



HIGHLIGHTS

THE PUBLIC SERVICE

COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE DES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE ET D'ASSURANCES P. 29

Taking responsibility for its role in mistakes

The Commission sometimes pays surplus amounts to pension recipients by mistake. The recipients themselves are often unaware that a mistake has been made, and may find themselves in financial difficulties if they are forced to reimburse the overpayments.

COMMISSION D'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION P. 31

Reducing waiting times

In 2009-2010, the average waiting time in Montreal for a hearing before the Commission was 18 months.

COMMISSION DE LA SANTÉ ET DE LA SÉCURITÉ DU TRAVAIL P. 32

Insufficient grounds still being given for decisions

- Sufficient grounds are still not being given for a significant percentage of decisions.
- Potential conflict of interest: physicians may be called as Commission experts and as members of the Bureau d'évaluation médicale that reviews decisions.
- The Commission has improved telephone access to the staff in charge of compensation for victims of criminal acts.

CURATEUR PUBLIC P. 35

Remembering the vulnerability of people under tutorship and curatorship

The Public Curator charges high fees and expenses.

MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DES PÊCHERIES ET DE L'ALIMENTATION P. 41

Diligent follow-up to the Québec Ombudsman's recommendations

The Department was both diligent and professional in implementing all the recommendations made in the Québec Ombudsman's report concerning management of the listeriosis crisis.

MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT

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While waiting for the Student Ombudsman

Many complaints refer to the provision of services in the school boards, including access to quality educational services for students with handicaps or learning disabilities. The Québec Ombudsman, although it does not have jurisdiction over the education network, nevertheless acted on behalf of parents to help them obtain support and referrals.

MINISTÈRE DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE

P. 46

Overseeing the quality of official information

Failure to check computer data and the information posted on the Department's website caused prejudice to certain citizens.

MINISTÈRE DE LA JUSTICE

P. 49

Simplifying and adjusting requirements in the interests of citizens

The Québec Ombudsman notes that some progress has been made with cases submitted to the Ministère de la Justice since 2007, in particular with regard to simplification of the review process for child support payments and giving the Directeur de l'état civil the powers it needs to respond more effectively to socio-demographic changes.

MINISTÈRE DE LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

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Social reintegration action plan

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique presented its social reintegration action plan to the Québec Ombudsman last February. The Québec Ombudsman noted that most of the issues it had identified were treated as priorities, and asked the MSP to give official status to the plan, in addition to introducing monitoring measures to ensure that the stated objectives were achieved.

MINISTÈRE DES FINANCES

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Correction to the negative impact of a good intention

The Ministère des Finances, in its 2009-2010 budget, corrected an unfair situation for single-parent families by providing that any person who receives parental insurance benefits is entitled to the tax credit for childcare expenses.

MINISTÈRE DES RESSOURCES NATURELLES ET DE LA FAUNE

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Taking responsibility for its share of decisions

In a case examined by the Québec Ombudsman, the Department chose to leave the parties to their own devices or take the matter before the courts, rather than adopting a position and solving the dispute.

MINISTÈRE DU REVENU

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Ongoing improvements

- Clarifications and easier access to tax-related information were requested once again this year, to ensure that citizens are better informed.
- The waiting time for requesting reimbursement of a lost or stolen cheque has been reduced from 35 to 15 days.
- A collection problem was discovered in the department responsible for support payments in Montreal, and has been corrected.

RÉGIE DE L'ASSURANCE MALADIE DU QUÉBEC

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Compulsory drug insurance... some misconceptions

Despite the information distributed by the Régie, some people are still unaware that they must join a group insurance plan. The Régie must work harder to publicize the Prescription Drug Insurance Plan, in particular with insurance companies, contractors and employers.

RÉGIE DES RENTES

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A commitment that remains essentially symbolic

The Régie has not yet solved its harmonization difficulties with the Société de l'assurance automobile, in particular with regard to the causes of disabilities. Like last year, it has promised to review its practices and propose solutions. To be continued...

RÉGIE DU LOGEMENT

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Aim higher, act faster

Unreasonable delays and unambitious goals that were not achieved. The average waiting time for an initial hearing in a general civil case is 16 months. As of March 31, 2009, 18,715 cases were on the waiting list, and the Régie's aim was to reduce this number to 7,400.

