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FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC

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The FIQ, a rich past, a strong future!

Lina Bonamie
President

THE FIQ, A RICH PAST A STRONG FUTURE!



Priority actions

P.3

2008:
a year of consolidation
for action and transformation

Group insurance

P.4

Renewal of the
group insurance plans

Negotiations

P.6

Information on the Quebec
and local negotiations

Budget forecast

P.7

Budget forecast to meet
the FIQ's action needs

Before opening the Federal Council, Lina Bonamie, President of the FIQ, took a few moments to present a souvenir gift to delegates, marking the Federation's 20th anniversary.

The President began her address by discussing different political issues on which the Federation has concentrated since the November Federal Council.

She reviewed the decision in favour of the labour organizations rendered by the Quebec Superior Court on Bill 30. This legislation forced the merger of bargaining units in the health and social services network and changed the process of negotiation by decentralizing

26 matters. Ms. Bonamie explained to the delegates that Justice Roy ruled for the plaintiff labour organizations on two arguments: freedom of association and collective bargaining. This judgment recognizes that Bill 30, adopted in haste, flouts union rights. Up to now, Minister Couillard has kept silent, but he has 30 days to appeal this decision. If he abstains, he will then have 18 months to take the necessary steps to comply. The Federation will now take the time to analyze the judgment and all of its implications carefully.

The President also discussed the subject of the *Table nationale du projet de main-d'œuvre pour le réseau de la santé et des services sociaux*, the Quebec table on the workforce project for the health and social services network, established by Minister Couillard. She reminded the delegates that "Minister Couillard's two priorities are overtime and reliance on private agencies", adding that "the small committee on which the FIQ was supposed to sit has turned out to be a big table with many stakeholders". Different labour organizations, professional orders, the MSSS and the *Association québécoise d'établissements de santé et de services sociaux* are

represented at the Table. Francine Girard, Dean of the Faculty of Nursing of the *Université de Montréal*, chairs the Table. This approach causes the Federation to be very skeptical about the results that can be expected from this action. "The FIQ will not put all its eggs in one basket."

Ms. Bonamie then gave a short report on the brief deposited by the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* a few weeks ago. "Other meetings with the OIIQ are scheduled in the weeks ahead to continue the discussions and thus make the necessary adjustments in response to members' interests."

The President informed the delegates about the steps taken by the FIQ regarding the new name chosen by the *Union québécoise des infirmières et infirmiers* (UQII). That organization decided to adopt the name "*Fédération de la santé du Québec (FSQ)*". After making a written request to the FSQ to change its name and not obtaining a response, the FIQ sent it a formal warning. "The goal sought by the Federation is to avoid any confusion," Ms. Bonamie added.

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Violence against women and antifeminism – still a reality

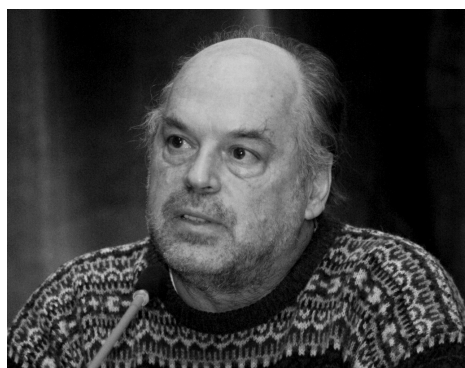
COMMEMORATION OF THE TRAGEDY AT POLYTECHNIQUE

To commemorate the sad events of December 6, 1989, the members of the Status of Women Committee reminded delegates of certain facts: *“On December 6, 1989, at 5:25 p.m., one man murdered 14 women at the École polytechnique de Montréal. His act was a cry of hatred and opposition to the rise of feminism.”*



Despite this tragic event, these deaths were not in vain: solidarity was created between women here and elsewhere, a Gun Registry was established and women increased their denunciations of violence. However, a lot of work still has to be done: we must fight to maintain the Gun Registry, we must continue providing assistance and support to shelters for battered women, particularly in the Aboriginal territories, and we must continue to raise public awareness about violence against women.

After the screening of the film, in which he made several interventions, Martin Dufresne of the *Collectif masculin contre le sexisme* addressed the Federal Council. Following this presentation, many delegates took the floor to express comments and talk about incidents in their workplace.



