

Bilingual Telephone System

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The CSSS des Sommets has completed implementation of its new telephone system.

The new system features multiple automated menus to direct you to the extension you need, and all of those instructions and directions are available in English. One call to 819-324-4000 will lead you to all the departments and services available at the CSSS des Sommets, including the hospital, the CLSCs and long-term residential care facilities in Ste. Agathe, Mont Tremblant and Labelle. When you call, right near the beginning of the French welcome you will hear a message providing the option “For English, please press 1 now” which will lead you to the English welcome message. From there on, whether you want to reach a patient, a member of the administration or any of the health and social services offered, you will be given menus with several options that will ultimately lead you to your goal.

Although these automated telephone systems can be very frustrating, they are, in fact, quite efficient in connecting you with the person you want to reach. Of course, at any time during the process, you can interrupt it by pressing “0” (zero) to be connected with the receptionist, who will help you to figure out the extension you are looking for.

There are still some kinks to be ironed out and, of course, the possibility that, once connected to the extension you are seeking, the person at the other end is unable to speak English. You will find, however, that more and more of the staff are able to respond to your needs, either directly or by finding someone nearby who can speak English. Please be patient, the will is there to improve service but it takes time. The coordination of human resources is only one aspect of the management of such a large and complex institution as a health and social services centre like the CSSS des Sommets, with its nearly 1200 employees and seven distinct facilities across a large territory.

We have noted that the message at the Appointments Centre of the Outpatients Department is still only in French. It is not part of the same phone system and requires programming separately. Hopefully it will be upgraded, too, in the very near future.

At the same time as the changes have been implemented here in the Laurentians, the provincial government has also instituted a single number to reach Info-Santé, the health information line, across the whole province. Instead of the over 100 different numbers to reach the service, there is now a single number, good everywhere in Quebec. Just dial 8-1-1, press “9” or say “English” and you will be connected with a health professional who can help you deal with any non-emergency medical question, including referrals to the appropriate entry point in the health and social services network. The service is divided into the 15 administrative regions but is set up so that, if there is an overload in one, the calls will be redirected to another, less busy, region. All the information on local services is being computerized so that you can expect the same level of help no matter where the person answering your call is located. And, with the centralized system, you can have greater assurance that your call will be answered in English.

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