



## **Opinion and Demands – National Home Support Policy “Mieux chez soi”**

February 2, 2026

“A policy that transforms programs as central as the Chèque emploi-service, without clear accessibility criteria or an explanatory guide, creates more uncertainty than security. Today, despite good intentions, this policy raises more questions than it provides answers.”

— Steven Laperrière, Executive Director of RAPLIQ

### **1. A Necessary Shift, but Still Incomplete**

The launch of the National Home Support Policy “Mieux chez soi” represents a long-overdue but necessary recognition of the importance of home support in Quebec. The status quo was no longer sustainable, and in this regard, the government’s intention to act must be acknowledged.

That said, a structural shift cannot succeed without operational clarity, without explicit recognition of disabled people, and without a strong strategy for the frontline workforce.

One positive element is that CLSCs have been designated as the single entry point for all services.

1a) Yes to Increased Funding for EÉSADs, if and only if:

- No to their use as a low-cost substitute for the public system
- No to a model based on underpayment and precarious work
- Yes to a complementary, regulated, and adequately funded model
- Yes to governance that places disabled people and frontline workers at the center

The real question is not:

“Should EÉSADs receive increased funding?”

But rather:

“Funding EÉSADs to do what, within what framework, and for whose benefit?”

If the answer does not include:

- decent working conditions
- explicit recognition of disabled people
- a fully accountable State

then increased funding risks shifting the problem rather than solving it.

## **2. Ongoing Invisibility of Disabled People in Public Discourse**

During the recent presentation of the policy, references to seniors overwhelmingly dominated the discourse, while disabled people were virtually absent, despite the policy's stated intention to serve all individuals with impairments, regardless of age.

This omission is deeply concerning. It contributes to framing home support strictly as a geriatric issue, whereas for disabled people of all ages, it is an essential condition for autonomy, social participation, and the exercise of fundamental rights.

## **3. A Real Risk of Budget Dilution Within the Administrative System**

Another major issue concerns the governance structure chosen for the policy's implementation.

The announced decision-making chain — government orientations, implementation by Santé Québec, and execution by CLSCs — raises serious concerns about the ability of funds to actually reach frontline services.

“Now you have the government setting orientations. You have Santé Québec responsible for implementation. And then you have CLSCs tasked with delivering services. That's a lot of people, a lot of salaries, a lot of money. I don't see how all of this is going to concretely reach services.”

— Steven Laperrière, Executive Director of RAPLIQ

In a context of workforce shortages and urgent needs on the ground, every dollar lost in administrative layers is a dollar not invested in people and frontline workers.

## **4. Wage Increase from \$20/hour to \$21/hour**

Without defining an ideal model in numerical terms, it can be stated that a credible increase must go well beyond a simple \$1/hour raise and be part of a progressive wage scale.

Experience and specialization (disability, intellectual disability, autism, mental health) must also be recognized, and the policy must be accompanied by measures addressing travel compensation, schedule stability, and ongoing training.

In short, yes—any increase is better than none. But let us be clear: \$21/hour does not reflect the level of responsibility involved and will not resolve workforce shortages or retention issues. A stronger signal is required, consistent with the strategic importance of home support.

We often speak of self-sacrifice, vocation, or “work of the heart” to describe home support or caregiving. Repeated endlessly, these terms too often serve to justify inadequate wages, difficult working conditions, and minimal recognition.

Home support workers are at the heart of the system: without them, no “Mieux chez soi” policy is possible. Predominantly women, often from immigrant backgrounds, sometimes considered “low-skilled” on paper but highly competent in reality, they perform work that few people would accept—day after day, in the intimacy of people’s homes, with vulnerable individuals, often isolated, sometimes at the end of life.

This essential work remains largely invisible and undervalued. Fragmented schedules, poorly compensated travel, job instability, and limited career prospects define their reality. We expect them to be reliable, competent, available, and deeply human—while offering them the bare minimum.

This precariousness is not accidental; it has become structural. A system that claims to support people at home while treating those who make it possible as interchangeable resources cannot be sustainable or dignified.

“You don’t build a sustainable home support policy with symbolic raises. At \$21 an hour, we barely acknowledge the existence of the problem—certainly not its magnitude.”

## **5. A Workforce Crisis Potentially Worsened by the End of the PEQ**

The policy is further weakened by a major blind spot: the impact of the termination of the Quebec Experience Program (PEQ), abolished in November 2025.

This program was a critical retention pathway for a significant proportion of licensed practical nurses and home care staff.

“With the end of the PEQ, how many nurses will be affected and forced to leave Quebec? Even losing 10% of the workforce—or even 7 or 8%—would be a disaster.”

— Linda Gauthier, Senior Advisor, RAPLIQ

No home support policy can be credible without a clear, quantified, and realistic strategy to retain and attract workers, particularly in a context of international and interprovincial competition.

## **6. Caring for People... and for Those Who Support Them**

Government discourse rightly focuses on individuals receiving home support services. But a sustainable policy must also take care of those who make these services possible.

