



Vol 23 | No 3 | March 2010
Federal Council
March 15, 16 and 17, 2010

EN ACTION

FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC | www.fiqsante.qc.ca

PRIVATE HEALTHCARE EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES



Over the last few months, the important issues linked to the increasing use of private healthcare employment agencies have been at the heart of the work at the Federation. Daniel Gilbert, 2nd Vice-President, and union consultants from different sectors and services of the organization presented the delegates with a progress report on the issue.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK

The work is moving along and several of the steps in the action plan to counteract the presence of private healthcare employment agencies adopted unanimously in December 2009, have already been fulfilled or are in the process of being. Notably:

- Deployment of a publicity and poster campaign throughout Quebec;
- Distribution of a pamphlet to the public;
- Creation of a Talking Points, a FIQ Special Report and a reference document;

- Repeated public interventions by the president of the FIQ;
- Use of legal recourses;
- Meetings with nursing and cardio-respiratory students;
- Interventions with the various professional corporations, members of Parliament and the health and social services agencies that they formally commit to preserving a public health system for providing care.

The delegation then adopted an additional budget to continue the work in fulfilling the action plan.

A SYMPOSIUM: IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS

On May 28 and 29, a symposium organized by the FIQ will be held at UQÀM in Montreal. This meeting will be another excellent opportunity to discuss the private healthcare employment agencies, the negative effects of their heightened presence in the public health institutions and the solutions to consider for stopping the use of their services. Information will soon be available on the web site of the Federation <www.fiqsante.qc.ca>. ■



POSTE-PUBLICATION
Convention 40007983

(adresse de retour)
FIQ Québec | 1260, boul. Lebourgneuf,
bur. 300, Québec (Québec) G2K 2G2

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

FIQ en Action, vol. 23, n° 3, mach 2010 | Published by the Communication-Information Service after each FIQ Federal Council and Convention meeting | **Distribution:** 58 550 copies | **Creative design:** Nolin | **Graphic layout:** Josée Roy | **Photography:** Jacques Lavallée | **Printing:** Solisco-Caractéra | Reprint of any article or excerpt must indicate "reprint from the publication *FIQ en Action*"
 ISSN 1913-1755 (Print)
 ISSN 1913-1763 (Online)
www.fiqsante.qc.ca | info@fiqsante.qc.ca



THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS ARE A CATASTROPHE

Régine Dhaurest

At the start of the last federal council, there were only 16 days left before the symbolic date of March 31, 2010, when the Decree in lieu of a collective agreement expires. Thus, the negotiations are at a crucial stage. The current context is seething. The media does not stop reporting on the numerous failures in the health system. Who should be held responsible for this chaotic situation? A government which can't seem to grasp an idea that is quite obvious: an efficient public health network is inevitably linked to an offer of decent working conditions for its employees.

ERRATUM

An error appeared on page 10 of the *FIQ Special Report on private Healthcare Employment Agencies*. The contents of the blue box should read:

“An increasing dependency

As the hours worked by independent labour increase, so does the public institutions' dependency on the private healthcare employment agencies. Thus, this dependency aggravates the shortage rather than resolving it.” ■

The government is straining to hide its persistence in weakening the union movement and to rid itself of the social benefits that affect the quality of life of its employees. The survival of the public health network is being threatened. The working conditions of care professionals are more fragile than ever seen before. The situation has become unbearable for the 58,000 members of the FIQ. Their demands are clear: they are urging the Minister of Health to make the necessary corrections to stabilize the situation. The Federation, via its expertise on these matters, has all the tools for presenting solutions that cover the well-being of its members, and also that of the population.

Moreover, many players recognize this expertise: the credibility of the FIQ no longer needs to be demonstrated. It is not surprising that the *Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens* and the *Fédération des médecins spécialistes* wanted to join their voices with that of the FIQ. They recognize that care professionals are an integral part of the solution for the population to have access to a strong health-care system that is accessible to all. The federations of physicians support these demands: these are historical alliances.

The government is not showing any openness, but rather a total lack of responsibility towards its employees.

The current negotiations are a catastrophe. If they really want to tackle the problems of a care professionals shortage, they must stop their attempts at recuperating some of the working conditions.

