

INFORMATION CAMPAIGN ON THE FLU SEASON: THE GOVERNMENT HAS COME UP SHORT, SAYS THE COMMISSIONER

Toronto, September 17, 2009 - François Boileau, Ontario's French Language Services Commissioner, has launched an investigation into what he considers a direct violation of the *French Language Services Act*, following the province-wide release of an English-only brochure on the flu season.

According to the Commissioner, it is inconceivable that, in 2009, a brochure being sent to every household in Ontario is not bilingual. The provincial government has missed an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that it is committed to offering high-quality French-language services to its French-speaking citizens.

The brochure, currently being distributed in English by the government, is available in French—but only on request. And it is very difficult for the province's French-speaking citizens to obtain a copy of it.

QUOTES

"Clearly this brochure should have been bilingual. Was it decided, at some point, that Francophones in Ontario didn't need to be informed about the flu because they were somehow immune to it?", stated François Boileau.

"There is a bilingual website on the H1N1 flu, but there are still discrepancies between the English version and the French version. I plan to investigate on the whole matter more fully in the coming weeks. Given the importance of this situation, this is an embarrassing state of affairs," added the Commissioner.

QUICK FACTS

- Created in 2007, the Office of the French Language Services Commissioner has a mandate, under the *French Language Services Act*, to conduct independent investigations either in response to a complaint or on its own initiative. It also monitors government agencies on their progress on the delivery of French-language services in Ontario.
- In May 2009, the French Language Services Commissioner released a *Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario*.

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