IN NOMINE PATRIS

Michèle Boisclair, Executive Officer in charge of the Status of Women Sector, presented the film by Myriam Tonelotto and her spouse, Marc Hansmann, *In Nomine Patris*, to the delegates. In a series of interviews with men, this short video denounces the rise of antifeminism and masculinism.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Julie Lejeune, union consultant for the Status of Women Sector, provided the delegates with information on 2008 International Women's Day. The *Collectif 8 mars* has chosen the following theme: *“Women's economic autonomy, a collective force.”*

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THE FIQ, A RICH PAST, A STRONG FUTURE!

To raise public awareness about the perverse effects of privatization of health care, a citizen initiative is under way. Ms. Bonamie invited delegates to visit <www.santesansprofit.org> and sign an online petition. In a similar vein, the President informed them of the presence on the *You Tube* website of the video *“Peux-tu me vendre un service”* by the group *“Les Alarmistes.”* In less than ten minutes,

this film effectively sums up the attacks on public services and the negative impact of privatization on these services.

Finally, Ms. Bonamie sets out the main items on the agenda of this Federal Council. In particular, the priority actions, the latest details on the local and Quebec negotiations and the renewal of the group insurance plans

were presented to delegates. They were also informed of the action plan of the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics* and heard the report on the congress of *Public Services International* held in Vienna last September. On December 6, a few moments were devoted to the commemoration of the tragic events that occurred at *École polytechnique de Montréal* in 1989. ■



2008: A YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION FOR ACTION AND TRANSFORMATION

Suzanne Lavoie, of the FIQ Executive Committee, accompanied by Sylvie Savard, 4th Vice-President, presented the priority actions for 2008 to the delegates. After discussing the internal and external context, Madam Lavoie set out the objectives and actions of the sectors and services, which the Federation intends to carry out to concretize its priorities in 2008. These priorities are consolidation of union life and mobilization of members. The delegates adopted the priority actions by a strong majority.



CARE PROFESSIONALS AT THE CENTRE OF CHANGE

The health-care network is currently going through upheavals on an unprecedented scale. This is not simply a structural reform, but the establishment of a network open to private enterprise. This reform brings new realities: very large-scale institutions (CSSS), new managers, changes of organizational and union cultures, transformations of professional practice arising from the adoption of Bill 90, new professional challenges and changes in the basic requirements to work in certain centres of activity. These changes are sometimes destabilizing and accentuate the difficulties of retaining and attracting care professionals in the health-care network, since they only exacerbate a persistent shortage.

The organization of work and the fight against casualization of positions and privatization continue to be key for the Federation in stemming the shortage and making the profession attractive. Regarding the transformation of professional practice, delegates mandated the FIQ to produce a profile of the roles, duties and responsibilities performed by care professionals since Bill 90 came into force, in view of defining a union position on this question and developing an action plan.

ACTIVE UNIONISM AND CONSOLIDATION OF LOCAL TEAMS

For most FIQ unions, local negotiations will end in the next few months. Although it is too soon for a critical evaluation, we can nonetheless observe that the employers did not succeed in wiping out acquired rights and that most of them finally came to the bargaining table to make agreements with the unions.

The local teams are experiencing organizational difficulties due to all the changes to which they have been subjected. With the creation of the CSSSs, members are dispersed over multiple sites and union leaves are difficult to obtain due to the shortage. However, the current context requires an increase in bargaining power.

In the year ahead, a bitter struggle looms on the horizon to counter the private sectors assaults on public services, and especially on health services. The Federation intends to participate actively in the fight against privatization and make its voice heard on the public scene. The FIQ will also continue the work begun with the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics*, an alliance that is more than necessary in the current context.

The Federation will also redouble its efforts to publicize and defend the solutions it proposes to make the health professions more attractive.

KEY WORDS FOR 2008

To be able to adequately meet the challenges awaiting the Federation, affiliated unions and members, efforts will be made to consolidate and mobilize local teams who are, in many respects, the organization's best spokespersons. Thus, the key words for the year ahead are: vision, education, information, mobilization and quality services to members.

About thirty actions were adopted to meet the objectives the Federation set for itself. These objectives include:

- Give union reps and members an accurate vision of political and union issues.
- Educate local teams on union and political issues.
- Support local union reps in relation to the interventions on the organization of work.
- Counter the neoliberal line.
- Encourage and support mobilization for union activities and social actions.
- Adapt the services to members to better respond to the new local realities.
- Improve members' working and living conditions.