It is essential to shout loud and clear that the current government has only scorn for its employees and that the Minister of Health shines with inertia. The battles must continue so that satisfactory working conditions be given to the care professionals. Nothing must be forgotten in order to achieve this. As professionals, as women and as citizens, we must speak out and make the population aware of what is happening in the health field. ■

NO TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDEPENDENT LABOUR



A meeting of the steering group on independent labour was held on January 28 and included the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the health and social services agencies, the professional corporations, health institution associations and labour organizations.

At this meeting, the FIQ representatives learned that the Ministry, within its five-year plan, expected to reduce the use of private healthcare employment agencies in the public network by 25%. The FIQ believes that this objective is clearly insufficient and instead demands that the private agencies be completely removed from the public institutions. It has been decided that the participation of the Federation on a committee on independent labour during a negotiations would be ill-advised, even dangerous. Moreover, the FIQ had asked that this committee not be set up. In fact, attention must not be taken away from the negotiating table for the benefit of a working committee which determines weak objectives that are unlikely to really improve the state of the public health network. ■

WILLINGNESS AND POLITICAL COURAGE... FOR BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES



Claude Vaillancourt

The delegates left the presentation by Claude Vaillancourt from ATTAC-Québec on the means that the Liberal and Conservative governments have at their disposal to bail out the State's coffers and adequately finance public services refreshed.

Money for better public services is not what is missing according to Mr. Vaillancourt, Professor of Literature at *Collège André-Grasset* and author of the book, *Mainmise sur les services*. However, the leaders must have the willingness and political courage needed to go get this money, two qualities that seem to be lacking in both Mr. Charest and Mr. Harper.

Claude Vaillancourt, who, today is *secrétaire général de l'Association québécoise pour la taxation des transactions financières* and for action citoyenne, a citizens' movement which came about in France before expanding to more than forty countries, denounced the propoganda campaign fed by the current political leaders and shown *ad nauseam* in certain media.

According to them, the government would be forced to resort to charges for services due to an unfavourable

context: budget deficit, economic crisis, indebtedness, etc.

The methods promoted by the Charest government since its arrival in power are regressive measures in that they contribute to creating social inequalities, to an impoverishment of a significant segment of the population, to a decrease in recourse to essential services and to discouraging any form of social solidarity.

The delegates emphasized the eloquence with which Mr. Vaillancourt demonstrated that a more equitable distribution of the wealth would contribute towards correctly financing public services. Among the ones referred to for doing this are the following:

- Adopt more strict controls on the financial markets in order to reduce the disproportionate power

that the financial world currently holds. It is imperative to take on tax dodging and tax evasion which allows both individuals and businesses to steal money from income tax by skirting the law;

- Force businesses to pay their taxes;
- Resort to progressive measures to tax the rich, instead of impoverishing the people who are already at a disadvantage. Ex. tax capital gains at 100%;
- Fight against corruption;
- Significantly increase the royalties for businesses which get richer by exploiting raw materials. ■

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- By instituting a tax on financial transactions of just ten percent, the State could collect between 200 and 900 billion dollars? This taxation project was supported by many premiers, but Mr. Harper is vehemently opposed to it.
- Canadians invested 45 billion dollars in tax havens in Barbados between 2003 and 2008?

AN EVENTUAL MOTION FOR MEMBERSHIP FOR THE FIQ MEETING WITH THE CFNU

It was in a spirit of openness that the FIQ representatives met the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) and some of the presidents of its affiliated unions in order to discuss the decision-making structures of the CFNU and the political files that they are carrying.

The FIQ shared its concerns on three elements:

- Decision-making process at the CFNU and, more specifically, the importance of having a consensus for all decisions;
- Respect for autonomy and Quebec power regarding all the subjects which come under Quebec's jurisdiction;
- Importance of being able to exchange in a climate of openness.

The FIQ has set up an internal committee which includes the Sociopolitical and Labour Relations Sectors and the Union Organizing Service to advance the work and come to an enlightened decision on joining or not. A consultative committee, composed of the presidents of several of the FIQ affiliated unions, will also be set up in order to find out more about their desire to join the ranks of such a federation. Although the negotiations are the current priority, the FIQ will continue to keep the members informed of the work in this file. ■

STATUS OF WOMEN

A SIGNIFICANT SETBACK IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS



Michèle Boisclair, Martine Éloy, Florence Thomas and Régine Laurent

A SIGNIFICANT SETBACK IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Following their participation at the 54th Commission on the Status of Women at the UNO, Régine Laurent, President of the FIQ, Michèle Boisclair, 1st Vice-President, and Florence Thomas and Martine Éloy, Union Consultants, gave a rather disturbing picture of the evolution of women's rights.

