

English on the agenda

Since Quebec's re-organization of health and social services was launched on April 1, elements affecting the English-speaking community have been slowly but surely fitting into place. Of particular significance in Montreal is that two of the region's five new integrated health and social services centres, the Centre-West and West-Island CIUSSSs, have been given bilingual status. And new regional access programs must include a human resources plan that supports delivery of English-language services in specified institutions.

Furthermore, in the Montreal region several prominent administrators from the community's traditional institutions have been appointed to senior management positions in the new CIUSSSs. Their former institutions – and their boards – had been abolished and their operations merged into the new CIUSSSs. The appointment of this staff provides a strong measure of continuity and influence in provision of services to the community.

There are also procedures under way whereby English-speakers are to be included on every CIUSSS board. And regional access committees will be composed of people nominated by organizations representing the interests of the English-speaking community.

Boards

All CIUSSSs will have a single board overseeing the operations of all its merged and regrouped services. The Ministry called for board nominations from individuals, professional groups in each institution and community organizations. Members are now being selected, to take office September 30.

Access committees

The procedure for selecting members of new regional access committees is somewhat more complicated. The provincial advisory committee is to approve which English-community organizations are to be asked to submit nominations for the new regional access committees.

On Montreal Island, it is the Centre-East CIUSSS that now has responsibility for this committee, having inherited all regional dossiers attached to the former Health and Social Services Agency. However, it is the Centre-West and West-Island CIUSSSs that will identify which organizations are to be asked to submit nominations to Centre-East. This procedure is expected to be finalized in November.

Access programs

Existing programs for access to healthcare services in English were updated by the Health and Social Services Agencies before they were dissolved on March 31. They are to be maintained by the CIUSSSs until new regional access committees are named. Those committees will not be in place until after Sept 30, because they are named by the new regional boards. They will be reviewing the programs for approval for the period 2016-2021.

There will be a landmark change in the delivery of services in English. Access plans in future will not only specify what services must be made accessible, but also require that healthcare personnel assigned to deliver those services have the necessary linguistic competence to do so.

Advisory committees

The new health reform legislation stipulates that a foundation or owning company associated with a former health and social services institution may ask to set up an advisory committee for that institution, and the Minister must accede to that request. This provision is particularly pertinent for the English-speaking community because it makes for continued oversight over those entities and their linguistic, historical and cultural heritage.

Community oversight

A special standing committee of the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) has offered its expertise and historical insight during these procedures, maintaining contact with the Minister and supporting local organizations that are in contact with the new healthcare centres.

Awards announced

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) has announced the winners of its Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards.

Lynden Bechervaise and **Gary Briand** are pioneers in Quebec's English-speaking community's advocacy movement. Co-founders of the Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA) in the Gaspé, they have played an instrumental role in several other local and provincial English community organizations.

Fatiha Gatre Guemiri works to establish harmony between individuals of different cultures. She is co-founder and executive director of the East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA). A member of the Canadian Council of Muslim woman, she encourages intercultural dialogue between Jewish and Arab communities.

Royal Orr has a long history of supporting English-speaking communities as both volunteer and professional. Past president of Alliance Quebec and executive director of the Townshippers' Association, he has volunteered for a number of other community organizations.

The first winner of the Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award is **Alexander Gordon**. He is cited for his early and continuous volunteer involvement in student activities and his achievements in community action. This award is co-sponsored by the QCGN, Notre Home Foundation and CBC.

Centraide campaign kick-off

Centraide of Greater Montreal launched its 41st fund-raising campaign on September 29 with its traditional March of 1000 Umbrellas. Theme of this year's campaign is that one gift "changes lives for life" through Centraide's work of supporting youth success and essentials for families, breaking social isolation and building caring communities.

A SNAP success

A highly successful method of helping tame troubled kids' antisocial behavior has taken root on the West Island. The Family Resources Center has embarked on a five-year, \$million program called Stop Now and Plan (SNAP). Funded by the federal Department of Public Security and Crime Prevention, it is designed for youngsters from six to 11 who are potentially at risk with the law.

"It was designed by the Children's Development Initiative (CDI), based in Toronto," explains **Carrie Goldberg**, Center executive director and clinical director of the project. "It's been going strong elsewhere in Canada for 25 years. In Quebec, it's a first for us and a Cree community in the North."

The new program, run jointly with Projet communautaire de Pierrefonds, a nonprofit working with immigrant families, starts this fall. It will handle eight groups of children for a total of 64. Candidates are identified by schools, police or youth protection services. Goldberg and her team of professionals received intensive training from CDI.

"The emphasis is on individual attention," says Goldberg, "so the numbers are kept small. We work with both the kids and their parents on improving their self-control, curbing anti-social behaviours, and so on. And it's very thorough. After two months of assessment, we'll run 13 weekly sessions, with parents and kids separately. There is a full year of follow-up. Whenever required, they'll get extra individual counselling. It's an amazing program."

New school coming

The English Montreal School Board has received approval, and \$21.9 million in funding, to build a new facility to house the Mackay Centre and Philip E. Layton Schools. The former provides education for blind children, the latter for youngsters with hearing and physical disabilities and communication disorders. The schools are currently housed in the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre.

