

Tool for Resistance

Whereas it is the social responsibility of the State to provide public services to all citizens;

Whereas autonomous community action (ACA) groups belong first and foremost to the people who created them; are forums of citizenship; and are rooted in democratic practices;

Whereas the orientations, actions, activities and services of autonomous community action groups are determined solely by their members;

Whereas the citizens that make use of the services of community groups do so on their own free accord;

Whereas the reduction of public services has direct repercussions on community groups;

Whereas the orientations of governmental ministries reveal their desire to benefit from the use of community groups to deliver state services at a cut rate;

Whereas all reductions in public services represent a loss for the people of Quebec, and particularly for women who pay the mental, social and physical price of their often "triple burden" as workers in health and social services, users of the system, and as primary caregivers in the family.

We, _____ (name of organization), are prepared to actively defend the following positions:

The right to health

Based on our values of social justice, we demand concrete respect for our right to health by the maintenance of a free and public health and social service system rooted in the principles of universality, integrity, accessibility and public administration. We therefore do not accept the reduction of the role of the State in health and social services, which calls into question our values of social justice, and we are opposed to privatization and the loss of any publicly-delivered care and services.

Respect for the autonomy of ACA organizations to determine their own mission, practices and orientations

We are opposed to the way the Charest government's project to reengineer the Quebec State views community organizations as private service providers when these services are in fact the responsibility of the State to provide to its citizens. We are opposed to the forced integration of autonomous community action organizations in the "Integrated Network of Health and Social Services" (Réseaux locaux de services intégrés) and we demand instead respect for the voluntary relationship between citizens and autonomous community organizations.

Respect for the right to private life

In light of the project to computerize the files of users of the public health and social service system, we demand a true social debate on this matter that brings citizen concerns to the forefront, and we demand respect and confidentiality of citizens.

Respect for current core funding toward the mission of autonomous community action organizations

We demand that the **"Support program for community organizations" (Programme soutien aux organismes communautaires) (PSOC)** be maintained permanently at the regional level. We are opposed to the shift of PSCO funding towards the local level. We reiterate that PSOC's mission as a program dedicated to core funding of community organizations must also be maintained. Additionally, as stated in the 2003-2006 strategic plan of the Régie Régionale de Montréal Centre, now the "Agence," we demand that a part of all new monies be dedicated to financing the global mission of groups. Similarly, we demand that the PSOC monies for community groups and regroupments be increased by at least \$11.3 million, as promised.

We similarly demand a true application of the parameters as stated in the PSOC programme such as the application of intervention strategies that put the principle of "comparable resources, comparable financing" into practice. In order to assure equity and coherence of the PSOC, we demand that the Minister of Health and Social Services give clear directions and instructions for the application of the current PSOC programme parameters.

Respect of democracy and respect for people

Citizens of Quebec must be involved in the important debates on the revision of the role of the State in health and social services. We are thus unsatisfied with the expedient manner in which such significant reforms were developed. This short timeframe did not permit citizens to understand the issues at stake and articulate well-informed positions. Similarly, we denounce the loss of democratic spaces envisioned by the reforms in health and social services, and particularly the reduction of the number of boards of directors.

In light of the sectorization of health and social services, we demand respect for the right of free choice for citizens with respect to where they receive services and by whom these services are delivered. Additionally, we are opposed to the sectorization of community organizations, which are being restricted to specific geographic territories as outlined by the Agence.

We ask that the particular realities of women's experiences and social roles be recognized and taken into account.

Finally, we denounce the present State mentality that views citizens as passive consumers of services. We believe that citizens must have a voice in the development of solutions.

Signed _____

In _____ on _____ 2004

Please send a copy of this document to the Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM): 65, Castelnau West, office 401, Montreal (Quebec) H2R 2W3. Telephone: (514) 277-1118 e-mail: riocm@cam.org