

Intervention report (excerpts)

Intervention at Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Centre

Québec City, October 16, 2019

The intervention

The Québec Ombudsman decided to intervene on its own initiative further to a situation profiled in the media.

The situation concerned a woman who had been on the Québec Family Doctor Finder (GAMF) for more than four years before being registered with a physician, but who had to re-register. Even though she had only seen the doctor once, she had to start the registration process from scratch after her new physician decided to no longer participate in the public health insurance plan of the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ).

Conclusion

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) provided the Québec Ombudsman confirmation that this subject is not covered in its administrative documents and that there are no guidelines in this respect. The Québec Ombudsman understands that the consequence of this lack of guidelines—the need to start the registration process all over again and the ensuing wait—is unintentional. It nonetheless feels that this situation causes users significant harm.

The Québec Ombudsman considers it unreasonable that people who have had very little medical attention by a physician (sometimes a single consultation) must set the GAMF wait time back to the beginning (which is regularly several years). Therefore, the institution concerned (Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Centre) and MSSS must take extra action to rectify these adverse effects.

Recommendations

Given the preceding, the Québec Ombudsman is making the following recommendations to the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux:

- R-1 Determine** a maximum period for registering with a family doctor which authorizes persons to be registered on the Québec Family Doctor Finder on the date of their initial registration if the physician terminates his or her registration (termination of participation in the public system, retirement, relocation, death, etc.);

R-2 Determine the rules for applying this new measure within all centralized waiting lists for orphan patients, notably by providing for the measure's retroactivity in situations in which the physician has terminated registrations since January 1, 2019.

By November 15, 2019, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the maximum periods and the rules that will have been determined for applying the new measure.

R-3 Inform the various players concerned (Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, all centralized waiting lists for orphan patients of the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec, etc.) about the changes made so that people who comply with the pre-determined period and rules may be re-registered on the Québec Family Doctor Finder at the date of their initial registration if the physician terminates their registration.

By December 16, 2019, provide the Québec Ombudsman with confirmation that this information has been conveyed, and indicate the means used to do so.

The Québec Ombudsman also made the following recommendation to Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Montérégie-Centre:

R-4 Take the necessary measures so that people who have been assigned a physician by means of the Québec Family Doctor Finder (GAMF) and who were registered are re-registered on GAMF at the date of their initial registration if their physician ends the registration, in compliance with the period and the rules to be determined by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.

By March 31, 2020, inform the Québec Ombudsman about the measures taken to achieve this goal.

Expected follow-up

The Québec Ombudsman has asked the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux to, within 30 days of receiving this report, inform the Québec Ombudsman of whether it intends to implement the recommendations made to it, or of its reasons if it has decided not to act on them.

In accordance with the provisions of 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 of whether it intends to implement the recommendation made to it, or of its reasons if it has decided not to act on it.