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

The Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers (RPCU) calls for protection for seniors living in private residences

Québec City, March 15, 2011 - The Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers (*provincial association of users' committees*) (RPCU) is calling for the users' and residents' committees that exist throughout Québec to have an additional mandate to defend the rights of seniors who live in private residences. That request was made today in conjunction with the filing of its brief entitled "*Governance: Users at the core of services*" with the Parliamentary Committee on Health and Social Services that is reviewing Bill 127.

"No-one is defending the rights of those with no voice, the seniors who live in private residences, and we believe this is a serious deficiency in our society," said Mr. Claude Ménard, President of the Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers. *"We believe that all it would take would be for the legislation to require healthcare institutions to cover all the clientele within their territory, including intermediate resources, family-based resources and private residences, in order to provide minimal protection to a vulnerable clientele."*

The RPCU would like users' and residents' committees to have greater autonomy for managing their affairs and their budgets. Furthermore, since the Citizens' Forum that formerly reported to the regional agencies has been abolished, the RPCU suggests that a regional commission of users' committees be formed to give voice to committee members at the regional level, so that they may participate in decisions affecting users.

"The citizen's voice is often disturbing and it is not welcome at the Board of Directors' table," observes Mr. Pierre Blain, Director General of the RPCU. *"In fact, Bill 127 eliminates a seat that users' committees used to have on boards of directors, and the Ministère de la Santé has just cut their budgets."*

Regardless of who is sitting on the boards of directors of the institutions, whether those people are elected, appointed or co-opted, the Act respecting health services and social services gives a clear mission to the users' committees: to be the voice of users and defend their rights while improving the quality of services .

The users' and residents' committees of healthcare and social services institutions were created to safeguard users' rights. The RPCU represents the 594 users' and residents' committees whose members work on a volunteer basis to improve the quality of services.

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