



2011-2012 BUDGET PRESS RELEASE No. 9

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A Plan to Consolidate Our Solidarity Tools

Québec, March 17, 2011 – “Québec is a society in which human values are important. We never stop trying to improve the quality of life of Quebecers, particularly that of families and seniors, and fight poverty for everyone’s benefit. Despite the current budgetary difficulties, it is important to continue our efforts. We do so within our means,” Minister of Finance Raymond Bachand said in tabling the 2011-2012 Budget.

Enhancing the Québec family policy

“In the early 1960s, the Québec government paid allowances for the first time to Québec parents. Since then, the government has gradually developed a series of measures making Québec a family policy leader in North America. Today, we invest considerable sums to support families. We allocated \$6.7 billion in family support during the fiscal year drawing to a close. That is 63% more than in 2003. It is unique in Canada,” the Minister observed.

As of 2012-2013, the government will gradually create 15 000 new reduced-contribution daycare spaces. They will be fully in place by 2015-2016, ultimately raising the number of reduced-contribution spaces to 235 000. These investments will be in addition to other funding increases announced, including for family community organizations and community daycare centres.

Ensuring stable funding for health

“In the 2010-2011 Budget, we undertook to ensure stable funding for the health-care system in return for performance initiatives from the network, because there is always room for improvement,” the Minister pointed out. “The implementation of the health contribution, the revenues from which are deposited in the Fund to Finance Health and Social Services Institutions, supports actions that improve access to surgery, hospital performance and the deployment of family medicine groups.”

“Health care is still a priority for Quebecers. Thanks to the health contribution, among other measures, health funding could rise from \$32 billion to \$41 billion over five years, a 5% increase per year,” the Minister said.

Meeting the local needs of seniors

“We have a duty of respect toward our seniors,” the Minister noted. “We listen to their needs. Society’s burgeoning seniors population requires adaptations. Since the 2007-2008 Budget, the government has invested a total of \$2.2 billion to increase the disposable income of seniors, enable them to stay in their home and better support their informal caregivers. We must adapt our action so that a longer life also means a good and fulfilling one.”

One of the new budget measures will broaden the refundable tax credit for informal caregivers to include caregivers of a spouse 70 or over with a physical or mental impairment, as well as caregivers who live in the care recipient’s home.

The Minister also announced additional funding for some measures. For example, the amount allocated to the Age-Friendly Municipalities program, which provides financial assistance for the implementation of urban infrastructure or development projects meeting the needs of seniors, will be doubled for the next five years.

In addition, an extra \$2.1 million will be allocated to information hubs for seniors from 2011-2012 à 2013-2014. To support the network of community organizations that work to bring the generations closer together, known as “maisons des grands-parents,” additional funding of \$300 000 a year for three years will be allocated to the Ministère de la Famille et des Aînés. As well, the maximum deduction granted to low-income seniors admitted to a residential and long-term care centre (CHSLD) to help them defray transitional housing costs will be doubled from \$325 to \$650 dollars per month.

Continuing the fight against poverty

“Since 2003, the government has announced the construction of 17 000 social, community and affordable housing units, raising their number to 30 000,” the Finance Minister underlined. “We have announced investments totalling more than \$1.7 billion. But we do not intend to stop there. The 2011-2012 Budget provides for the construction of 2 000 additional social and community housing units. Furthermore, the Société d’habitation du Québec will examine new approaches for improving the funding of community housing.”

The Minister also announced improvements to the Shelter Allowance Program, which provides financial assistance to low-income families with children and people 55 or over with low incomes who allocate too large a part of their budget to paying rent. As of October 1, 2011, the eligibility age for the program will be lowered from 55 to 50 over five years for single people and couples without children.

Furthermore, an additional \$4 million a year is being allocated to social economy businesses that provide domestic assistance services to 50 000 Quebecers.

All told, the 2011-2012 Budget provides for the injection of nearly \$80 million more to combat poverty.

“All of the measures announced today will help strengthen the support provided to our families and seniors in keeping with our values,” the Minister concluded.

- 30 -

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