

A Legal Guide for Seniors

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The *Fondation du Barreau du Québec* (the Quebec Bar Association's foundation) publishes a handy little booklet entitled "Know Your Rights, Take Your Place: a Legal Guide for Seniors," in their *Éducaloi* series. Available directly from the foundation by calling 1-800-361-8495 ext. 3456, it can also be found in notaries' offices and through many community groups such as FADOQ, the federation of Golden Age Clubs.

Broken down into five sections, this guide answers questions directly related to the needs and concerns of seniors. Part 1, *Dignity: a question of respect*, deals with questions of abuse and exploitation, the legal issues surrounding compulsory retirement, your rights as a consumer, especially in the face of door-to-door salespeople and telemarketers, and your legal right to have access to your grandchildren, especially in the event of the acrimonious divorce of your child and his or her spouse.

The second part of the booklet is *Incapacity: an eventuality not to be overlooked* is devoted to explanations of incapacity and mandates, living wills and protective supervision.

Housing: being comfortable in your home environment describes some of the programmes available for you to stay in your own home and directs you to your local CLSC for more information on that or on moving into a long-term residential facility. There is also lots of information on leases and their terms and the rights of residents both in their own homes and in institutions.

In Part 4, *The Health Care System: resources at your disposal* provides a quick overview of your rights in choosing a health care professional, your access to your own or your spouse's medical records, the meaning and implications of consent to care, and an outline of where and how you can file a complaint and where to get help if you want to file one.

The last part, *A Will: your door to a serene departure*, is the section the we automatically associate with the legal professions. There is an explanation of the types of wills that you can prepare and why they are useful and your rights in the face of pressure from people around you. There is a practical section of tips on keeping our document organized to simplify things for your estate, and an explanation of the responsibilities of the executor.

This is followed by a list of telephone numbers for organizations that can provide help on all the issues addressed, including, of course, the Bar Association itself. The booklet is intended as a guide only and specific questions and concerns need to be addressed to the appropriate sources. It is a timely reminder of all the resources that are available in the community that are often overlooked.

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