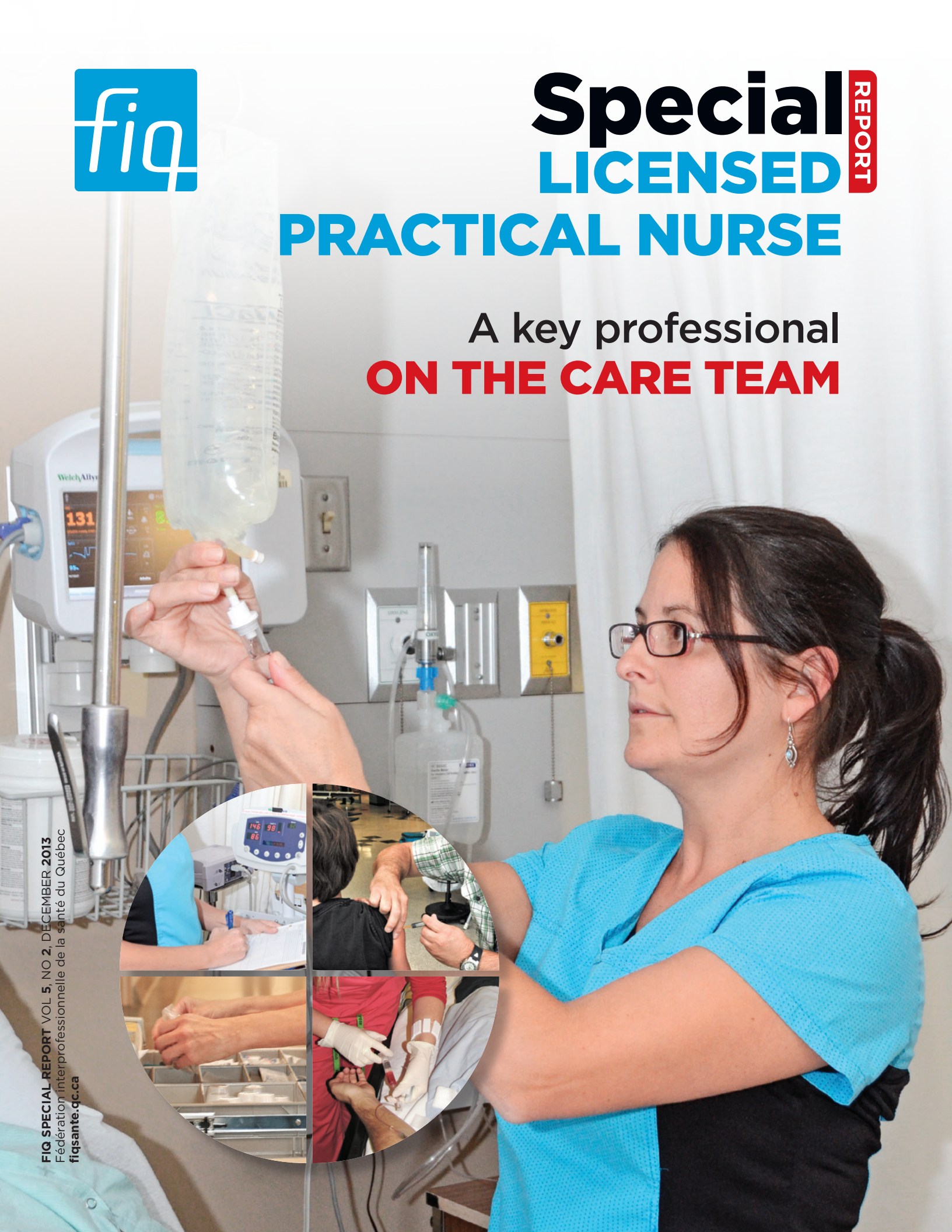




Special **REPORT** LICENSED

PRACTICAL NURSE

A key professional
ON THE CARE TEAM



Special LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE

REPORT

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A key professional ON THE CARE TEAM



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Better understanding of the licensed practical nurse profession and its role on the care teams

The FIQ has more than 15,000 licensed practical nurses, 74% of whom are women. In total, the Federation has more than 62,000 nurse, licensed practical nurse, respiratory therapist and perfusionist members. As the largest labour organization with nursing and cardio-respiratory professionals exclusively, the Federation is well aware of the issues affecting their living and working conditions.

