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37th Annual Report
of the Québec Ombudsman

**A CALL FOR GREATER VIGILANCE IN RISK PRÉVENTION AND MANAGEMENT IN
THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK**

Québec City, June 7, 2007 – Providing better quality services will require concrete actions to prevent risk and respond rapidly when dangerous situations arise. Complaints and reports to the Québec Ombudsman over the last year have revealed deficiencies in risk management plans for health and social services network establishments. Québec Ombudswoman Raymonde Saint-Germain insists on a more stringent application of the provisions of the *Act Respecting Health and Social Services* to ensure the safe provision of services.

Establishments are required to share information on incidents and accidents, inform patients and their families, keep a record of these events, and include reports on all incidents or accidents in the files of the patients affected. Establishments must also create risk management committees to identify and analyze potential dangers and make recommendations to the establishment's board of directors.

The Québec Ombudsman notes that the Act's provisions are not being equally applied in all establishments. Among the recommendations it has made after investigating complaints and reports are to require incidences and accidents to be reported to users or their representatives, to improve employee training, and to make changes to how risk management committees are run. The Québec Ombudsman also recommends that establishments respect the ratio of nurses working in infection prevention and finish updating their nosocomial infection prevention and control programs as quickly as possible.

Although the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux has an action plan for the prevention and control of nosocomial infections, the Québec Ombudswoman believes that the ministry also has the responsibility of ensuring that the measures taken are sufficient and that they are applied in a timely manner. "The many cases of nosocomial infections reported in Québec's hospitals over the last year are a concern to the public and to hospitalized patients and their families. Vigilance and prevention must be used to avoid aggravating health problems and

wasting the time, energy, and public funds expended by care providers and administrators. In the end, everyone will benefit,” states Ms. Saint-Germain.

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