

Bilingual homes: Minister promises stricter rules (Translated by Google) – The Minister of Social Development is committed to strengthening the language requirements of new bilingual nursing homes operated by the private sector.

## Description

The Minister of Social Development is committed to strengthening the language requirements of new bilingual nursing homes operated by the private sector.

Minister Cathy Rogers promises to introduce stricter rules to ensure that seniors' language rights are respected when new licensed bilingual care facilities are established.

There are already four designated bilingual nursing homes in New Brunswick. Their managers make every effort to offer their clients a service of equal quality in French and English (see box), although the rules of the ministry are rather succinct.

The government took Francophone seniors in Fredericton by surprise last month by announcing the upcoming construction of a 60-bed bilingual nursing home. The Association of Seniors in the Capital Region has been advocating since 2011 for a 30-bed Francophone health care facility in Fredericton.

A request for proposals will be issued by the government to find a private partner to build and operate the new facility.

Fredericton announced in May its intention to use public-private partnerships to expand its offer of accommodation and care for seniors.

Minister Rogers said she would consult with seniors' representatives and nursing homes to develop requests for proposals for the Fredericton bilingual nursing home and other similar institutions that could follow.

"The main goal of this approach will be to better define the requirements that bilingual care homes must meet in terms of services offered in the language of choice of residents," the Ministry of Development wrote recently.

"In the future, when we submit requests for proposals to the private sector, we will include (language obligations) in the very important criteria that operators will have to meet," added Rogers on the sidelines of an earlier government announcement this week.

The minister is scheduled to meet with the Association of Seniors in the Capital Region next month.

"We want to express our concerns to the minister and ask her a series of questions about what she means by a bilingual home," Yvonne McLaughlin, president of the association, told Acadie Nouvelle recently.

"We have had bad experiences with bilingualism; The issue of staff, language of work and everything

else, “she said.

Minister Rogers does not rule out the creation of other bilingual nursing homes elsewhere in the province as the aging population accelerates.

Will the new rules also apply to the four existing bilingual nursing homes?

“It’s going to be part of the upcoming discussions,” says a ministry spokesperson by email.

The Ministry’s guidelines for bilingual homes are currently limited to an “internal work guide” on the characteristics of a facility that “may” include signage and bilingual staff, Recreational, spiritual and cultural “in French and English, as well as” cultural festivals “linked to the two linguistic communities.

Despite the pressure exerted by Acadian civil society, the government did not see fit to subject nursing homes to the Official Languages Act at its most recent revision.

<http://www.acadienouvelle.com/actualites/2015/07/15/foyers-bilingues-la-ministre-promet-des-regles-plus-strictes/>

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