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Complaints About Health or Social Services

WHERE TO TURN


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Information Empowers

Setting
the
Scene

Learn how to make a formal complaint if you are dissatisfied with public health or social services you received.

This pamphlet is up to date to March 2021.

It has general information only. If you need legal advice on a specific situation, consult a lawyer or notary.

Reasons for Complaint

You can file a formal complaint if a health and social services institution did not provide good service or violated your rights.

As a user of health and social services, you have many rights, including these:

- receive safe, appropriate care
- be treated with respect
- be informed of your state of health and treatment options
- accept or refuse care
- receive certain services in English if you're an English-speaking person

Health and social services institutions must adopt an anti-maltreatment policy and post this policy publicly. You can file a complaint if you experience or witness mistreatment.

Institutions

The complaint process applies to any institution or facility in the public health and social services network and private facilities connected to it. Here are examples:

- hospitals
- CLSCs
- long-term care centres (CHSLDs)
- rehabilitation centres
- child and youth protection centres
- intermediate and family-type resources (supervised apartments and foster homes)
- private seniors' residences

- integrated health and social services centres (CISSS and CIUSSS or regional umbrella institutions)

Before Filing a Complaint

Speak with the people in charge of the institution. If this doesn't solve the problem, you can file a formal complaint.

Who Can File a Complaint

You or someone allowed to act for you (a close relative, your representative under a protection mandate, etc.) can file the complaint.

Where to File a Complaint

In most cases, file your complaint with the service quality and complaints commissioner for your integrated health and social services centre (CISSS or CIUSSS).

Call Services Quebec at 1-877-644-4545 or ask staff at the institution providing the services for the commissioner's contact information. You can also find contact information on "The Health and Social Services Network Complaint Examination System" page of the Quebec government's website.

For complaints about ambulance service in Montreal and Laval, file your complaint with the service quality

and complaints commissioner for the Corporation d'Urgences-santé, 514-723-5600.

Procedure

Your complaint can be oral or written.

If your complaint is about a health professional working in a public institution, the commissioner sends it to a medical examiner named by the institution. The examiner then has 45 days to make a decision.

All other complaints are decided by the commissioner within 45 days.

Your complaint is kept confidential.

Read more about the complaint procedure on "The Health and Social Services Network Complaint Examination System" page of the Quebec government's website.

Review of Decision

If you are not satisfied with the commissioner's or medical examiner's decision, you can file a second-level complaint.

Get Help

Service quality and complaints commissioner

You can ask the commissioner for your CISSS or CIUSSS to help you with your complaint.

Call Services Quebec at 1-877-644-4545 or ask staff at the institution for the commissioner's contact information.

Users' committees

All network institutions have a users' committee that can help you with your complaint.

For more information, contact the institution or go to the website of the Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers at rpcu.qc.ca/en/.

Many residential facilities, such as intermediate resources and CHSLDs, also have a sub-committee called an in-patients' committee that can help with a complaint.

Many private seniors' residences have their own residents' committee. Although they don't have official status under the law, they can help find solutions to problems.

Centres d'assistance et d'accompagnement aux plaintes (CAAP)

The CAAP can help you in these ways:

- explain the complaint process
- help you write your complaint
- accompany you through the process
- encourage talks with the institution to find a solution

The CAAP can help you communicate with the service quality and complaints commissioner or a users' committee or help solve problems with a private seniors' residence.

Call 1-877-767-2227, or go to fcaap.ca/en/.

Services in English can vary.