

**Health
and Social Services**

3

A transition year

Since April 1, 2006, the Ombudsman has been performing duties that were previously the responsibility of the Health and Social Services Ombudsman, in accordance with *An Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman*. Its jurisdiction now includes two distinct and complementary areas.

The Québec Ombudsman intervenes among departments and agencies that administer policies and programs of the health and social services network. Given the size of this network in Québec's public services, it pays particular attention to the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. By virtue of *An Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman*, it now has a direct window onto the impact of the services network on citizens, making it better able to establish a link between complaints from users and respect for the law in how policies and programs are applied. By virtue of this, it can adopt a proactive stance with the Department.

The entry into force of certain provisions of Bill 83, *An Act to amend the Act respecting health services and social services and other legislative provisions*, in April 2006, significantly altered responsibilities regarding the system for processing complaints about health and social services. As a result, the year 2006-2007 was a transitional year for the Department, network authorities and the Québec Ombudsman. This annual report will therefore address both the processing of complaints in accordance with *An Act respecting the Health and Social Services Ombudsman* and take stock of the implementation of measures to strengthen the system, the responsibility of which rests with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

The system for processing complaints must operate as effectively as possible to ensure that users' rights are respected. Therefore, before making its report on the processing of complaints related to health and social services, the Québec Ombudsman will first reiterate these rights, at the beginning of this chapter.

The report follows with an analysis of the implementation of the new complaints processing system for the year 2006-2007 and addresses the obligations of the Ministère de la Santé et de Services sociaux with regard to quality of service. It then addresses the results of its activities with regard to complaints and interventions by authorities or by mission and the specific problems related to health and social services it was involved in over the last year.

Chapter 3

A transition year

Recommendations in this chapter are those made to the Department or to network authorities as part of our analysis and processing of complaints and reports. A number of problems raised in this report have also been the subject of recommendations to the Department. For these, we have noted the response to the recommendations.