RENEWAL OF THE GROUP INSURANCE PLANS

The executive officer in charge of the Social Security Sector, Monique Leroux, and Francine Tisseur, union consultant for this sector, presented the conditions for the renewal of the group insurance plans for 2008 to delegates. This is the first renewal that reflects the true experience generated by all FIQ members, for all job categories.

The Federation proceeded to analyze the major factors in the current context -- out of the Federation's control -- which play a key role today in determining premium rates. This analysis also affected the negotiation of the renewals based mainly on trend factors (utilisation et inflation) used by the insurer in establishing the adjustment demands. After reading the report, delegates evaluated that, overall, this is a good renewal proposal.



PRESCRIPTION DRUG POLICY

The first factor analyzed is the *Policy on prescription drugs* presented at the beginning of the year by the Minister of Health and Social Services, Philippe Couillard. One of the consequences of this Policy which had a major impact, among others, is the abandonment of the freeze on the cost of prescription drugs. Indeed, pharmaceutical companies did not take long to raise their prices well beyond the limits announced by the Minister. Certain products, currently prescribed, suffered increases that vary between 40% and 79%.

The effects of this policy has already begun to have an impact on the experience of the Federation's drug insurance plan; this renewal is marked by a substantial increase in the premium for this plan. At this level, the FIQ contract does not escape the pressure exerted by various factors that converge towards increased consumption and higher prices.

Moreover, with the exception of the drugs required for the treatment of cancer, the *Policy on prescription drugs* would enable hospital centres to bill hospitalized patients for the cost of drugs administered. Private insurance plans will therefore have to cover these new costs.

THE ARRIVAL OF 13,000 NEW POLICYHOLDERS

Another factor analyzed is the impact of the arrival of 13,000 new policyholders. This massive transfer could have had a major impact on the consumption, use or aging of the group. Although the use of the benefits has increased, the analyses of the Federation indicate that this factor alone has had no significant impact on the experience of the Federation's plans, which is excellent news.

A MODIFICATION OF THE CONTRACT

In response to the will of members who responded to the survey conducted last spring, only one modification was introduced in the Basic Health - Extended Plan III. Thus, starting on January 2008, the criteria for the reimbursement of fees of health professionals, with the exception of the psychologist, will be modified. The admissible fees will be increased from \$20 to \$35 per treatment, but the total yearly reimbursement will remain \$500.

Delegates adopted all the conditions for the renewal of the Federation's group insurance contract, representing a weighted increase of 8.7%, including the requested modification.

TABLE 2 - REVISED RATES¹

PROTECTION	Current rates	Negotiated agreement		Rates on 01/01/2008
Basic Drug insurance²				
Individual	\$23.73			\$27.05
Single-parent	\$30.61		14%	\$34.90
Family	\$55.77			\$63.58
Basic Health Extended Plan III				
Individual	\$4.59	Negotiated agreement	Requested modification	\$5.55
Single-parent	\$4.59	-0,9%	\$0.99	\$5.55
Family	\$9.18		\$1.98	\$11.06
Extended Plan I (Dental Care)				
Individual	\$10.52			\$11.25
Single-parent	\$19.99		6,9%	\$21.37
Family	\$29.46			\$31.49
Extended Plan II				
Basic life insurance and ADD ³	\$0.35/\$5,000		0%	\$0.35/5,000
Additional life insurance and ADD	\$0.087/\$1,000		2,3%	\$0.089/1,000
Life insurance for dependent children	\$0.08		0%	\$0.08
Long-term disability	1,188% of the gross salary		0%	1,188% of the gross salary

Regarding the 2009 insurance contract, the delegation mandated the FIQ to call for tenders from different insurance companies. ■

¹ Rate per 14 days excluding the 9% provincial tax.

² Rate including the employer's contribution, namely \$1.36 for individual coverage and \$3.39 for single-parent or family coverage. For a part-time employee who works less than 70% of a full-time equivalent, the employer's contribution is reduced by 50%.

³ ADD : Accidental death and dismemberment



IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

In the past few months, the spokespersons of the member organizations of the *Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics* (SISP) have agreed to make a habit of inviting a representative of another member organization of the SISP to attend their decision-making bodies. Thus, at the December Federal Council, Réjean Parent, President of the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ), addressed the Federal Council delegates.

