

Intervention report (excerpts)

Intervention at Centre hospitalier de l'Université Laval of CHU de Québec –
Université Laval

Québec City, March 29, 2017

The intervention

Several instances of dissatisfaction concerning the long wait times for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) at Centre hospitalier de l'Université Laval (CHUL) were brought to the attention of the Québec Ombudsman. According to the information at its disposal, the delays for an MRI can be as much as three years for the pediatric and adult client population alike.

Instances concerned

CHU de Québec – Université Laval (the institution) consists of five hospitals, including CHUL, Hôpital Saint-François d'Assise, Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus and Hôpital du Saint-Sacrement. All five facilities are located in the Québec City region.

CHUL (the facility for which reports were received), which houses Centre mère-enfant Soleil, offers specialized and super-specialized care, in particular, in the areas of maternal and child healthcare, digestive diseases, chronic pain and medically assisted procreation. CHUL is the only institution in eastern Québec that offers pediatric MRIs.

Conclusion

The Québec Ombudsman's intervention revealed that despite several measures put in place by the institution to reduce MRI wait times at CHUL, delays continue to be considerable, if not unreasonable. While one of these measures (new appointment management software) has not yet been rolled at CHUL and it is reasonable to believe that it will have a positive impact on wait times, the Québec Ombudsman feels that supplementary actions must be taken immediately. In fact, certain options are underused.

It bears pointing out that an MRI is often a prerequisite for seeing a specialist (e.g. an orthopedist) or for surgery, which also involves wait times. In order to prevent user safety from being compromised by unduly prolonging wait times, the Québec Ombudsman considers it important that MRIs be carried out within the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux target of fewer than three months as well as within the institution's target wait times based on established priorities. Given the preceding, the Québec Ombudsman has made six recommendations to CHU de Québec – Université Laval.

Recommendations

The Québec Ombudsman recommends that CHU de Québec – Université Laval:

R-1 Immediately **transfer** MRI requests (adults and children age 14 and over) already registered on CHUL waiting lists to other CHU facilities that could respond more promptly, depending on the kind of MRI and the expertise required.

By May 31, 2017, provide the Québec Ombudsman confirmation that these transfers have occurred and indicate the proportion and the receiving facilities;

R-2 As soon as they are received, **refer** new CHUL MRI requests to the facility most capable of responding promptly.

By May 31, 2017, provide the Québec Ombudsman confirmation that this is being done and indicate the proportion and the receiving facilities where certain requests were referred;

R-3 **Examine** the possibility of optimizing the use of the CHUL MRI machine, notably, by adding other night slots.

By September 29, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the outcome of this assessment and the measures established as a result;

R-4 **Examine** the slate of radiologist services, notably, for evenings, nights and weekends, so that it meets the demand for MRIs requiring supervision.

By September 29, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the outcome of this assessment and the measures established as a result;

R-5 **Examine** the possibility of doing certain MRIs under anesthesia at other facilities, notably, the Hôpital Saint-François d'Assise for the pediatric client population.

By September 29, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the outcome of this assessment and the measures established as a result;

R-6 **Examine** the possibility of an agreement, notably with the Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec and private radiology clinics, so that certain types of MRIs could be done there.

By September 29, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the outcome of this assessment and the measures established as a result.

Expected follow-up

As provided for in 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 that it agrees to implement the recommendations made to it, or if the institution has decided not to act on them, of the reasons for it.