



PROTECTEUR
DU CITOYEN

INTERVENTION REPORT (EXCERPTS)

Intervention at Hôpital de Sept-Îles

Québec City, January 17, 2023

THE INTERVENTION

The Québec Ombudsman received a report about the shortcomings in the quality and safety of the care provided to Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de la Côte-Nord service users. More specifically, the facility concerned was Hôpital de Sept-Îles, which serves a population of more than 57,000 people in various regional county municipalities (MRCs). The hospital's emergency room is recognized as a secondary trauma centre and has ten authorized stretchers. Front-line and second-line services are provided, in particular, general and specialized hospital care.

Given the nature of the allegations and the risk of harm, the Québec Ombudsman decided to intervene.

THE CONCLUSION

The Québec Ombudsman's investigation revealed flaws in the quality of the care and services offered to Hôpital de Sept-Îles service users. In the past, several issues with triage had prompted the Ombudsman to make recommendations. Several elements could still stand improving if they are to comply with expected standards, especially concerning triage, control measures and hospital fluidity.

As part of its investigation, the Québec Ombudsman saw the staff and the managers wanted to provide quality care and to improve the situation. The institution had begun to make changes before the Québec Ombudsman's visit. In terms of organization, the Ombudsman would also like to highlight the mobilization and involvement of the various sections in a bid to decrease emergency room overcrowding. The following recommendations are part of an improvement process and their purpose is to ensure that service users receive quality care in keeping with their rights.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the preceding, the Québec Ombudsman has made the following recommendations to CISSS de la Côte-Nord – Hôpital de Sept-Îles:

R-1 **Inventory** and analyze the causes of the shortcomings with emergency room triage regarding the following aspects:

- Ineffective use of the time recorder;
- Underuse of the short assessment;
- No systematic support for triage nursing staff when there is heavy emergency room traffic;
- Triage that exceeds the prescribed five minutes.

By May 30, 2023, send the Québec Ombudsman the findings of this exhaustive analysis and information about the means used to make the required changes.

R-2 **Take** the measures needed for quantitative pain assessment (scale of 0 to 10) for all people who go to the emergency room suffering, notably by:

- Carrying out an audit on pain assessment by the nursing staff at triage;
- Meeting individually with every staff member who did not carry out quantitative pain assessment in order to inform them about the flaws observed;
- Offering the necessary support to the staff concerned so that they can correct their practices.

By May 30, 2023, show the Québec Ombudsman that this recommendation was implemented and indicate how this was done.

R-3 **Ensure** that the emergency room nursing staff concerned are able at all times to monitor the people in the waiting room, including those in the second waiting room, so that the staff can see whether the service users' condition is deteriorating, in keeping with the emergency room emergency guide.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-4 **Ensure** that the people who are waiting for their case to be taken in hand at the emergency room are informed about the importance of remaining in the waiting rooms for that purpose.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-5 **Do** what is needed so that triage nursing staff can reassess the condition of people awaiting medical management, according to the requirements of the Canadian Emergency Department Triage and Acuity Scale.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-6 Design a redirection process, including the notion of free and informed consent and the clinical algorithm for predefining the requirements for safe redirection of people who go to the emergency room.

By May 30, 2023, send the Québec Ombudsman a copy of this process.

R-7 Inform emergency room nursing staff about the process for redirecting people who go to the emergency room.

By September 30, 2023, give the Québec Ombudsman confirmation that the content of the redirection process has been explained to the staff concerned and indicate how this was done.

R-8 Maximize the visibility of stretchers from the nurses' station at the emergency room, notably by removing the frosted film and the posters on the station windows, and by relocating certain equipment that obstructs the view.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-9 Do what is needed so that people placed in isolation at the emergency room are supervised in compliance with the institution's protocol by ensuring in particular that:

- The required forms are properly used;
- Observation notes are completed;
- The nursing staff concerned are equipped to apply this control measure.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-10 Ensure that unused physical restraints are kept somewhere that is easy to access, while ensuring that emergency room users cannot see them.

By May 30, 2023, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving this goal.

R-11 Design a checklist to make it easier to carry out disinfecting and cleaning at the emergency room and make the list available to the healthcare staff concerned.

By May 30, 2023, give the Québec Ombudsman confirmation that this checklist has been created and made available to emergency room healthcare staff, and send it a copy of the checklist.

FOLLOW-UP

The Québec Ombudsman has also asked CISSS de la Côte-Nord – Hôpital de Sept-Îles to send it the following:

By June 30, 2023:

- S-1** The result of the discussions on preoperative preparation by the weekend emergency room nursing staff.
- S-2** An updated copy of the plan to handle emergency room overcrowding.
- S-3** Confirmation that the technological tool to optimize home support and report on the number of hours of care provided has been put in place.
- S-4** A report on the various steps related to the construction of an intermediate residence in Sept-Îles.

As at September 30, 2023:

- S-5** The following performance indicators:
 - The average stay for people on stretchers in the emergency room;
 - The time between the request for hospitalization and the time of departure from the emergency room;
 - The statistics on the people who have alternative care status.

Expected follow-up

In accordance with the provisions of the *Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman* (CQLR, c. P-31.1) within 30 days of receiving this report, the institution must inform the Québec Ombudsman of whether it intends to implement the recommendations made to it, or of its reasons if it has decided not to act on them.



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