

2001-2002 BUDGET

\$2 BILLION MORE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Québec City, March 29, 2001 – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for the Economy and Finance Pauline Marois announced in the **2001-2002 Budget Speech** that an additional \$2 billion will be allocated to the health and social services network. These additional resources will increase the health and social services budget by \$1.3 billion and will be used to create a reserve of \$600 million, particularly for modernizing the network. The **2001-2002 Budget** also includes several new initiatives for improving services for young people and their families, home care services, services for older persons losing their autonomy, and for bolstering assistance for compulsive gamblers.

“The government has taken and will continue to take measures to ensure that everyone has access to the most adequate care, without unduly long waiting periods, regardless of his or her financial situation”, Ms. Marois said.

Increase in operating budgets

In the **2001-2002 Budget Speech**, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for the Economy and Finance announced that the operating budgets of the health and social services network will be increased by \$1.3 billion for 2001-2002. Compared with the March 2000 forecasts, the budgetary envelope of the network for the coming fiscal year will thus be raised from \$15.4 billion to \$16.7 billion. The budget allocated to health and social services will account for 40% of program spending, compared with 36% in 1997-1998. Since that date, the budgets earmarked for health and social services have increased by nearly 30%.

A reserve of \$600 million for modernizing the network

Ms. Marois also announced the creation of a reserve of \$600 million from the excess budgetary amounts for 2000-2001. This reserve will make it possible to modernize the network and act upon one of the most interesting recommendations of the Clair Commission respecting the establishment of family medicine units.

The reserve will also be used to upgrade the network's equipment, computer systems and buildings.

New initiatives, for the quality of life of Quebecers

Ms. Marois also announced a number of new initiatives that will immediately have a direct impact on Quebecers' quality of life.

- Budgetary appropriations of \$45 million will be allocated over the next three years to consolidate basic services for children and young people.
- Funding for home help businesses will henceforth be provided on a permanent basis and increased to \$32 million per year.
- A total of \$30 million will be earmarked each year for new services adapted to the needs of older persons losing their autonomy.
- The budget for assisting compulsive gamblers will be raised to \$20 million per year.

A definite priority, even though the money is in Ottawa

According to Ms. Marois, the **2001-2002 Budget** confirms the importance the government attaches to health. "Over the past four years especially, the government has made a tremendous effort to re-inject funds into the health and social services network", she added. "While the money remains in Ottawa, we have assumed responsibility for these essential services with the utmost determination and compassion. The Budget that I am tabling today clearly indicates that we will continue to do so".

Source: Nicole Bastien
Press Officer
Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of State for the Economy and Finance
Tél. (418) 643-5270 or (514) 499-2551
www.finances.gouv.qc.ca