

South-East Ottawa
Community Health Centre
Every One Matters.



Centre de santé communautaire
du sud-est d'Ottawa
Chaque personne compte.

Suite 600-1355 Bank St. Ottawa, ON K1H 8K7 Tel: 613-737-5115 Fax: 613-739-8199

January 31, 2017

Mayor Jim Watson
Ottawa City Hall
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 1J1

Re: Support for the City of Ottawa's official bilingual status

Dear Mayor Watson,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Board of Directors of the South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre (SEOCHC). At our board meeting, January 26th, the Board passed a Motion supporting the work of *Bilingual Ottawa Bilingue* that promotes the current bilingual status of the City of Ottawa, the Nation's Capital, being enshrined in provincial legislation. We ask you to join ranks with the thousands of citizens, as well as with numerous organizations, who want the City of Ottawa to become officially bilingual during the Canada 150 celebrations this year.

We believe it is important to officially recognize Ottawa's bilingual character in the City of Ottawa Act, 1999. The proposed approach of *Bilingual Ottawa Bilingue* aims to protect the city's existing Bilingualism Policy by incorporating it into its Bilingualism By-Law. This approach will add no extra costs to the city and will ensure the sustainability of French-language services within the City of Ottawa, while recognizing the equal status of both of our official languages in municipal services.

While SEOCHC does not have French Language Services designation, we do ensure that services are available in both official languages. Our commitment to this is guided by our French Language Services Committee (FLS) which is responsible for evaluating, recommending and promoting French services. The Board receives an annual report from the committee. Our funding agreement with the City of Ottawa includes a clause that recognizes and respects the City's bilingualism policy. Making it official would reinforce the importance of this policy. Having an officially bilingual city will be helpful in our collective responsibility and ability to respond to the needs of the members of our diverse francophone community.

We ask you to support the *Bilingual Ottawa Bilingue* proposals and to work towards having this important initiative come to fruition in 2017. I hope you will see this as an opportunity to reaffirm your commitment to the linguistic duality of the Nation's Capital.

Sincerely,



Clinton Cowan, President,
SEOCHC Board of Directors

- c.c. Diane Deans, Councillor Ward 10
- Jean Cloutier, Councillor Ward 16
- Riley Brockington, Councillor Ward 18
- David Chernushenko, Councillor Ward 17
- Bernadette Sarazin, Bilingual Ottawa Bilingue