

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL CENTER (SMHC)

Position on Bill 60

Our Mission

St. Mary's Hospital Center (SMHC) is a McGill University affiliated community hospital, which serves a socio-culturally diverse population. It seeks to provide the highest level of safe patient and family focused care, and also plays a leading role in teaching and research particularly in the areas of clinical epidemiology and community health. St. Mary's is an integral part of the Réseau universitaire intégré de santé (RUIS) McGill.

The Community We Serve

Situated in the heart of Montreal, in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, SMHC serves a community located in the territory covered by two health and social services centres, CSSS Cavendish and CSSS de la Montagne, and its McGill hospital partners, the Jewish General Hospital and the McGill University Health Centre.

With over 340 000 residents, this territory is one of the most populous and culturally diverse of the city and represents 18.3% of its population. Nearly one out of two (43.2%) of its residents is born outside Canada and just over one out of ten (12.3%) is newly arrived in the country. In addition to residents of Vietnamese, Jewish, East Indian, West Indian, Arab, Spanish, Italian, Persian, and other ethnic origins, it has the largest Filipino, Chinese and Romanian communities of the island of Montreal.



Although 59% of people living in the territory are of English or French mother tongue, English remains the language commonly used in everyday life. Nearly one in three (26.5%) still speaks a language other than English or French at home. There are over 70 languages (including dialects) spoken throughout this ethnically diverse community which is served by the dedicated and competent health care teams and volunteers of St. Mary's Hospital Center.

SMHC also serves patients from all across the province of Quebec, and has acquired a reputation of excellent and compassionate care from its close to 90 years of existence. SMHC is also involved in education, training and knowledge exchange on an international level.

Principles and Values

SMHC is a healthcare institution that values and respects gender equality, and religious and sociocultural diversity. SMHC promotes social and cultural inclusion and awareness with respect to the patients, physicians, employees, residents, volunteers and students. Bill 60's proposal to prohibit our medical and hospital staff from wearing visible religious symbols/apparel and to impose other restrictions on the hospital, its staff and its patients is discordant with SMHC's principles of social inclusion, compassionate

care, cultural competence and professionalism. The religious affiliations of our personnel and the wearing of religious clothing and symbols do not interfere with the ability of the medical and hospital staff to provide professional, compassionate, and culturally sensitive care to its patients/community.

Situation

SMHC's ombudsman has not received any complaints related to the spiritual/religious symbols and apparel of our personnel. The religious/spiritual beliefs of our personnel and volunteers do not impede their ability to deliver professional, respectful and courteous services to the patients/community.

Additionally, given that SMHC's personnel are on inter-institutional committees and are cross-appointed at the other McGill network hospitals, SMHC has cultivated an environment that is socially and professionally welcoming, inclusive and collaborative, of our network colleagues.

Cultural Representation



Cultural representation is known to be a key factor in promoting cultural safety in healthcare. When patients, families, and community members see themselves culturally represented among St. Mary's medical and hospital staff, they feel welcomed, and this facilitates the communication and interaction between them. It is also important to note that in addition to sharing many of the same healthcare professionals across our network, SMHC also shares many of the same patients with its network partners.

SMHC in the Context of Bill 60

St. Mary's Hospital Center affirms its values of socio-cultural inclusion, cultural competence, and the cultivation and maintenance of a welcoming environment to all physicians, employees, residents, network colleagues, students and volunteers, where they are free to wear religious symbols. Given that SMHC has been serving a socio-culturally diverse community for many decades, the medical and hospital staff and volunteers have acquired and developed cultural awareness and competence in their commitment to providing high quality and compassionate care to our community. This has been accomplished by having an equally socio-culturally diverse team. SMHC strongly believes that prohibiting overt religious symbols/apparel and imposing the other restrictions set out in Bill 60 will significantly impair its ability to provide safe, compassionate and high quality care to its community and its ability to recruit and retain top-quality physicians, staff and volunteers.

Conclusion

St. Mary's Hospital Center, well established in understanding the needs of its community members for almost 90 years, achieves patient-centred care by being community-centred and culturally-centred. The hospital is proud to have a diverse and dedicated workforce that is reflective of the community it serves. When patients see their socio-cultural diversity and that of their community represented in the diversity of the hospital's work force and volunteers, they feel welcomed, understood and supported. St. Mary's Hospital Center values, practices and promotes a welcoming and socially inclusive environment of cultural

competency, compassionate care, professionalism, and collaboration towards all those who work here and to the community it serves. Bill 60 is incongruent with SMHC's values and principles and SMHC opposes the bill.

December 2013