



ASEQ – EHAQ

Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec –
Environmental Health Association of Québec (ASEQ – EHAQ)

OPEN LETTER TO QUÉBEC MEDIA

Saint-Sauveur, Québec. September 21, 2026

Millions report MCS. Why are their voices still missing from the conversation?

To Québec's journalists, editors, producers and news organizations:

We are asking you to look again at Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). Not because MCS is new. Because the evidence is increasingly difficult to ignore, and the people affected remain largely invisible in public discussion.

Preliminary 2025 Statistics Canada data indicate that **9.4% of Canadian adults report MCS, approximately 3.1 million people. Nearly one in eight women reports MCS.** Approximately 900,000 adults report having been diagnosed. View statistics on MCS [here](#).

These are not marginal numbers. Yet MCS remains largely absent from public discussion. How often do Canadians hear about MCS in the news? How often are people with MCS interviewed about their inability to access healthcare, remain employed, find appropriate housing or enter public spaces? How often is MCS included when we discuss disability and accessibility?

And during an election campaign in which healthcare, housing, affordability and public services are central issues, where are the voices of people with MCS?

There is a story here

Over the past several years, ASEQ-EHAQ and its research partners have been building an increasingly substantial body of Canadian evidence. [Our research](#) has examined healthcare access, accommodation barriers, socioeconomic exclusion, fragrance-free policies, chemical exposures and indoor air quality. Our real-world [indoor air research](#) found approximately **70% lower total volatile organic compound concentrations in workplaces with scent-free policies compared with workplaces without such policies.** New peer-reviewed Canadian research documents barriers to healthcare for people with MCS. Other research documents refusals of accommodation and socioeconomic consequences.

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The evidence is no longer limited to individual accounts.

But behind every statistic is still a person. A person who postpones medical care because the healthcare environment itself presents a barrier. A person who can do their job but cannot remain in a workplace because preventable exposures have not been addressed. A person searching for housing where the air will not make the space inaccessible. A person who asks for accommodation, and may face disbelief, hostility or even retaliation for having asked.

These are disability, healthcare, housing, employment and human-rights stories. They are Québec stories.

We know how difficult it can be to get these stories told

ASEQ-EHAQ has worked for years to bring the realities of MCS into public view.

When we developed [Resilience](#), considerable effort and resources were required simply to help this issue reach a wider audience. Organizations representing marginalized communities should not have to continually struggle to make documented disability barriers newsworthy. And people with MCS should not have to become invisible before their exclusion becomes visible.

Québec is choosing its next government

ASEQ-EHAQ has asked Québec's major political parties to make concrete commitments on MCS. We have also released our **Government Action Priorities for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity — Québec General Election 2026**, setting out nine areas where the next government can take practical action.

At the centre is one overarching commitment:

Recognize Accessible Air as an essential dimension of accessibility in Québec.

Our priorities call for a Québec Action Plan on MCS; accessible healthcare; protection of the right to accommodation and action on retaliation; accessibility and disability law reform; accessible, healthy and affordable housing; government responsibility for Accessible Air and source control; employment and economic participation; better data, research and professional education; and meaningful participation by people with MCS in the decisions that affect them.

These are not abstract demands. They are concrete policy responses to documented barriers.

We are asking political parties a straightforward question: **What will your government do to ensure that Quebecers with MCS can access healthcare, housing, employment, public services and public spaces without facing preventable chemical exposure barriers?**

Now we are asking Québec's media to ask that question too.

[Read ASEQ-EHAQ's Government Action Priorities for MCS](#)

Journalism can make invisible barriers visible

Public policy is shaped in part by what society sees. When an issue is rarely covered, people affected by it can remain outside the political conversation, regardless of how many people are affected or how serious the consequences are.

More than three million Canadian adults report MCS.

They are patients. Workers. Parents. Students. Tenants. Professionals. Caregivers. Voters. They should not be invisible. During this Québec election, we are asking journalists across the province:

- **Look at the evidence.**
- **Talk to the people affected.**
- **Ask the political parties what they will do.**

And when Québec talks about accessibility, **ask whether accessibility includes the air people need to breathe.**

For ASEQ-EHAQ's Québec Election 2026 campaign, including our priorities, research, resources and party responses, visit:

[ASEQ-EHAQ - Québec Election 2026](#)

There is an important story here. And it deserves to be told.

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