

Administering the CSSS des Sommets

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Your community health and social services belong to you.

There are two sets of interlocking administrators who guide each of the health and social services institutions in Quebec. The obvious one of these groups is the paid staff, which includes the Executive Director at the top of the organizational chart. But the other group is equally important. It is made up of volunteers, some of whom are elected, and certain designated representatives of the professional groups working in the institution.

These elected volunteers sit on the Board of Directors of each CSSS (Health and Social Services Centre) in the province. They are a dedicated group of men and women with a heavy load of responsibilities. Their primary purpose is to oversee the operations of the paid administration of the institution and, in addition, to take the overarching policy decisions that establish the direction that the CSSS will take, of course in the framework of the laws and regulations laid out by the Quebec Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (Ministry of Health and Social Services).

In lengthy monthly meetings, reports are presented from committees, which each have their own meetings during the month, detailing the concerns, problems and accomplishments of each aspect of the institutions' operations. The members of the Board each sit on at least one and often several of these committees, and the Chairman of the Board, him- or herself a volunteer, attends many of them in order to stay abreast of all that is going on.

In addition to the Executive Committee, which takes responsibility for the good functioning of the board, the other committees roll up their sleeves and get into the details of the day-to-day operations of all parts of each health and social services centre. In our case, at the CSSS des Sommets, this includes the hospital in Ste. Agathe plus CLSCs in Ste. Agathe, Mont Tremblant and Labelle, as well as long-term residential care facilities in all three of those places. This large organization serves the whole territory of the MRC des Laurentides as well as some of the neighbouring municipalities including St. Adolphe and St. Donat. Working with the doctors, there are 1,200 employees, including nurses, support staff, technicians, dieticians, receptionists, and, of course, those specialized administrators who run departments such as the physical plant, finances and communications. A committee made up of senior staff members along with those same volunteers who sit on the Board of Directors oversees each of those departments.

There is even a Users' Committee, on which many more volunteers sit, representing all the different constituencies of users in the institution, including each of the three long-term care facilities, whose residents have a great interest in how their 'homes' are being run.

There is a great need for people from all walks of life to give back to their communities by taking part in the operations of health and social services institutions such as the CSSSs. They are ours, after all, not just to use and to praise or complain about, but to maintain.

Sheila Eskenazi, President, English Communities Committee of the CSSS des Sommets