It is very troubling to find out that many countries are facing significant setbacks on women's rights when the objectives of the Beijing Statement should have been achieved since the beginning of the millennium. The FIQ president shared her great surprise regarding certain practices that are still in place in many countries and aimed at keeping women in a constant state of subordination, generation after generation.

However, the leadership of such countries as Sweden should be applauded for questioning the UNO regarding certain unacceptable practices adopted during different missions of the organization which are flagrantly contrary to the values promoted by the member nations. Sweden has demanded that the UNO end the recruitment of personnel for salaries lower than the minimum wage during missions and to stop recruiting personnel who do not belong to labour organizations.

In spite of the team's disappointment regarding the advancement of the Beijing Statement over the last 15 years, Michèle Boisclair emphasized the importance of the NGO's and the unions being present to influence the States.

The Status of Women heading on the FIQ web site remains a key spot to consult the detailed summary of this meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women <www.fiqsante.qc.ca>. ■

HAÏTI SOLIDARITY

Lise Martel, Treasurer of the FIQ, revealed the amount the solidarity impetus of the members of the Federation gathered up to today, for the purpose of helping the Haitian people affected by the earthquake of January 12. As of March 17, 2010, the donations from FIQ members and employees has reached \$46,931.56. The Federation invites the unions that have not yet contributed to make their donation over the next few weeks so that the initial objective of one dollar per member be attained.

ADOPTION OF THE FIQ NEW SOLIDARITY PRACTICES PROGRAMME



Michèle Boisclair and Karine Crépeau

Michèle Boisclair, 1st Vice-President and Karine Crépeau, Union Consultant in the Sociopolitical Sector, presented the delegates with the FIQ New Solidarity Practices Programme, developed with the idea of broadening the Federation's field of intervention and to diversify its approach to international solidarity.

The objectives and the ideas for implementing this programme were well received by the delegates. This programme will be put into operation over a period of five years, in particular to continue researching partnerships with the Quebec and Canadian international cooperation organizations. The programme will take on the following form:

- Information and education in international solidarity in order to sensitize the delegates to the realities experienced by workers

in the Southern countries and to the economic, political and union situation that prevails in these countries;

- International solidarity internships in order to sensitize the FIQ union reps and employees to the realities experienced by communities in Southern countries;

- Financial support for short and long term solidarity strengthening projects;

- Political actions determined by current events;

- Special projects which allow the offer of ad hoc financial support in various situations.

The comments from the delegates were a sign that there will be strong participation in the programme. ■

RESOUNDING SUCCESS OF THE WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN

In the absence of Alexa Conradi, *President of the Fédération des femmes du Québec*, it was Martine Éloy, Union Consultant for the Status of Women Sector, who gave an account of the success of the various regional and national demonstrations organized for this event.

On March 8 in Montreal, all of *complexe Desjardins* came to a standstill when the women circulating through it froze on the spot for three long minutes to symbolize what a world without women would mean.

Detailed information on the activities scheduled between October 12 and 17, 2010 is available on the Federation web site <www.fiqsante.qc.ca>. It has been decided that each day will correspond to one of the Quebec demands.

October 12:

Work of women: women's economic independence

October 13:

Common good and access to resources

October 14:

Violence against women as a tool to control women's bodies

October 15:

Peace and de-militarization

October 16:

Rights of indigenous women. ■

NEXT YOUTH NETWORK

Fortified by the success of their first Network meeting in October, the young members proudly revealed the date of the next gathering: May 26 and 27, 2010. Other details will soon be available on the Federation website under the heading of Youth Committee <www.fiqsante.qc.ca>. ■

PREVENTION PAYS OFF

Élaine Trottier, Executive Officer in charge of the Occupational Health and Safety Sector, joined by Hélène Caron and Roxanne Michaud, Union Consultants, presented the delegation with the brief on the Québec occupational health and safety plan. On March 1, this brief was presented to the members of the work group created by the *Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail*.

According to the FIQ, an improvement in the plan inevitably goes through an updating of these preventive and compensation laws as well as by concrete actions mainly focused on the prevention of employment injuries. It is time that Quebec workplaces concentrate their energy and efforts on the development of a culture of prevention of health, safety and integrity of workers, on both the physical and psychological level. The employers, obsessed with the absolute reduction in the costs of employment injuries, must finally realize that prevention pays off.

