

End-of-life care at MUHC: users call for immediate action by management

Montreal, July 5, 2016 – The MUHC doctors' explanations about access to end-of-life care, given at yesterday's press conference, hold no water, declares the Regroupement provincial des comités des usagers (RPCU), the main spokesperson for users of the health and social services network, which deplores the abdication of responsibility by MUHC management and the Board of Directors with regard to a handful of physicians who are imposing the dictates of their conscience and refusing to comply with legislation.

The RPCU is calling for an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors, at which it can withdraw its decision to prevent the palliative care unit from offering doctor-assisted dying freely and serenely. The MUHC should also immediately eliminate its requirement that a patient must have received care in the institution for at least 18 months to be eligible for doctor-assisted dying.

"The most vulnerable individuals – those who were on lawmakers' minds in both Quebec City and Ottawa when they voted on legislation governing end-of-life care – are being held hostage by the MUHC's doctors, and are being denied access to what the Supreme Court of Canada defined as a basic right," declared Pierre Blain, director general of the RPCU. "Who is defending the most vulnerable people in this institution? Where is the Board of Directors, whose members have been assigned this role?" he added.

Management has not fulfilled its role within this institution, which is one of the most prominent in Quebec. They hid behind the physicians during this press conference. "No-one is above the law, which should also be upheld by the MUHC Board of Directors," concluded RPCU Chairman Claude Ménard.

About the RPCU

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 to work to improve the quality of services provided to users of the health and social services network. The RPCU also advocates for the elderly and for youth.

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