



PROTECTEUR
DU CITOYEN

INTERVENTION REPORT (EXCERPTS)

**Intervention at the Hôtel-Dieu de
Montréal Shelter**

Québec City, February 7, 2024

THE INTERVENTION

The Québec Ombudsman intervened on its own initiative following information received in September 2023 about the quality of care and services provided to 186 people living in the Hôtel-Dieu Shelter (Shelter) operated jointly by Mission Bon Accueil (MBA) and the Old Brewery Mission (OBM) in the Montréal area.

The matters brought to its attention concerned recurring apprehensions about the quality of care and services provided at the Shelter since it opened in the summer of 2021.

Because client population safety and care and service quality may have been compromised, the Québec Ombudsman intervened to ensure that the rights of Shelter users were respected and that they received the care and services they were entitled to expect.

The institutions and organizations concerned were as follows:

- Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal;
- Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM);
- Mission Bon Accueil (MBA) and the Old Brewery Mission (OBM).

Context

The Shelter project took shape in the summer of 2021 after it was announced that a temporary shelter located in a downtown Montréal hotel would be closing. During the pandemic, the temporary shelter was managed exclusively by MBA.

CHUM's Pavillon Royer was available at the time, and given the scale of this new project, which now included 186 beds, OBM and MBA decided to co-manage the resource.

In concrete terms, OBM employees are responsible for monitoring the Shelter on day shifts, while MBA employees are responsible for evening and night shifts. MBA also manages meal planning at another of its facilities, as well as transporting meals to the Shelter.

CHUM had to bring the premises up to code and see to their upkeep in order to adapt the site to fulfil its new role as an emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

It is important to note that there has never been a formal agreement between the parties (CIUSSS, CHUM, OBM, MBA) since the project was implemented in the summer of 2021. The Québec Ombudsman recommends such an agreement. This presentation of the respective roles is therefore based primarily on information gathered during the investigation from testimonies obtained by the Québec Ombudsman.

THE CONCLUSION

The Québec Ombudsman's investigation confirmed that some people referred to the Shelter had needs that existing staff could not meet adequately.

Although the Québec Ombudsman assumes that the parties involved in the Shelter project are sincere in their bid to respond to complex clinical issues, and even more so given the emergency context in 2021, it is difficult to understand the absence of a contractual link between these parties to date.

While it is true that the CIUSSS is responsible not only for coordinating and funding certain regional homelessness services, but also for funding community initiatives, the Québec Ombudsman believes that the difficulties encountered in managing the Shelter are first and foremost a matter of shared responsibility. The services offered and the partners' respective roles should have been clearly established from the outset in a formal agreement (CIUSSS, CHUM, OMB, MBA).

In addition, although it is understandable that some Montréal hospitals have to deal with homeless client populations at times, and that some of these people occupy beds when their condition does not require hospital care, they should not be systematically referred to the Shelter or similar resources.

More specifically, as soon as the condition of a person experiencing homelessness requires nursing care or care by attendants, or if they have reduced mobility, they should not be referred to a shelter unless there is a specific agreement to that effect. Such an agreement should include, if required, the addition of workers capable of providing adequate and safe services.

In a context where a new project will be needed to compensate for the loss of the current building in July 2024, solutions will have to be adopted to ensure that no shelter takes in people for whom it has neither the expertise nor the support required to ensure their safety and meet their needs.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the foregoing, the Québec Ombudsman made the following recommendations to CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal:

- R-1** Complete the assessment of people staying at the Hôtel-Dieu Shelter and relocate those whose condition requires care from nurses or attendants or who have reduced mobility;

- R-2** Ensure compliance with the directives issued by the Table des présidents-directeurs généraux adjoints (PDGA) regarding the criteria to be met when referring people to the Hôtel-Dieu Shelter;
- R-3** More specifically, assess the condition of people using technical aids to move about in order to ensure that the equipment is in good condition and is safe;
- R-4** Issue a call for proposals to offset the loss of the building housing the Hôtel-Dieu Shelter, scheduled for July 2024;
- R-5** Draw up a draft contract setting out the respective roles of all the partners involved in the project, the access criteria, the training required, and the services and accountability expected. Furthermore, ensure that it is signed as soon as the new project is set up with the organizations selected in the call for proposals.

By May 1, 2024, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures for achieving these objectives.

Expected follow-up

As provided for in the *Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman*, no later than 30 days of receiving this document, CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal 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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