



Manifesto for Regional Health Equity: SOS Outaouais

**October 30, 2024 - Five years after the Quebec National Assembly unanimously
recognized the Outaouais' unique characteristics**

Five Years Later... Still Waiting : Outaouais demands concrete action

We, the citizens, organizations and community leaders of the Outaouais, sign this manifesto with a common goal: to put an end to decades of health inequity in our region. For too long, the Outaouais region has suffered from chronic and historic underfunding that seriously compromises access to health care and social services.

Five years after the National Assembly recognized our regional particularities, we're still waiting. We're waiting for the concrete action promised to remedy this structural inequality. Today, **we say: enough is enough!**

1. Chronic and historic underfunding that must end

Despite the recognition of the Outaouais' geographic and border particularities in 2019, the region faces an underfunding of nearly \$200 million per year compared to the provincial average. This deficit seriously compromises the quality of care and the ability of our institutions to recruit and retain healthcare professionals. Like all tax-paying Quebecers, Outaouais residents should have access to the same level of services as those offered in the rest of the province.

This underfunding, documented by numerous reports, continues to undermine public health in the Outaouais. Every day, thousands of citizens are confronted with interminable waiting lists, overcrowded emergency rooms and limited essential services.



2. A continuing crisis: The Talent Drain

We are facing an unprecedented personnel crisis. Our healthcare professionals are leaving Ontario in droves, attracted by better pay and working conditions. At a time when 22 job titles are affected by significant wage gaps, the attractiveness of our region is plummeting.

One-off bonuses, such as those awarded to medical imaging technologists, are no longer enough. They treat the symptoms, but ignore the root causes of the exodus. We need structural solutions tailored to the specific realities of our border region.

3. An Urgent Call to Action: We demand concrete changes

The time for promises and temporary measures is over. We, SOS Outaouais, demand that the National Assembly take immediate and lasting action to restore equity in our region. Here are our demands:

- Differentiated compensation for healthcare workers in the Outaouais, recognizing the particular challenges of our proximity to Ontario.
- Permanent investment in the region's health and social services infrastructure, so that our citizens can access the same care as those in other regions of Quebec.
- A regional recruitment and retention plan, to halt the exodus of talent and ensure competitive conditions for attracting healthcare professionals.

4. Together, we can succeed

The status quo is no longer an option. The Outaouais deserves dignified, equitable and accessible healthcare. We demand that recognition of the Outaouais' unique characteristics be translated into concrete action. The government recognized our unique situation in 2019, but we've been waiting ever since. Five years later, we won't wait any longer.



We will submit this manifesto to the National Assembly and the Minister of Health, and we will continue to mobilize, alongside citizens, healthcare professionals and local organizations, until regional equity is finally a reality in the Outaouais.