The licensed practical nurse profession has been enriched over the last few years with an expansion of the tasks and the areas of practice, linked to the new activities that became accessible through regulations and Bill 90. However, the FIQ finds that, still today, the information on the role, tasks, duties and responsibilities of licensed practical nurses has still not gotten through in certain institutions, even 10 years after Bill 90 went into force.

Unfortunately, this situation limits their professional practice. The licensed practical nurses are however, key professionals on the care team because their close role with the patients contributes greatly to the humanization of care. It is for this reason that the FIQ vigorously defended the professional aspect of the licensed practical nurses' work in the context of the pay equity exercise that was concluded in 2006.

The success of an effective care team inevitably requires inter-professional collaboration and knowledge of the field of practice and responsibilities of every

member on the team. The Federation continues to promote the important contribution of the licensed practical nurses in the quality, continuity and access to care for the patients.

Recently, the licensed practical nurse union representatives wanted to have a place to discuss their professional reality, this is why an ad hoc advisory committee was created. The work started by this committee is constructive and will contribute, I am sure, to the development of this profession which is still sometimes misunderstood. I want to commend the commitment of these union representatives and their determination to have their expertise recognized more.

The Federation intervenes with various bodies, at all levels, to have the licensed practical nurse profession recognized, but the mobilization of the members at the local level is also necessary to get the administrators in the health network involved. The licensed practical nurses must invest in the various areas of influence, with the help of their local union team, in order to fully occupy their field of practice in their institution.



Régine Laurent, President

Together to promote our profession



The tasks of the licensed practical nurses are not currently standardized in some health institutions and their practice could be taken another step further if all the activities to which they have access through regulations and within the framework of Bill 90¹ were given to them.

An *ad hoc* committee composed of nine licensed practical nurse union representatives was set up at the FIQ in April 2013 to identify courses of action to better meet the professional concerns of the licensed practical nurses, in particular regarding their recognition. For several licensed practical nurses, the particularities of their field of practice and the role that they play on the care team has to be re-enriched.

Following a call to mobilize from the members of the *ad hoc* committee, a good number of licensed practical nurse union representatives mobilized at the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec* (OIIAQ) general assembly in June 2013. They demanded that the latter act with all the decision-makers in the health network to demand better standardization and integration of their reserved activities. They also reminded the Order, like the FIQ, of the importance of continuing to insist on the necessity of their participation on the interministerial-partners committee on the initial training of nurses in order that the impacts on all healthcare professionals of a possible upgrade in the standard of admission to the nursing profession are evaluated.

The *ad hoc* licensed practical nurses committee is presently working on other actions to heighten the recognition of the professional competencies of licensed practical nurses and thus insure them a more satisfying professional practice in the different practice settings that they work in.

This special publication falls within the framework of the committee's work and aims to promote the licensed practical nurse profession in its entirety and its crucial role on the care team. I think a good start to this is for every licensed practical nurse professional to insist on the importance of being identified by her full professional title in her workplace: licensed practical nurse.

Linda Bouchard

Linda Bouchard, Licensed Practical Nurse Vice-President

The FIQ licensed practical nurse vice-president and political officer of the *ad hoc* licensed practical nurses committee, Linda Bouchard (centre), surrounded by the members of the committee, Katherine Lambert, CSSS Alphonse-Desjardins, Sylvain Allard, CSSS Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle, Sonia Mancier, Vigi Santé Montérégie, Guillaume Carette, CHUS, Lynda Lessard, CSSS de la Vieille-Capitale, Isabelle Hall, CSSS de la Haute-Côte-Nord-Manicougan, Carole Grant, CHUM and Sandra Chiasson, CSSS Domaine-du-Roy. Absent from the photo: Nicole Boisvert, CSSS Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke



1. Act amending the Professional Code and other legislative provisions as regards the health sector.

The importance of licensed practical nurses workforce planning

The contribution of licensed practical nurses on the care team is indispensable and the FIQ intends to continue demanding appropriate licensed practical nurse workforce planning from the decision-makers.

The licensed practical nurse profession is in a state of growth today, the numbers of the OIIAQ having increased by 35% between 2002 and 2012². Despite this, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) projects a workforce deficit of licensed practical nurses of possibly 303 for 2013-2014, increasing up to 2,486 licensed practical nurses for 2017-2018³. Licensed practical nurses, who regularly work at the patients' bedsides, are key contributors to the humanization of care.