Among the concrete actions that the FIQ recommends be implemented are:

- Adoption of a modern and parity approach to an integrated participative management in regards prevention;
- Mandatory parity preventive mechanisms in all institutions;
- Implementation of a strategic prevention process for psychological health problems at work;
- Employers obliged to identify the psychosocial risks that can be present in their institutions in order to see to their elimination.

It is high time that the Health and Social Services sector be recognized, by government decree, as being a priority group subject to all the legislative and regulatory provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Within the framework of the brief presented, the FIQ requested that the work group and the CSST make a formal recommendation to the Quebec government, in spite of the management position oriented towards minimum regulations and maximum reduction of costs at the expense of the optimization of the health and safety of the workers in the sector. ■



MOVING ON

The Federation took advantage of the last Federal Council to mark the retirement of two people who have done a lot for the organization. That the future be filled with daily luck, health and pleasures. Thank you for all your commitment.

1. Johanne Chouinard, Coordinator 2. Clément Lincourt, Union Consultant

THE FIQ SUPPORTS THE MEDIA WORKERS AT THE *JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL*



Raynald Leblanc

The president of the *Syndicat des travailleurs de l'information du Journal de Montréal*, Raynald Leblanc, addressed the Federation delegates to inform them of the state of the work conflict which has been paralyzing his organization for more than 13 months.

The FIQ used the presence and intervention of Mr. Leblanc to reassert its support of the 253 locked out workers of the *Journal de Montréal* as well as of their union which is trying to revive the talks with the employer by any means, but to no avail.

The Federation repeats its request to the members to boycott the *Journal de Montréal* and to do whatever it takes so that this paper does not circulate in their workplace. Also, the FIQ is encouraging care professionals to sign the petition demanding that the government uses all means at its disposal so that the parties can come to a satisfactory negotiated agreement. The petition can be signed at <www.mesopinions.com>, dans la catégorie « Politique ». ■

ELECTIONS

During the Federal Council, the delegation elected some of its members to various committees or teams. Here are the results:

- Marie-Claude Ouellet, from CSSS Pierre-De Saurel, was elected as president of the Election Committee;
- Luc St-Laurent, from CSSS Rimouski-Neigette, was elected as a substitute on the FIQ Information and Support team;
- Caroline Flageol, from CHUM, was elected as a FIQ regional representative for information and support for the grouped regions of Montreal/Laval/Lanaudière/Laurentians.

The position of FIQ regional representative for information and support remains vacant for the Outaouais region.

MAY 1 QUEBEC DEMONSTRATION

Within the framework of International Workers Day, FIQ members are invited to demonstrate under the theme “*Un Québec équitable*”. For the Montreal area, the demonstration will have the air of a family party and will take place on Saturday, May 1, 2010 in the southwest section of the city. The gathering is scheduled for noon at the Lionel-Groulx metro station and the march sets off at 1 p.m. Contact the coalitions for May 1 or your local union team if you want details on activities in other regions.

FÊTE INTERNATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEUSES ET DES TRAVAILLEURS

POUR UN QUÉBEC ÉQUITABLE

- Un système de santé public gratuit et universel
- Un réseau public d'éducation accessible et de qualité
- Des conditions de travail décentes pour toutes et tous
- L'accès à la syndicalisation et à une libre négociation
- De vraies mesures pour contrer la pauvreté
- Pour la sauvegarde des services publics, non à toute forme de privatisation

2010 **mai**

NEGOTIATIONS



DECISIONS MUST BE MADE NOW!



The Charest government is pushing the limits to the absurd in wanting to cut the already fragile working conditions of care professionals.

However, this government has erred with its over confidence and has grossly under estimated the strength, unity and determination of the FIQ members. It has also under estimated the desire of the population to preserve and to reinforce public services.

This correlation between the working conditions offered to employees and the very survival of public services has progressively taken shape in the collective imagination to the great displeasure of this government which is clearly on the payroll of the

private sector. Therefore it is easy to understand why Minister Bolduc refuses to publicly comment on the behaviour of his representatives at the negotiating table. He has no interest in the working conditions of his employees becoming an issue for society.