“We talk a lot about people receiving services, and that’s normal—that’s the goal. But we also need to take care of our workers. We need to value them and show them that we need them. Today, that question remains unanswered.”

— Steven Laperrière

Without concrete recognition of working conditions, emotional workload, job stability, and fair compensation, home support will continue to rely on a fragile system under constant strain.

## **7. A Reform Preferable to the Status Quo, but Still Too Vague**

This must be stated clearly: doing nothing was no longer an option.

“It’s better than the status quo, which was going nowhere.”

— The RAPLIQ Team

However, implementation details remain largely insufficient. Stakeholders, affected individuals, and rights advocacy organizations need:

- clear timelines;
- accountability mechanisms;
- precise indicators of real access to services;
- greater transparency regarding the use of funds.

### **We affirm that:**

- Home support must be recognized as a rights-based policy for all, not merely a tool for managing population aging.
- Disabled people must be explicitly named, recognized, and integrated into political discourse and action plans.
- Public funds must primarily reach direct services and frontline workers, not be absorbed by bureaucracy.
- No reform can succeed without a robust strategy to retain and value workers.
- The success of “Mieux chez soi” will depend less on intentions than on its concrete implementation on the ground.

# Demands – National Home Support Policy “Mieux chez soi”

## 1. Explicit Recognition of Disabled People

- That disabled people of all ages be explicitly named in:
  - government public communications;
  - action plans;
  - performance indicators of the “Mieux chez soi” policy.
- That home support be formally recognized as a rights-based policy, not merely a tool for managing aging.

## 2. Governance and Accountability

- That the governance chain involving the government, Santé Québec, and CLSCs be subject to:
  - public annual accountability;
  - full transparency regarding the share of budgets devoted to direct services.
- That independent monitoring mechanisms be established to prevent the dilution of funds within administrative structures.

## 3. Funding and Role of EÉSADs

That increased funding for EÉSADs be conditional upon:

- real improvements in wages and working conditions;
- workforce stability and continuity of services;
- respect for the self-determination of disabled people.
- That EÉSADs be recognized as complementary to the public system, not as a low-cost substitute.
- That the State remain fully responsible for universal and equitable access to home support services.

## 4. Working Conditions and Compensation

That the wage increase from \$20 to \$21/hour be recognized as insufficient and replaced by:

- a progressive wage scale;
- formal recognition of experience and specialization (disability, intellectual disability, autism, mental health).
- That structural measures accompany compensation, including:
  - adequate travel compensation;
  - stable and predictable schedules;
  - guaranteed access to continuing education.

## **5. Workforce and Immigration (PEQ)**

- That the government promptly present a clear strategy to offset the impacts of the termination of the Quebec Experience Program on home care staff.
- That targeted retention and attraction measures be implemented to avoid critical workforce losses.
- That no home support reform be implemented without a quantified analysis of workforce needs in the short, medium, and long term.

## **6. Real Access and Quality of Services**

- That clear service deployment timelines be made public.
- That precise indicators of real access (wait times, hours allocated, worker continuity) be monitored and published.
- That disabled people and their representative organizations be continuously involved in the evaluation and adjustment of the policy.

## **7. Fundamental Principle**

That the government recognize that:

- Home support is an essential condition for the autonomy, dignity, and social participation of disabled people, and must therefore be funded, organized, and governed accordingly.

## **8. Immediate Clarification of Program Changes**

That the government explicitly and publicly name the change from the Chèque emploi-service (CES) to the Home Support Allowance (Allocation Autonomie à domicile), to avoid confusion.

That this change not be merely an administrative rebranding, but be accompanied by a clear explanation of the real differences between the two programs in terms of:

- rights;
- responsibilities;
- access modalities;
- concrete impacts on affected individuals.

### **9. Eligibility Criteria: An Unacceptable Lack of Clarity**

That eligibility criteria for the Home Support Allowance be established, published, and disseminated without delay, particularly regarding:

- access for caregivers;
- types of needs covered;
- duration and intensity of support;
- any exclusions.

### **10. Caution Regarding Implicit Transfer to Caregivers**

That the desired expansion of caregiver access to the Home Support Allowance not occur at the expense of:

- professional services;
- recognition of the permanent needs of disabled people;
- autonomy and self-determination of those concerned.
- That the role of caregivers remain a choice, not an implicit obligation created by a lack of accessible services.

### **11. Major Information and Transparency Deficit**

That the Ministry promptly produce a clear, public explanatory guide, including:

- a comprehensive FAQ;
- concrete scenarios (disabled person, caregiver, or both);
- operational answers on real-world application of the program.

That this guide be distributed to:

- CLSCs;
- community organizations;
- directly affected individuals,
- to prevent the policy from generating more questions than answers, as is currently the case.

## **12. A Worthy Intention, but Insufficient Without Clarity**

That the government acknowledge that, despite the good intentions expressed by the Minister, a public policy cannot be assessed on intentions alone, but solely on:

- its clarity;
- its predictability;
- its real-world applicability.