SOCIÉTÉ DE L'ASSURANCE AUTOMOBILE DU QUÉBEC

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A number of cases settled

The SAAQ has settled a number of cases in favour of road users. In particular, we salute the positive results obtained in the following areas: waiting times for medical opinions, application of law in cases involving multiple actions, recovery of overpayments, problems in accessing the SAAQ's telephone system, and recognition of driving tests taken more than three years ago.

ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF QUÉBEC

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Difficulties in dealing with the influx of cases

Ever since 2006-2007, the Tribunal has had to deal with a significant increase in the number of automobile insurance cases. Despite the steps it has taken, both the number of cases and the average processing time have increased. As of December 31, 2009, 9,445 cases were on the waiting list, more than double the number in 2003.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX

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Constant vigilance required

- Effort is needed to ensure that the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux is more vigorous in providing guidance and support for the implementation of its policies and programs, in order to correct some persistent problems.
- Follow-up to the Québec Ombudsman's recommendations has been poor. Only 10 of the 32 recommendations made to the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux since 2007-2008 have been followed up in a satisfactory manner.
- Based on the departmental orientations, the Québec Ombudsman obtained gains from the institutions that led to improvements which will benefit everyone concerned.
- The requirement for certification has been extended to residences for substance abusers and people with mental health problems or intellectual disabilities. How it is implemented will be a key factor.

ADOPTION

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- It is important to harmonize the services for parents adopting domestically and abroad, and to adjust them to the specific situation of each of the two groups.
- The Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale must be more vigilant in controlling the activities of accredited agencies.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY, MENTAL DISABILITY AND PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

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There has been a gradual reduction in the number of people awaiting services, particularly among children aged 0 to 6. However, the wait has simply been shifted, and now occurs between the needs assessment and the beginning of actual services.

ACCOMODATION OF PEOPLE WITH AGE-RELATED LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE

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- As of March 31, 2010, roughly 20% of private residences had not yet been certified, even though the certification process for all residences should have been completed by June 30, 2009. More effort needs to be made, because as long as certification has not been completed, there is no guarantee that the residences are complying with the social and health-related criteria that determine service security and quality of life.
- People living in certain resources, both public and private, are subjected to a regimen designed more to suit the organization of work than their own needs.
- Problems are caused by mixing different client groups with differing levels of cognitive ability, and institutions should be encouraged to assess users more accurately, and group them as much as possible with people whose behaviour is compatible.

TROUBLED YOUTH

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Additional effort is required to uphold the right of newborn babies and toddlers to protection, security and attention, all of which are necessary to their blossoming.

MENTAL HEALTH

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- Abuse occurs in some institutions where users are contained against their will, contrary to the legal structure that exists to protect their fundamental freedoms.
- There is still a need to structure the use of isolation and containment, and to improve both the information given to users and their families, and the transmission methods used.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

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- Improvements to the organization of work have been observed in some institutions.
- All too often, people who go to the emergency room still face unreasonable delays that are contrary to recognized triage and reassessment standards.
- The number of complaints concerning access to palliative care outside specialized palliative units increased during the year, especially in short-term care units (e.g. emergency rooms and intensive care units) and in CHSLDs.

PREHOSPITAL EMERGENCY SERVICES

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The increase in the number of complaints was due to the fact that the general public is unaware of the fees payable for ambulance transportation, and to the fact that, in many cases, the people transported by ambulance did not request the transportation themselves.

HOME SUPPORT

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Access to and continuity of home support services continue to be problematical for many citizens. The Home Support Policy has not been implemented as quickly as anticipated, or at the same rate in all the regions.

RESULTS IN FIGURES

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- The Québec Ombudsman received 21,289 requests from citizens.
- The Québec Ombudsman intervened in 61 of the 86 government departments and agencies subject to its jurisdiction, and in 177 of the 310 institutions and agencies in the health and social services network.
- Substantiated complaints in the public service: 24.2%.
- Substantiated complaints and reports in health and social services: 38.9% (up by 4.1% from 2008-2009).
- Rate of acceptance of the corrective measures requested: 99.6% for measures of individual scope and 98.8% for measures of collective scope.

