

Who may make a complaint?

Outaouais health and social service organizations provide services to thousands of users every day. To maintain and improve service quality, users who are not satisfied with services they received or ought to have received may file a complaint. This is the best way to not only establish your rights but also help to correct the situation so that it does not happen again.

A **Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner** is appointed for each healthcare institution in the region and for the *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de l'Outaouais*. Commissioners are trained to examine complaints by users of health services and social services. Complaints are viewed as indicators that help to review practices and policies in order to improve the quality of services provided.

Who is entitled to file a complaint?

Any user who is not satisfied with the services he or she received or ought to have received is legally entitled to file a complaint. A user's representative or the heirs or legal proxies of a deceased user may also formulate a complaint.

Under the Act respecting health services and social services (R.S.Q., chapter S-4.2), you have the following rights:

- the **right to be informed** of the existence of health services and social services, where and how to obtain such services, your state of health and well-being, possible solutions, and the risks and consequences generally associated with these options;
- the **right to receive health services and social services** that are scientifically, humanly and socially appropriate, with continuity and in a safe and personalized manner;
- the **right to choose** the professional or institution from whom or from which you wish to receive such services;
- the **right to give or refuse consent** to care;
- the **right to receive emergency treatment**;
- the **right to participate in any decision** that affects your state of health or well-being;
- the **right to receive services in the English language** if you are English-speaking, in keeping with the access program for your region;
- the **right to be accompanied and assisted** when you wish to obtain services or information;
- the **right to pursue recourse** when an error has been made in your case.

Where should I go to file a complaint?

If you are not satisfied with services, begin by raising the issue with the staff or professionals at the institution concerned. This simple step often leads to an acceptable solution. If you are still not satisfied, however, we recommend that you follow our procedure for the examination of complaints. The steps are as follows:

If your complaint concerns **services that you received or ought to have received in an institution**, then you should address your complaint to the institution. The Board of Directors of each institution designates a person to receive and examine complaints. This person is called a Local Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner. The Local Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner has 45 days to study your complaint and inform you in writing of their conclusions and recommendations.

If your complaint concerns a **physician, a dentist or a pharmacist in an institution**, then the Local Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner will forward your complaint to the **Medical Examiner** and inform you of this process. The Medical Examiner is appointed by the institution's Board of Directors to study this type of complaint. He will proceed in the same way as the Local Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner and inform you of his decision within 45 days. **If you are dissatisfied with the Medical Examiner's decision**, you have 60 days to submit your complaint to the **Review Committee**, which is designated by the institutions' Board of Directors. The Review Committee will render a final decision within 60 days. In the case of a serious error that could justify a sanction against the responsible professional, your complaint will follow another process. You will be kept informed at least every 60 days of the course of your complaint.

For the contact information of the local commissioner, contact the institution directly. To facilitate your search, you may click on the following link:

If your complaint concerns services provided **by l'Agence de la santé et des services sociaux, a community organization under contract with the Agence, ambulance services (pre-hospital emergency services), or a regionally registered seniors' residence**, then you should contact:

Mrs. Jacinthe Mallet
Regional Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner
Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de l'Outaouais
104 Lois St.
Gatineau (Québec) J8Y 3R7
☎ 819-776-7615

The Regional Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner has 45 days to study your complaint and inform you in writing of their conclusions and recommendations.

If you have **not received a response within 45 days** or are **dissatisfied with the conclusions of the Local or Regional Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner**, as a last resort, you can direct your complaint to the **Ombudsman**. The Ombudsman's office, which is independent from institutions, the Agence and the Ministry, will examine your complaint and communicate its **final decision** to you. Contact:

The Ombudsman

500 René-Lévesque Ouest, suite 6400

Montréal (Québec) H2Z 1W7

☎ Tel.: 514 -873-3205

☎ Toll-free: 1-877-658-2625

Fax: 514-873-5665

Web site: <http://www.protecteurducitoyen.gc.ca>

Complaints about the **services provided in a private clinic** should be addressed to the owner or manager of the clinic.

Do you need help with submitting your complaint?

The Regional Service Quality and Complaints Commissioner or the Ombudsman's office can help you to process your complaint.

You can also receive assistance from:

- A person of your choice (a parent or someone that you trust)
- The user's committee where you received or should have received
- The *Centre d'assistance et d'accompagnement aux plaintes - Outaouais* (CAAP - Outaouais)
- The users' committee at your institution

The users' committee at each institution is an important resource. The committee knows what your rights are and is there to help you with any steps you take, including filing a complaint. To find out the name of the person who heads the users' committee at your institution, please call the receptionist at that institution

The *Centre d'assistance et d'accompagnement aux plaintes-Outaouais* (CAAP-Outaouais) is the regional community organization that has a mandate from the Minister of Health and Social Services to help with the procedure of filing a complaint with one of the following:

- an institution in the health and social service network,
- the *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal*,
- the Users' Ombudsman (who works in the Ombudsman's office),

- or if your complaint has been forwarded to the council of physicians, dentists and pharmacists at an institution.

CAAP's role is not to process complaints but to accompany you in whatever steps you decide to take. All services are provided in complete confidence and at no charge.

Contact:

CAAP-Outaouais

92 St. Raymond Blvd., Suite 203

Gatineau (Québec) J8Y 1S7

☎ 819-770-3637

☎ 1-877-767-2227

E-mail: caap-out@videotron.ca