

# EQUALITY IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

SHEET 1 OF 2

## WAITING PERIOD

For a maximum three-month period following the submission of an application to the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ), people who have recently arrived in Québec and who wish to settle here are not covered by Québec's public health insurance program. The three months in question constitute the official [waiting period](#). There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. For example, during the waiting period pregnant women are entitled to the medical, pharmaceutical and hospital care services they need.

## RECOGNIZED RIGHTS

The [Act respecting health services and social services](#) establishes the rights of users of these services. All persons are entitled to choose the professional or institution from whom they wish to receive health care services or social services. Each person can also ask, but not demand, to be examined, treated or cared for by a person of their choosing with respect to gender, among other things. The health and social services network will try to satisfy this request to the extent allowed by the internal organization of its institutions and its human, material and financial resources. The user and resident committees established under this law in each health and social services institution are the guardians of users' rights.

Any person who believes that their rights have not been respected, or who is not satisfied with services received, can [file a complaint](#). The Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner examines complaints concerning health care and social services. Analysis of these complaints makes it possible to review the practices or policies currently in effect and to improve the quality of the services offered to the public.

[All persons 14 years or older have a right to see their medical records](#). They are also entitled to confidentiality and can, on their own, [consent to medical care](#). However, if a child's state of health requires a stay in a health care or social services institution for more than 12 hours, the child's parents or guardian must be notified in a timely manner.

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## **BIRTH CONTROL AND THE VOLUNTARY INTERRUPTION OF PREGNANCY**

[Family planning services](#) stress respect for personal decisions from the time of the decision to procreate to conception.

The voluntary interruption of pregnancy (VIP) on demand is legal in Québec and elsewhere in Canada. [The final decision rests with the woman concerned](#). The right to respect for physical integrity and the regulation governing consent to care apply here as in all health care services.

## **THE SHIFT TO HOME CARE**

In recent years, the role played by family and friends in health care services has grown, with more emphasis being placed on the support offered in the family setting. This means that hospital stays are now seen as a temporary solution or one of last resort. This change represents a major advance on the human level for both people with illnesses and elderly people facing a loss of autonomy. However, this often leads to excessive demands being made on [caregivers](#). From the vantage point of equality, it is preferable that the responsibility for the care of family members be divided evenly between the women and men in the family.