

[Letterhead: Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec]

BY EMAIL

October 21, 2024

Catlin Seibel-Kamél
Legislative Clerk | Committees Directorate
Senate of Canada
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Dear Ms. Seibel-Kamél:

Subject: Invitation – Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages

Thank you for your invitation to appear at the meeting of October 28, 2024, regarding health services in minority languages. We appreciate the opportunity to bring our expertise to this important discussion. Unfortunately, after assessing our current commitments, we will not be able to attend the meeting.

However, we would like to emphasize that, as a Quebec professional association whose primary mission is to protect the public, we believe that, when it comes to providing health care, nurses have a professional obligation to provide health care and services to anyone who needs them.

In fact, the Quebec *Code of Ethics of Nurses* addresses this point in section 2, which states: “A nurse may not refuse to provide professional services to a person on the basis of race, colour, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, civil status, age, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic or national extraction, social origin or condition, a handicap or the use of any means to palliate a handicap.”

Therefore, in the view of the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec, it is essential for patients to be able to express their needs and have their requests understood. In turn, it is equally important for them to clearly understand the proposed course of treatment and give free and informed consent to the nurse, as required. This is a shared responsibility. The patient’s language should never be a barrier to treatment, and all necessary steps should be taken to ensure that the patient’s needs and situation are clearly understood.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]
Luc Mathieu, RN, DBA, ASC
President

LM/nr