



Press Release

My breasts and uterus count too! Enough of being invisible!

Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign October 2 to November 9, 2023

TIOHTIÀ:KE (MONTREAL), UNCEDED TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE KANIEN'KEHÁ:KA PEOPLES, Oct. 2, 2023 /CNW/ - For this October, a month dedicated to breast cancer awareness, Moelle épinière et motricité Québec (MÉMO-Qc) and Breast Cancer Action Quebec (BCAQ), in conjunction with our partners, are joining forces to address the government. Women with disabilities have had enough with being invisible and underserved by the healthcare system. They feel they don't exist, that they've been left behind by society.

We urge the provincial government to consider the needs and challenges these women face in accessing gynecological, oncological and perinatal healthcare.

For our breast cancer awareness campaign, we're organizing from October 2 to November 9 to denounce alarming findings, in particular regarding the inadequacy of the health programs and policies in place in our province. These policies are poorly adapted to the needs and realities of women with disabilities.

We deplore the lack of scientific work and statistical data on health equity. Women with disabilities face real obstacles in their daily lives that are rarely taken into account, whether in prevention, screening or treatment.

In 2023, it is completely unacceptable that the healthcare system should ignore the essential needs of over 600,000 women across Quebec.

The testimonies we have gathered are unequivocal: the services and care these women struggle to obtain are ill-adapted. By failing to take their needs into account, the autonomy and dignity of these women are undermined. Faced with physical, socio-economic and communication barriers, these women find themselves at the crossroads of oppression and discrimination: this can no longer be ignored.

Thousands of them can tell you their stories. For example, Marjorie Aunos, the spokesperson for this campaign, is a working woman with a disability and the mother of a teenager: "Without adapted or accessible screening tools, I had to come back 3 times for a mammogram".

In order for our province to be consistent with the words of its own policy for people with disabilities, and in its desire to establish a genuine exercise of the right to equality:

We call for women with disabilities and the groups that represent them to be included when policies or programs concerning them are developed. They are the experts of their own lives, needs and trajectories;

We call for all healthcare establishments, whether public or private across Quebec, that administer preventive, diagnostic and treatment services specific to women, such as mammograms, gynecological, oncological and perinatal examinations and care, to be accessible;

We call for parking lots, common areas, changing rooms, examination rooms, materials and equipment to be adapted and accessible;

We also call for these establishments to provide qualified staff to welcome these women, staff who have a real understanding of their realities and needs, which are specific needs;

We call for this staff to be trained and available to provide a sympathetic welcome and ensure the safety and dignity of these women when it comes to carrying out examinations on their bodies which need to be mobilized;

We call for the promotion of awareness-raising health and breast cancer campaigns specifically targeting women with disabilities; campaigns and tools that are inclusive and adapted to their realities.

These are issues of dignity, equity and social justice.

The government is already aware of this lack of services received by people with disabilities, and women in particular. The report entitled *Améliorer les conditions de vie des personnes handicapées - portrait et bilan des actions gouvernementales dans le cadre de la politique À part entière*, published by the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) last February, makes ample mention of this: the difficulty of receiving preventive care, particularly breast cancer screening, the serious impoverishment of women in the event of serious illness, and inadequately trained staff to support them.

What is the Quebec government waiting for to implement concrete strategies and actions? We don't want to wait any longer and take this opportunity to invite the public to support these demands at a rally on November 9 in Montreal.

Groups supporting this statement:

- Moelle épinière et motricité Québec (MÉMO-Qc) <https://www.moelleepiniere.com/>
- Breast Cancer Action Quebec <https://acsqc.ca/>
- Réseau d'action des femmes en santé et services sociaux (RAFSSS) <https://www.rafsss.org/>
- Table des groupes de femmes de Montréal (TGFM) <https://www.tgfm.org/>

*Le G13- The Group of thirteen, or G13, is a collective of 21 feminist groups across Quebec, working to defend women's rights in Quebec and Canada. Its members are:

- Action santé femmes
- Réseau d'action des femmes handicapées (RAFH/DAWN) <https://www.dawncanada.net/>
- Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes (RQASF) <https://rqasf.qc.ca/>
- Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances (FQPN) <https://fqpn.qc.ca/>
- Regroupement Naissance-Respectées (RNR) <https://www.naissancesrespectees.org/>
- Femmes Autochtones du Québec/Quebec Native Women (FAQ) <https://faq-qnw.org/>
- La Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) <https://www.ffq.qc.ca/>
- L'R des centres de femmes du Québec <https://rcentres.qc.ca/>
- Réseau des Tables régionales de groupes de femmes du Québec
- <http://www.reseautablesfemmes.qc.ca/>
- Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de 2e étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale <https://www.alliancemh2.org/>
- Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine
- <https://cdeacf.ca/>
- Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail <https://ciaft.qc.ca/>
- Action travail des femmes <https://atfquebec.ca/>
- Fédération des associations de familles monoparentales et recomposées du Québec
- <https://fafmrq.org/>
- Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes <https://fmhf.ca/>
- Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale <https://maisons-femmes.qc.ca/>
- Regroupement québécois des centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel <https://rqcalacs.qc.ca/>
- L'Association féministe d'éducation et d'action sociale (AFEAS) <https://afeas.qc.ca/>
- Relais-femmes <https://relais-femmes.qc.ca/>
- Réseau d'action pour l'égalité des femmes immigrées et racisées du Québec <https://rafiq.ca/>
- Réseau des lesbiennes du Québec- Femmes de la diversité sexuelle <https://rlq-qln.ca/>
- Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes
- <https://tcri.qc.ca/>

Source :

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