



## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Canadian Disability Groups Demand Public Apology from La Presse

Montréal, Québec, September 8, 2025 - On September 7, 2025, La Presse published a column by Patrick Lagacé mocking fragrance-free policies and trivializing Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), a recognized disability. Three disability advocacy groups — ASEQ-EHAQ (Québec), EHAC-ASEC (Canada), and the Confédération des organismes de personnes handicapées du Québec (COPHAN) — have issued formal letters demanding a retraction and public apology.

#### Key Points:

- MCS is recognized as a disability under Canadian and Québec human rights law, the Accessible Canada Act (2019), and the UN CRPD.
- In March 2025, the UN CRPD reminded Canada that people with MCS have the right to equal protection, accommodation, and accessibility.
- In June 2025, the American Medical Association recognized fragrance sensitivity as potentially limiting major life activities.
- Prevalence: 3.5% of Canadians (over one million people) are diagnosed with MCS.
- Fragrance-free spaces protect not only those with MCS, but also people with asthma, migraines, autism, and chronic conditions.

Michel Gaudet, President of COPHAN adds, “Freedom of the press is vital, but it carries the duty to inform responsibly. This article fosters stigma, discrimination, and real harm. We call on La Presse to retract it and apologize to the Canadians whose lives it endangers.”



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