

Intervention report (excerpts)

Intervention regarding quotas on incontinence products involving eight health and social services institutions

Québec City, February 21, 2017

The intervention

The Québec Ombudsman decided to intervene on its own initiative further to allegations concerning quotas on incontinence briefs in various residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs).

Institutions concerned

The Québec Ombudsman intervened regarding fifteen CHSLDs, including private resources under contract, in eight institutions in the Laurentides, Montréal, Mauricie-et-Centre-du-Québec, Estrie, Laval, Montérégie and Capitale-Nationale regions.

Conclusion

The information gathered during the investigation we conducted, including systematic review of all the cases (9 files) submitted to the Québec Ombudsman in the previous 18 months, did not suggest that there were instructions as to limits on the use of incontinence products to the detriment of residents' needs.

However, the message conveyed by the teams formed by the provider or its interpretation in the residences is inconsistent with the expectations expressed by the managers of the institutions. The use of the term "quota" for the purposes of estimating needs in terms of product inventory and for certain supply practices may cause confusion.

We therefore recommended that the institutions stop using the term "quota" in all their communications so as to prevent any confusion, notably when estimating how much product is needed for sufficient inventory. Managers should also point out the appropriate nuances of reading the absorbency indicators on incontinence briefs, which is not intended as a way of avoiding changing soiled briefs.

Recommendations

Given the preceding, the Québec Ombudsman recommended the following intervention for the institutions concerned:

- R-1 Remove** the term "quota" from all their written or verbal communications in order to prevent any confusion by caregivers as to the institution's expectations concerning the frequency — which must be centred on residents' needs — of changing incontinence products;
- R-2 Explain** use of the absorbency indicators on incontinence products to the caregivers and insist on the fact that the purpose of checking the indicators is never to avoid changing soiled briefs;

By March 31, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the measures taken to act on these two recommendations.

Considering that the same shortcomings may also occur in other institutions that were not subject to this intervention, the Québec Ombudsman recommended that the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:

R-1 Ensure that all health and social services network institutions apply recommendations R-1 and R-2;

By March 31, 2017, inform the Québec Ombudsman of the measures taken to act on these two recommendations.

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 receipt of this report, the institution concerned must inform the Québec Ombudsman of the actions to be taken as a result of the recommendations or, if the institution has decided not to act upon them, of the reasons for such a decision.