



# The English Speaking Catholic Council

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## Le conseil catholique d'expression anglaise

### **Executive Summary –**

### **The English Speaking Catholic Council's Response to Public Consultation on Seniors' Living Conditions**

For the English Speaking Catholic Council (ESCC), the care of seniors, especially the frail elderly, is a moral and social imperative for us all. Our community has created a number of specialized institutions and services over the past one hundred and fifty years that allow us to carry out our responsibilities to seniors, but Quebec faces many challenges if we want to protect and promote fully the interests of older citizens.

The ESCC gathered a panel of community-based experts, volunteer leaders and concerned citizens in the field of aging. They identified three key principles on which the ESCC believes we must build any successful reform to the system that provides care for seniors.

- 1) The recognition of the value of the individual person and the protection of the dignity of each individual as he or she ages must be paramount. Respect for the dignity of the whole person has an important language dimension, particularly in the provision of health and social services to seniors, where quality of care is linked directly to the capacity for clear communication between health professionals and patients or clients. Respect for the dignity of the person must also take into account the spiritual element of individual identity and well-being.
- 2) All policies and programs for seniors must be based on the recognition of their continuing value and potential for contribution to our communities.
- 3) The Government must reinforce quickly our greatest asset in addressing the challenges of aging in Quebec, that is, the willingness of younger generations to work with seniors and the elderly to protect dignity, to provide care, and to promote as full and independent a life as possible for each aging individual.

The ESCC consultation also identified areas for further action that are detailed in this brief and a number of specific recommendations for immediate attention by the Minister Responsible for Seniors and the Government of Quebec have also been developed. Chief among these are recommendations to protect the English language capacity of institutions that have traditionally served English-speaking communities, to create a comprehensive information service on issues of concern to seniors and their caregivers, perhaps modeled on Info-Santé services, to structure the health and social services system to take much greater responsibility for the coordination of care for individual seniors, not leaving that responsibility to untrained family or volunteer caregivers, and to encourage the benefits of co-operative and not-for-profit housing models for seniors' accommodation.