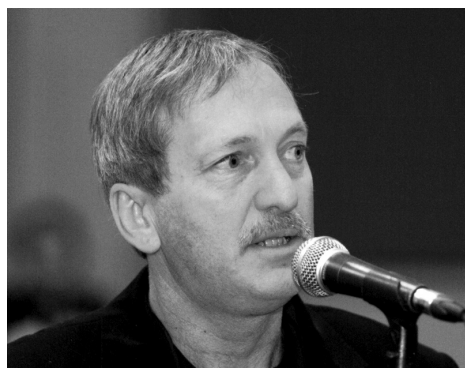


Mr. Parent took the opportunity to remind the delegates of the reasons why the FIQ, the CSQ, the *Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec* (SFPQ), the *Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec* (SPGQ) and the *Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux* (APTS) joined forces in the SISP. "This rapprochement is due to the current environment and the rise of neoliberalism," he explained.

The President of the CSQ deplored the repeated attacks by the Government of Quebec on public services: "One of the best ways to destroy public services is to attack the people who work for them," he outrightly stated. He pointed out that "it's increasingly difficult to find people interested in working to serve the public, because of the deplorable working conditions".

"By joining forces, we strengthen what we are," Mr. Parent continued. The SISP's five member organizations are looking in the same direction, leading to a more just and more equitable society.

In response to some interventions by delegates regarding the type of unionism practiced by the CSQ and their concern about future raiding, Mr. Parent stated that the SISP's union leaders respect each other. Before thanking Mr. Parent, the President of the FIQ indicated that the SISP has quickly taken an important place on the Quebec political and labour playing field.



SISP ACTION PLAN

Michèle Boisclair, Executive Officer in charge of the Health-Care Sector, Guy Drouin, union consultant with the Union Organizing Service and Sandra Gagné, union consultant with the Communication-Information Service, presented the SISP action plan to the Federal Council delegates. This action plan has two main lines, internal and external. Its internal objective is to provide effective explanations to the SISP's member organizations on the issues related to privatization of public services. Its external objective is to provide these explanations to the general public.

PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

Four members of the Federation's Executive Committee, Daniel Gilbert, Lise Martel, Michèle Boisclair and Lina Bonamie, reported to the delegates on their participation last September at the Congress of *Public Services International in Vienna*. In addition to attending different workshops offered by international organizations, the FIQ, as a member of the SISP, had the opportunity to lead a workshop. This workshop dealt with the mobilization and consultation tour on the future of public services in Quebec, which the SISP conducted among its members in a pre-election context.

CHSLD TALKING POINTS

The current government proposes to deinstitutionalize persons with loss of autonomy. To meet this objective, it is closing beds and even entire institutions. In St-Hyacinthe, in the Matapédia Valley and in Montréal, agencies have already begun these closures. To equip local teams and organize resistance to these service cuts, the FIQ has produced a brochure, "Talking Points - CHSLD".

Using a question and answer format, this brochure presents the main issues resulting from the Charest government's choices and suggests some concrete actions, some of which were proposed by the AIM-FIQ to counter the closure of *CHSLD Jacques Viger*. To date, three centres are engaged or have waged a struggle to stay open. *Centre Andrée-Perrault*, attached to *CSSS Richelieu-Yamaska*, was able to remain in operation. *CHSLD Jacques-Viger* is continuing its struggle and believes it can thwart the government's plans. Unfortunately, despite the actions taken by many organizations, the *Pavillon Blouin* of *Centre hospitalier d'Amqui* had to close.

This document can be consulted on the Federation's website at www.fiqsante.qc.ca.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN PUBLIC SPACE

Michèle Boisclair, Executive Officer in charge of the Health-Care Sector and Florence Thomas, union consultant for this sector, presented the preliminary results of the questionnaire on the place of religion in public space, which the Federation prepared in collaboration with the *Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse*. Distributed to 2,000 care professionals, this questionnaire obtained at a 25% response rate, showing members' definite interest in the question.

Based on these results, the FIQ's position is presented in the brief *"Accommodements raisonnables : la nécessité d'aller au-delà des perceptions"* (Reasonable accommodation: the need to go beyond perceptions), presented to the Bouchard-Taylor Commission. ■

INFORMATION ON THE QUEBEC AND LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS

The executive officer in charge of the negotiations, Sylvie Savard, accompanied by Gino Pouliot, coordinator for the negotiations, Francine Roberge, union consultant for the Sector and Guy St-Hilaire, union consultant for the local negotiations, presented a brief report on recent developments regarding negotiations.

