

Centre de recherche sur le vieillissement Research Centre on Aging

Health and Social Services-University Institute of Geriatrics of Sherbrooke



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Elder abuse: major changes

By Marie Beaulieu, PhD

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This newletter is intended for people who participated in the Research Centre on Aging's projects

It is also distributed to anyone who wants to receive it. Please contact us for more information (see page 4).

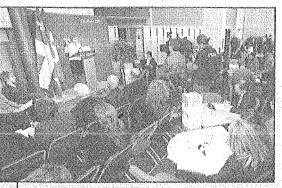


Marie Beaulieu, PhD, full professor, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Université de Sherbrooke; holder of the Research Chair in Elder Abuse, Research Center on Aging

uebec has the world's first research chair in elder abuse, whose work will be directed at the Research Center on Aging

You may have seen Yvon Deschamps (Frenchlanguage television) and Bill Haugland (Englishlanguage television) tell viewers to "Help, Love, Act" in public-service announcements about elder abuse. Their messages reach out to say that not only does elder abuse exist in Quebec, but, more importantly, but there is help and support for victims of it.

This awareness campaign is the first of four structuring actions of the first 2010–2015 Government Action Plan to Fight Elder Abuse, announced in June by Marguerite Blais, Minister Responsible for Seniors. The plan has been built around collaboration between 13 government departments and agencies. In producing it, the Secrétariat aux Aînés, a provincial-government agency, appointed a team of four experts, including Marie Beaulieu



Announcement of the creation of the Research Chair in Elder Abuse

from the Research Center on Aging. Beaulieu has been given the task of validating the plan's scientific basis.

This plan proposes directions around which a series of tangible actions will be structured to foster a major shift in the way that society views the



elderly. It will be backed by significant funding (\$20 million), so the actions should be adequately supported.

1-888-489-ABUS

The second of the government's four actions was the implementation in October of a new provincial elder-abuse helpline: 1-888-489-ABUS (2287), From 8:00 a,m, to 8:00 p,m,, every day of the year, elderly persons can call to share their experiences or to ask for help. If they provide their consent, the information will be shared with a professional in their region so their story a number of times. In the This will make it easier to months, the new provincial helpline organize rapid follow-up, o 1-888-489-A8US This helpline is also available 🐣 received more than to professionals in various a 1500 calls. This toll-free areas who need support in a telephone line lets the their work or who want to elderly speak directly have an outside opinion to to a health and socialshed light on their practice services professional. with the elderly.

Research chair

The third structuring action will be carried out at the Research Center on Aging through the work

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of Marie Beaulieu under a research chair in elder abuse created by the provincial government. The chair, with funding for five years, aims at proposing concrete action that can be validated scientifically. In all likelihood, this stands out as the world's first research chair dedicated to the fight against elder abuse! Beaulieu's team will focus on developing theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge; supporting the training of highly qualified personnel; evaluating intervention strategies (prevention, screening, and case management); and supporting knowledge transfer while developing innovative research projects.

The new research chair in elder abuse will also be responsible, starting in spring 2011, for a Web site to make study findings available to the public. Seniors associations will be called on to create research partnerships to ensure that the work performed corresponds to seniors' expectations and needs.

Coordinating action

Lastly, the fourth structuring action will consist in setting up a network of 17 coordinators, 1 in each of Quebec's 17 administrative regions. Its purpose will be to forge links and foster joint action between stakeholders in the health and social-services system, the various government departments, community organizations, social-economy stakeholders, and private-sector services. In taking this action, the government recognizes each region has its own organization and even operating procedures, which must be taken into account to reduce elder abuse.

In addition to these four structuring actions, several government departments and agencies have also committed to enhancing what they already do and developing new expertise. Improvements are expected in various fields of endeavor: improving knowledge, increasing information, improving training opportunities and better equipping practitioners, and strengthening and extending actions to better combat abuse and bolster joint action. To illustrate, the provincial department of justice will head up a committee on the issue of privileged communication. They will deal with questions such as how to enable practitioners from various areas to discuss a case of abuse without jeopardizing the professional secret associated with their oaths.

Lastly, this first 2010–2015 Government Action Plan to Fight Elder Abuse includes a place for the elderly themselves. They will be asked to give opinions or take part in action-research projects under the research chair to propose new practices responding to their needs. All of these actions are not of importance only to the elderly among us. As the Chinese proverb would have it, "To mock your elders is to destroy the house where you have to stay tonight." It



Left to right; Hélène Payette, RCA director; Marie Beaulieu, researcher; Marguerite Blais, Minister Responsible for Seniors; and Luce Samoisette, Rector of the Université de Sherbrooke



Centre de recherche sur le vieillissement Research Centre on Aging

1036, rue Belvédère Sud Sherbrooke, Québec J1H 4C4 Tel.: 819 780-2220, poste 45131

Contact: lucie.duquette@usherbrooke.ca

Web site: http://www.cdrv.ca

Committee:

Véronique Boutier, Marie-France Dubois, Laurent Fontaine and Nancy Leclerc

Graphic design: Graphic-Art Printing: Imprimerie Martineau

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