

BY E-MAIL

Pointe-Claire, October 22, 2018

Ms. Keller, C.A.R.E Jeunesse
Mrs. Julia Paré, Batshaw Alumni Association
Mr. Tony Maciocia, Quebec Association of Educators

Dear Ms. Keller, Ms. Paré and Mr. Maciocia,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for submitting your letter which, as I understand, reflects your concerns with regard to the quality of services to our clientele and the morale of the employees of Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, a facility of the Montréal West Island Integrated University Health and Social Services Centre (IUHSSC).

It is important to acknowledge that we all share a preoccupation with regard to the increased number of "*signalements*" which has resulted in an increased volume of children on the waiting list. This trend is concerning and is a phenomenon which is being shared by all Youth Centres across the Province of Québec.

Recent statistics from the Report of the Provincial Youth Protection Directors demonstrate an increase in the number of "*signalements*" (5.3% over the previous year) being treated across the province and more specifically in Batshaw Youth and Family Centres (5.6% over the previous year). It is believed that this increase cannot be attributed to one factor. Some explanations are as follows: (1) an overall increase in the situations of mistreatment and negligence; (2) there are better means of identifying cases of mistreatment and neglect due to the recent introduction of such programs as ALLIANCE (services offered by CLSC youth teams); and (3) it is felt that there is a better understanding by professionals and society in general with regard to the mechanisms of making a "*signalements*".

Given the increase in "*signalements*" which in turn has affected the waiting list in Evaluation/Orientation (EO) and the caseloads in "*Application des mesures*" (AM) there are several strategies which are being implemented to ensure that the children are being seen in a timely fashion with the goal of eventually reducing the waiting list, and ensuring services delivery in EO and AM that are coherent with the principles of best practice. More specifically, there is an initiative within our departments of Youth and Youth Protection to increase intensity of support provided by youth teams in 1st line services as well increased participation of community organizations so as to work collectively to improve a youth and family situation and potentially reduce the need to retain a "*signalements*".

As you have highlighted in your letter, we agree that staff shortages and staff turnover can make the situation seem worse. Staff shortages are shared by all Youth Centres across the Province. There continues to be a shortage of staff trained in youth protection and rehabilitation for youth centres overall. At the present time this reality is being addressed through a Provincial Action Plan lead by the Ministry and a local Action plan led by the Directors of Human Resources, Youth Program and Youth Protection. A number of initiatives have been successful in recruiting and retaining new staff. For example, all students that complete their field placement successfully have been offered employment prior to graduation. Job fairs and a wide spread recruitment campaign across the Montréal region (posters, social media, university solicitation, etc.) has allowed our organization to be ahead of others and we have received a high volume of candidates. Youth and Youth Protection Programs together have committed to train, clinically supervise and have ongoing recognition events to retain new staff as well as to provide continuous professional development to all staff.

I am aware that you have met with the Youth Program and Youth Protection Directors, Ms. Katherine Moxness and Ms. Linda See, now replacing Assunta Gallo, on two occasions in order to discuss issues of concern and we continue to encourage you to speak with them. This will allow your coalition to be informed of all the actions and initiatives that have been taken to stabilize the clinical teams. Moreover, your insight and assistance to the Directors in implementing any additional strategies would be very welcome.

As Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Montréal West Island IUHSSC, I am very much aware of all the actions taken by the Directors to reduce the impact of the shortage of staffing. Our President and CEO, Ms. Lynne McVey has written to Ms. Lyne Jobin, Associate Deputy Minister to share our concerns about the increasing number of "signalements" and consequentially the increased waiting lists in both EO and AM. Additional financial resources have been requested. The Directors of the Youth Program and Youth Protection have monthly accountability meetings with the Ministry on our progress in relation to the work force plan (*plan de main d'oeuvre*), progress is being reported.

I would like to share with you and inform you that despite the shortage in staffing, starting in December 2017 the Directorates of the Youth Program, Youth Protection, Quality and Multidisciplinary services conducted full audits of all our physical facilities (a total of 269 family type resources and 21 rehabilitation settings), interviewed over 492 youth residing in care outside of their residence, as well as audited 546 client dossiers with the goal of establishing a portrait of our current services. Developing a culture of continuous quality improvement as well as accountability across all levels of responsibility is our goal. I am reassured and able to report that 98% of all our living environments meet quality standards as outline in the Ministry's guidelines. The remaining 2% have support plans in place to achieve conformity of the standards of quality.

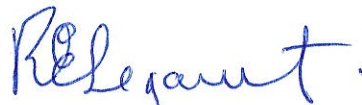
Please be assured, as I am, that all measures are in place to address the shortage of staff and reduce the risk both to youth and to our employees. The IUHSSC Directors, the President and CEO and I as Board Chairman are working together and alongside the Ministry to find solutions aimed at stabilizing our workforce and maintaining our service offer to youth.

In conclusion, you will be called to a meeting in the coming weeks with the Directors of the Youth Program and Youth Protection. Our President and CEO, Ms. Lynne McVey will join the meeting as well. It is my hope that any further questions you may have will be answered at that time.

Should you still have further concerns after this meeting, please do not hesitate to communicate with us. I remain available for a meeting with you at your convenience.

Thank you for keeping the lines of communication open.

Sincerely,



Richard Legault,
Chairman of the Board of Directors

c.c.: Ms. Lynne McVey, President and CEO
Ms. Judy Martin, Member of the Board of Directors
Ms. Katherine Moxness, Director Youth Program
Ms. Linda See, Director of Youth Protection, interim