Seniors sounding out regions

The Seniors Action Committee is spearheading a project aimed at motivating English-speaking communities into taking action on the most pressing issues facing seniors in their regions. Funded by Canadian Heritage, it is called Community capacity building: from evidence into action. The first step, just under way, will target four specific regions of the province; the results of that exercise will serve as basis for a larger, province-wide endeavor.

“We’re working with five partner organizations that are organizing focus groups in 15 communities in the Gaspé, Magdalene Islands, Sept-Îles on the North Shore, Quebec City and the Outouais region,” says **Ruth Pelletier**, SAQ executive director. “They will customize their approach according to local characteristics and experience. But each has the same goal: to zero in on one, single priority, on which action must be taken.”

To encourage attendance, these meetings will be held in wellness centres, churches or community centres – wherever seniors already gather. Once their local priority is determined, participants will identify local partners to work with to draw up an action plan to attain that goal. This exercise is to be completed by March 2016.

Aid for East End adolescents

A new program designed to bolster self-confidence among at-risk teens has been introduced at the Laurier-MacDonald High School in Saint-Léonard. Designed by specialists of the English Montreal School Board, the pilot project is being managed by the East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA).

Groups of up to 30 students from grades nine and ten who have been identified by school guidance counsellors will attend sessions on coping and communication skills, peer pressure and decision-making. Participation is voluntary. There will be a year’s follow-up to monitor their progress.

Aiming for better access

Because 75 percent of mental illnesses and health problems develop before the age of 25 and 50 percent occur between 12 and 25, it is obviously important to provide care as early as possible. But that has not been the case in Canada – until now. In November, a national youth mental health network aimed at young people aged six to 25 is to be launched. The five-year, \$25 million ACCESS project is sponsored jointly by the Graham Boeckh Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). It is being piloted across Canada by Montreal’s Douglas Institute.

Young people have had limited access to mental health care because most services are tailored to the needs of the very young and of older adults. In fact, only youth under the age of 18 are eligible for publicly-funded pediatric mental health care. By including young people up to the age of 25, the ACCESS program will address a crucial need.

Speedy attention is a primary goal of ACCESS. Among its components is direct access to a psychological specialist without the need to consult a generalist first, special training for professionals to evaluate young people in distress, and psychological evaluation within 72 hours – 10 times faster than what is usual now.

Philanthropy at the fore

The state of philanthropy in Quebec will come under the microscope at a conference being held in Montreal on November 10-11. Titled Philanthropic ecosystem: perspectives, perceptions, exchanges, it will bring together the who’s who of philanthropy in the province. It is hosted by the Mallet Institute, a Quebec-City-based entity dedicated to developing a sustainable culture of philanthropy here. Highlight of the conference will be results of an intensive survey of Quebecers on their volunteering and social engagement, financial participation, and their individual behavior and perceptions. For information: www.institutmallet.org.

New name for network

There have been some changes at the Care-Ring Voice, a caregiver-support telephone network started at the René-Cassin CLSC in 2004. It is now a nonprofit called The Caregivers Network (TCN), and has become Canada's biggest tele-learning network, serving caregivers across the country. Founder **Mark Stollow**, who is TCN president, explains that the new name better identifies what the service provides – a network of experts and peer-to-peer sharing that gives caregivers more opportunity to connect with each other. This autumn TCN will be introducing webinars, similar to telephone workshops but done on computers. For information: www.thecaregivernetwork.ca

Commission adds addiction

The mandate of Canada's Mental Health Commission has been changed to include research on linkages between drugs and mental illness. Since it was created eight years ago, it has focused on removing the stigma attached to mental illness, illness in the workplace and helping the mentally-ill homeless. But those who suffer mental illness often have addiction problems as well. To help address this issue, the Commission will merge with the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse.

Insurance for nonprofits

High employee turnover, a well-known fact of life for community organizations, is often related to a lack of employee benefits available in the business and institutional sectors. To resolve that issue, a collective health and life insurance plan specifically tailored for Quebec-based community groups could soon be available. Called l'Assurance collective pour les organismes communautaires du Québec (ACOCQ), it was initiated by La Table nationale des corporations de développement communautaire. Community groups are being asked to indicate their support for the idea so it can move ahead with the plan. For information: <http://acocq.com>.

In brief

To honour her 25 years of service, AMI-Quebec has created the **Ella Amir** Award for Innovation in Mental Health to be given to an individual or organization contributing in a significant way to promoting mental health in the community.

Andrea Clarke has been appointed new executive director of Head and Hands.

John Gallop and **Sheila Goldbloom** have been named honorary members of the board of the Foundation of Greater Montreal.

Susan Gallo was appointed director of Youth Protection at the West-Island CIUSSS.

Claire Roy, formerly Batshaw manager of Communications and Public Relations, has been named assistant to the president-CEO, and Public Relations, at the West-Island CIUSSS.

CCS (Collective Community Services) has moved to 451 av de l'Église, Montréal H4G 2M6. Telephone number remains the same.

Ami-Quebec's annual Edith and John Hans Low-Beer Memorial Lecture is at 7 p.m., October 29, at Oscar Peterson Hall. Guest lecturer is Dr. **Paul E. Garfinkel**, who will speak on What's Next for Psychiatry. For information: 514 486 1448.

Tel-Aide is looking for volunteer listeners. Candidates will receive professional training. For information: www.telaide.org.

Seniors Action Quebec has a new website: www.seniorsactionquebec.ca

National Seniors Day is October 1.

The editor welcomes story ideas: 514 937 4309.

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