

# Seniors' homes get certified

PROCESS WILL INCLUDE ALL OLD-AGE RESIDENCES

Provincial government wants to ensure all meet same standards of care and safety

MAX HARROLD  
THE GAZETTE

Imelda Landry loves living at Apple Hill, a seniors home in Baie d'Urfé.

"The food is not what it would be if I were cooking," Landry, 96, said jokingly, "but that's only natural."

Apple Hill's cooking, and the cozy atmosphere it provides for its nine residents, suits Landry to a T, she said.

"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the world."

While publicly funded long-term care facilities fall under government management, until now there have been few government guidelines applied to Quebec's 2,200 private seniors residences, whether they offer an intimate family-like atmosphere and just a handful of rooms or hundreds of rooms and a vast array of activities and services.

So it was with a mixture of surprise and pride that David Morris, co-owner of Villa Kirkwood, a nine-unit seniors residence in Beaconsfield, learned this month that the Kirkwood was one of eight private residences out of 106 such West Island homes - to receive its certification under Quebec's new program to certify private seniors' residences, an ongoing process that seeks to accredit all seniors' residences in the province by next June.

Six of the eight were small facilities, with under 20 rooms each, Morris said. Besides Villa Kirkwood, local residences on the list include Apple Hill, Evergreen Place (Roxboro), Foyer Gagnon (ale Bizard), ML Villa (Beaconsfield) and Résidence Jean Placide Desrosiers (Lachine).

The Maywood Residence in Pointe Claire, with 135 units, and Chateau Pierrefonds, with 63 units, were the only larger West Island facilities on the list announced by local public health officials. A total of 16 of the 307 private seniors homes on Montreal Island made the first cut.

Certification requires private seniors homes to adhere to 26 criteria, including respecting a resident's dignity providing access to community activities,

ensuring hygienic living space, providing enough room for visitors and having a safety plan in case of a fire.

"With just nine residents, we know when someone's not feeling well or if they don't finish their food or don't take their medication," said Morris, a former apartment landlord who bought the Kirkwood 18 months ago.

Prices for private seniors homes generally range from \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month for food, lodging and some services, like laundry and medication distribution, said Morris.

Nearly 2,100 of the province's 2,200 private seniors homes had started the process of certification by Dec. 10, Dominique Breton, a spokesperson for the Quebec Department of Health and Social Services, said. All the facilities must start the process by Feb. 14, 2009, and all must have received certification within four months after that. Fines for non-certified homes could be imposed after June, she said.

Normand Lauzon, manager of the health-care network on Montreal Island for the Quebec department of health, said. "there may be a few of these places that will say 'you know what? Installing sprinkler systems is just not worth it, so I'll just get out of the business.' But I think more than 3(X) (of the 307 on Montreal island) will comply."

He said another 30 residences on the island should soon get government certification.

Over at The Cambridge, a 533-unit complex in Pointe Claire for autonomous seniors, getting certified has hit a few snags, said the facility's director, Ellayne Kaplan.

"It's mostly just paperwork. We've built our complex in phases, and this has made things a bit more complicated. We're finishing up (getting) our fire plan approved."

On the Web: To see which private seniors homes have been certified, visit the Quebec Department of Health's website. The search function is only available in French:

<http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca>