



Death with dignity: making tough decisions more humane

Montreal, June 12, 2013 – The Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers (RPCU), which represents users of the health and social services network, welcomes the new bill, introduced today in the National Assembly, on the right to die with dignity. The RPCU is pleased to note the Legislator's willingness to extend access to palliative care to all areas of Quebec and to recognize the rights of the dying: the right to decision-making autonomy, the right to information, the right to privacy and the right to choose where the end of life will occur.

Claude Ménard, Chairman of the RPCU, underscored parliamentarians' courage in dealing with this topic, which at its core involves questions of a human, social, ethical and moral nature. *"We commend Véronique Hivon, the Minister for Social Services, as well as all MNAs and political parties for their resolve to legislate on such a fundamental issue."*

"This bill emphasizes the importance of adequate palliative care. It sets a legal framework for euthanasia requests and the decision will be based on the patient's free and informed consent, which is what the RPCU had asked for. The decision, while still a difficult one, will be made in a more humane context. We invite the various groups involved to move past their ideological views and make the condition of end-of-life patients – along with respect for the wishes – a priority," declared Pierre Blain, Director General of the organization.

The report compiled by the expert committee, which focused on the recommendations of the National Assembly's Select Committee on Dying with Dignity, made public in January 2013 by the Minister for Social Services and Youth Protection, who was also responsible for this file, reiterated the RPCU's recommendation that the end-of-life decision should be made in a free and informed manner.

RPCU profile

The Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers (RPCU) advocates on behalf of users and is the spokesperson for the 600 user and in-patient committees in Quebec's health and social services establishments. The committees' mission is to defend users' rights and work to improve the quality of services provided to users of the health and social services network. The RPCU also advocates for the elderly.