PERFUSIONISTS

The job title of perfusionist was not evaluated in the context of pay equity process since it is a “mixed” job title (i.e. it is occupied by women and men equally). To determine the adequate or applicable ranking for this job title and by virtue of Appendix 1 of the decree in lieu of a collective agreement, the FIQ shall proceed to an evaluation

Next January, a joint committee composed of representatives of the FIQ, CSN, FTQ, CSQ, APTS, and of the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* and the *Conseil du trésor* will begin work in view of determining the ranking applicable to this job title.

Visits of institutions in the course of the past year enabled the

Federation to better understand the roles, functions and responsibilities of perfusionists, and draw a portrait of the situation of these professionals.

SENIORITY

For the Federation, it is important that the application of the notion of seniority be as homogenous as possible in order that the seniority of all members be recognized and that it consider their union or professional origin. The notion of seniority related to the date of hiring as defined in the decree in lieu of a collective agreement raises may problems.

In light of this, the delegation mandated the Negotiation Sector to begin talks with the CPNSSS in order that, when entering the FIQ bargaining unit, the last date

of hiring with the employer be considered for the purpose of the calculation of seniority.

LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS

Madam Savard presented a quantitative report on local negotiations to delegates. As of December 5, 2007, 105 agreements were concluded, there were 27 requests for mediation and 26 negotiations were still in progress.

The executive officer stressed that employers were not able to use local negotiations to do away with many union gains for the members of the Federation. Many unions even made significant gains and concluded agreements which were received with great satisfaction by members. ■



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BUDGET FORECAST TO MEET THE FIQ'S ACTION NEEDS

The Treasurer of the Federation, Lise Martel, accompanied by the Executive Director, Suzanne Charrette and Johanne Chouinard, coordinator, presented the budget forecast for 2008. This forecast correspond to all the amounts available to achieve the objectives pursued by the Federation and carry out the resulting actions.

Last year, substantial amounts were allocated to the Negotiation Reserve Fund to support the local negotiations under way in all institutions represented by the FIQ. About one third of these negotiations are not yet completed. Amounts are therefore allocated to ensure enough staff to carry out this operation. Supernumerary positions have been added, mainly in the Labour Relations Sector, but also in the Health-Care, Task and Organization of Work and Occupational Health

and Safety sectors, to carry out the priority actions voted by the delegates. Amounts have also been allotted to support mobilization.

The delegates adopted the 2008 budget forecast and examined the September 30, 2007 financial statements tabled by the Treasurer. The Federation should maintain a balanced budget in 2008. ■



Defending the field of practice

Daniel Gilbert, 2nd Vice-President, accompanied by Paul Chaput, Coordinator, took the Federal Council as an opportunity to reiterate the importance of professional responsibility for all care professionals. He reminded the delegates that they should never tolerate any encroachment by another professional on their field of practice.

The Vice-President repeated that a professional should never, under any consideration, accept that another professional substitute for her in the context of her responsibilities. He also recommended that she denounce all situations where this might occur, so that she does not end up before the Committee on Discipline of her professional order. He emphasized the importance of recording clear notes in a patient's file, since these notes are usually produced as evidence.

This warning follows a decision rendered recently by the Committee on Discipline of the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*, which was very harsh towards FIQ members. The Committee on Discipline did not consider the special context and the role of other professionals in this specific case. In short, the Committee ruled that the members in question were guilty of inaction and negligence, and that they should have intervened, despite the context of practice and the institutional culture that left little room for these professionals. The members also received tougher penalties than the Syndic of the OIIQ had recommended. The Federation will appeal this decision.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF HISTORY!

On December 2, 2007, the FIQ celebrated its 20th anniversary. Thus, the Federation seized the opportunity of the Federal Council to highlight this important moment with the delegation. In order to recollect the important events of the FIQ's history, delegates were invited to an evening of celebration where a special activity awaited them.

Indeed, they participated in an adaptation of the French television quiz *Tous pour Un*. Of course, for the circumstances, the show was re-named *Toutes pour Une*. Who were the three participants? The two former presidents, Diane Lavallée and Jennie Skene, and the current president, Lina Bonamie. Moreover, in order to make this as realistic as possible, the host of the show Francis Reddy was present to ask the questions to the three participants who got the right answers to an impressive number of questions. For example, they were able to answer the following question: on what date did the nurses' strike begin in 1989? The answer: September 5. ■



Illustration : Marie Langlois

