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Special Federal Council  
of November 1 and 2, 2010

# ENACTION

FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC | [www.fiqsante.qc.ca](http://www.fiqsante.qc.ca)



## THE MEMBERS MUST FIGHT!

The healthcare professionals have always known that their adversary was tough, but they now realize just how obstinate they are. Evidently, they are guided by their neoliberal approach and they support an economic model focused on a maximisation of profits, to the detriment of human beings and a social contract founded on collective solidarity. Thus, they seem to be trying to obtain flexibility in the collective agreements in order to pave the way for the private sector.

Whether supporting PPP projects, the development of intermediate resources, a reliance on private healthcare placement agencies or the signature of agreements for surgical procedures to be performed in private clinics, the only goals of these choices are to offer business opportunities to the private sector. Thus, there are repercussions on the daily lives of healthcare professionals by increasing, among others, the exodus to the private agencies.

It is obvious to the delegates at the Federal Council that an agreement in principle will not be offered to the members of the Federation on a silver platter. Therefore, they reasserted their determination to fight! In fact, two

months after the negotiations started up again, and in spite of shared common goals and despite some progress, there are few indications to believe that the government is interested in or wants to conclude a negotiated settlement in the short term, based on the FIQ demands.

The Minister of Health and Premier Charest have still not made any public announcements on the healthcare professionals' file. However, the state of the network is regularly disparaged publicly and more than 126,000 people and 650 agencies have demonstrated their support for the FIQ by signing a petition that was tabled in the National Assembly. Things must change!

In the circumstances, the delegates of the Federation have asked the coordinating team for the negotiations to stop the meetings with the *Comité patronal de négociation* until the government demonstrates a real and credible willingness to offer better working conditions to the healthcare professionals. During this time, increased participation of the FIQ members is vital. More than ever, they must locally denounce their employers and everyone must understand that the smallest of actions, if repeated by all the healthcare professionals, will have considerable impact on the decision-makers. ■

### PRESSURE TACTICS ARE INTENSIFYING

At the Special Federal Council, the delegates updated and adopted an action and mobilization plan. These actions are aimed at increasing local pressure in order that the government finally understand that the healthcare professionals are more than ever determined to obtain a satisfactory negotiated settlement.

The different actions used to date, whether the wearing of the black T-shirt, masking ID badges or stopping the production of statistics appear at first to be mildly disruptive, but they become very significant if all the healthcare professionals put them into practice. It is imperative that pressure be exerted locally and, especially to be visible!



### MOBILIZATION ACTIONS

#### Until a settlement:

- Stop producing statistical data
- Ban the dress code by continuing black Wednesdays and by using their imagination for the other days
- Form regional squads in order to carry out "surprise" actions at MNA's public events
- Mask employee ID badges with a card "I'm nothing but a number to the Charest government"
- Wear a distinctive sign during accreditation visits
- Continue the process of identifying strike-breakers
- Public denunciations of aberrations seen in the institutions
- Have all members sign bank preauthorized payment forms for union dues

#### November:

Operation over a 5-day period: no employee performs her duties outside the hours scheduled to work. All time worked beyond the schedule must be claimed at time and one-half. This operation can be repeated at a time deemed appropriate

#### At a time deemed appropriate:

- Operation "Penal Complaint"
- Strike vote

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NEGOTIATION

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## DECEPTION AND RAGE OF THE DELEGATES

Helped along by the intervention of Madam Courchesne last September, the return to the bargaining table took place at a pace of two to three meetings per week. The arrival of an observer appointed by the president of the *Conseil du trésor* and a change in the management spokesperson led us to believe there was a turning point in this negotiation.

With the hope of reaching a negotiated settlement before the end of October, the parties agreed to remain discrete in public and not to reveal what was happening at the bargaining table. Despite this, an announcement of a possible agreement in principle made the headlines, because of a media leak. So, it was on a positive note that the delegation arrived at the special federal council of November 1 and 2.

During the presentation of the progress report on the negotiations, the delegates quickly grasped reality: deception and rage were palpable in the room. In fact, in spite of some progress, the general result remains very disappointing and the heart of the priorities are still in dispute.



Members of Canadian health sector labour organizations have signed their respective flags to express their solidarity with the FIQ healthcare professionals.

### THE PROGRESS...

In terms of progress, we can mention, in particular:

- the reclassification of all nurses who hold a Bachelor's of Nursing in the job title of nurse clinician, whether they hold a position or not; (this exercise is carried out only once, at a time mutually agreed to between the parties);
- the possibility for licensed practical nurses with additional training to move up in the salary scale;
- maintaining experience when integrated into the salary scale for all employees promoted to certain job titles (nurse team leader, respiratory therapist clinical instructor, technical coordinator, licensed practical nurse team leader);
- the continued payment, by the management party, of the costs linked to the resource person used by the Committee on Care;
- the end of the obligation for an employee, victim of violence or harassment, to have to choose between filing a complaint in accordance with the local policy on harassment or the filing of a grievance.

According to the management party, the upgrading of part-time positions to 5 shifts per 14 days must be accompanied by the reopening of a multitude of clauses in the local collective agreements in order to promote flexibility and versatility in management. The reduction in the use of private healthcare placement agencies demanded by the FIQ is also added to these same restrictions.

Also found at the heart of the disputes:

- the remuneration of overtime for nurse clinicians;
- the compensation for employees who are available during their meal periods;
- the payment of the instructor premium for employees who orient personnel.

Despite the fact that the parties have agreed on the percentage of increase for the evening, night and critical care premiums, a disagreement persists on the demand that employees must offer additional availability to be entitled to these premiums. In fact, the Federation insists on the fact that the premiums serve to compensate for the inconveniences and the responsibilities linked to the practice of the profession. By adding the obligation of availability to it, the reason for being of these premiums is being distorted.

Far from wanting to end the negotiations with a signed collective agreement, the government hopes to introduce the concept of permanent negotiations, notably by continuing the work through various committees, and this, throughout the duration of the collective agreement. Unfortunately, a number of differences of opinion remain between the parties and there is still a lot of work to do before an agreement in principle is reached. ■

### “Au-delà des mots”

In collaboration with two of her colleagues over the last 20 months, Sarah Bachand, from the CSSS de Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle, has worked on writing a book on perinatal mourning, “Au-delà des mots” (Beyond Words). In order to promote the publication of her book, reduce the sales price and to allow families in mourning to receive copies, the delegates collected \$725. The Federation also wanted to contribute to this extraordinary project by giving \$500. The book should appear in print this winter. Donations are collected through the *Fondation de l'Hôpital LaSalle* at 514-362-8000 ext 31584.

### THE DISPUTES...

In spite of the many discussions on the subject, arrangement of work time remains one of the priorities where very little progress has been made. The management party is maintaining its position of offering an arrangement to only some employees, as long as there is no reduction in the workweek. The FIQ is demanding a more accessible arrangement.

The Federation is demanding:

- sufficient upgrading of part-time positions;
- recognition of work done by all employees before and after the shift (overlapping of shifts).



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