Yet, there is no longer a choice. The population is very aware that a *status quo*, or worse, another demand of concessions would be equivalent to working conditions that are practically inhuman for the care professionals who are their friends,

neighbours, sisters. That would also be equivalent to accepting a significant reduction in the quality and safety of the care provided. From now on, it is dangerous for the Minister of Health to invoke the professional Code of Ethics because the population understands that slavery is illegal in 2010.

The government is demanding 5 years... but to have results in 5 years, decisions must be made today! ■

AN IRATE DELEGATION

Although things have evolved little since the last federal council, the coordination team of Sylvie Savard, Ginette Raymond, Francine Savard and Serge Prévost, presented the delegation with a progress report on the negotiations. The inertia of the management representatives at the negotiating tables moreover, caused anger to spread among the delegates and led to that adoption of the following motions:

- That from now to March 31, 2010, which is the deadline provided in the strategic framework, the negotiating committee intensify the negotiating process in order to have a negotiated settlement;
- That the negotiating committee activate the mediation process at the appropriate time;
- That the FIQ Executive Committee convene a Special Federal Council on March 29 and 30 in order to adopt an essential services policy. ■

INTERSECTORIAL TABLE

The following table presents the progress of the work on certain significant subjects.

Remuneration	No change for the union party, the offer is clearly insufficient.
Retirement	A few steps have been made, but none of the big issues are settled. The union party disagrees with the abolishment of the bank of 90 days, the introduction of a minimum age of 55 as a criteria of eligibility for a pension without actuarial reduction of 35 years of service and, also with an increase in the actuarial reduction that the <i>Conseil du trésor</i> goes too far in demanding.
Parental rights	A parity technical committee of 8 people has been set up. This committee submitted a report to the central table on March 2, 2010 containing all of its findings and recommendations. Discussions must continue.
Organization of work	The union party disagrees with the approach that has, as a priority, the reduction of labour costs.
Maintaining pay equity	The union party reasserts that this subject should not be part of negotiations. A committee has been set up and the first meeting was held on March 19, 2010 as an interunion meeting.
Duration of the collective agreement	The management party is demanding that the duration of the collective agreement be 5 years. The union party is of the opinion that nothing in the current context makes it in their interest to sign an agreement for 5 years.

NEGOTIATIONS

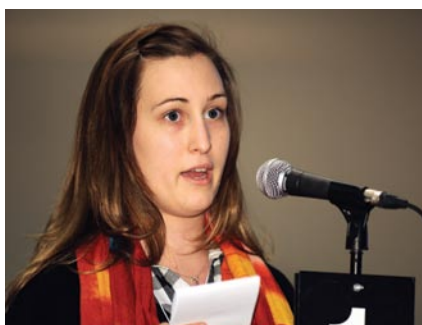
**THE FIQ,
A STRONG VOICE,
ACTIONS THAT COUNT**



SECTORIAL TABLE

The management party repeats that recuperation within the working conditions is inevitable. Thus, for the time being, it is proving impossible to get satisfactory answers from them, and this, on several subjects.

Evening, night and weekend premiums	The union party indicated its disagreement with evaluating the pertinence of these premiums.
Remuneration at double time for certain statutory holidays (Christmas and New Year's)	The management party refuses to pay double time unless the employee must be at work the day before or following the statutory holiday.
Recognition of postgraduate training in nursing or related to the profession	The management party categorically refuses to grant additional remuneration if the training is not required by the employer. It even is demanding to eliminate the automatic recognition of the Bachelor's Degree in community health.
Statutory holiday during a period of disability	The union party is demanding that the employee can postpone a scheduled statutory or compensatory holiday during an absence due to disability. The management party is questioning this demand because it requires a replacement.
Arrangement of work time	The management party maintains that the arrangement of work time project does not meet the needs of the network. They also think that there is no attraction and retention issue for the day shift, thus the evening and night shift must be targeted.
Allocation of benefits such as vacation and statutory holidays	The management party is questioning these benefits in order to increase the availability of personnel.
Overtime	The management party is challenging the definition of overtime in order to reduce costs.
Sick days	The management party is challenging the number of sick days provided in the sick-day bank.
Salary insurance	The management party is challenging the percentage of the salary insurance benefit.



Pressure must continue to be applied, whatever the cost, in order to reach a satisfactory agreement as quickly as possible. The members of the FIQ must use all the power that rests within their hands. ■

The situation may have changed at the time you are reading this.



If you prefer to consult the electronic version of our publications, send a request to info@fiqsante.qc.ca