The recurrent workforce shortage on the care teams remains an important issue for the FIQ. The Federation continues to defend the planning of a sustainable and adequate workforce with the decision-makers that takes into account all the members of the care teams. Such a process covering the forecasting of the workforce availability and needs of the network and the staffing of the health institutions with qualified personnel that can perform the activities and respond to the needs of the population, is urgently needed.

The FIQ finds that good workforce planning is a decisive factor in the daily organization of work and that it is, on the local, regional and provincial level, one of the major tools for making it possible for the healthcare professionals to fully assume their role and to promote access to quality health care for Quebecers.

A practice to develop, skills and competencies to promote

Field of practice

The field of practice for licensed practical nurses, under the Professional Code, consists of participating in the assessment of a person's state of health and the carrying out of a care plan, providing nursing and medical care and treatment to maintain or restore health and prevent illness and providing palliative care⁴. This field of practice allows licensed practical nurses to develop a practice focused on the relationship with the patients and on the quality of the care.

A full and complete appropriation of the licensed practical nurse's field of practice is critical for the organization of work plan. This is also the case for the field of practice for every professional that is a member of the care team. In fact, each one of the healthcare professionals plays an instrumental and complementary role in offering quality care and services to the Québec population. The recognition and optimum use of everyone's skills are important in order to insure the continuity of care and to promote good interprofessional collaboration.

2. OIIAQ. *Rapport annuel 2002-2003* and *Rapport annuel 2011-2012 - Développer mes compétences pour mieux soigner*.

3. MSSS, (September 2012). *Portrait de la main-d'œuvre infirmière auxiliaire*. Direction de l'analyse et du soutien informationnel.

4. *Professional Code*, R.S.Q., Chapter C-26, Article 37 p).

Reserved activities

The licensed practical nurses have grown to play new roles in the more diverse fields of practice over the last few years, among others, since Bill 90⁵ came into force in 2003. This legislation introduced the following nine reserved activities to the practice of the licensed practical nurse profession.

- 1** Apply invasive measures for the maintenance of therapeutic equipment.
- 2** Take specimens, according to a prescription.
- 3** Provide care and treatment for wounds and alterations of the skin and teguments, according to a prescription or a nursing care plan.
- 4** Observe the state of consciousness of a person and monitor neurological signs.
- 5** Mix substances to complete the preparation of a medication, according to a prescription.
- 6** Administer prescribed medications or other prescribed substances via routes other than the intravenous route.
- 7** Participate in vaccination operations under the Public Health Act.
- 8** Introduce an instrument or a finger, according to a prescription, beyond the nasal vestibule, labia majora, urinary meatus or anal margin or into an artificial opening in the human body.
- 9** Introduce an instrument, according to a prescription into a peripheral vein in order to take a specimen, providing a training certificate has been issued to the member by the Order pursuant to a regulation under paragraph o of article 94⁶.

The objective of these reserved activities is to allow the licensed practical nurses to fully assume their field of practice in complete autonomy and to better meet the needs of the patients and the reality of the health network. The changes brought by Bill 90 have contributed to expanding and enhancing the practice and to recognizing licensed practical nurses more as professionals who are full members of the care team.

5. To find out more about Bill 90:
www.fiqsante.qc.ca/publicfiles/documents/ot_0903_impacts-de-la-loi-90_ang.pdf

6. *Professional Code, S.R.Q., Chapter C-26, Article 37.1, 5°.*



The FIQ finds that in certain care settings, the employers do not set up the necessary measures that will allow the licensed practical nurses to fully perform their reserved activities and those through regulations. It is the employers' responsibility to see to the application of Bill 90 and its objectives of insuring better continuity of care and more effective collaboration between professionals in order to better respond to the patients' needs. The Federation is continuing the struggle for better recognition of the role of the licensed practical nurse and the development of an enhanced professional practice.

Activities opened up through regulations

The passing of regulations, particularly those in 2008 to 2013, has allowed licensed practical nurses to perform authorized activities and to increase their contribution to carrying out the care plan. The first, the Regulation respecting certain professional activities which may be engaged in by nursing assistants (LPN), governs different professional activities, in line with the maintenance care of a tracheostomy connected to a ventilator and participation in intravenous therapy, that can be carried out by licensed practical nurses when they hold an attestation of the necessary training, according to certain conditions of practice⁷.

To date, the training related to this regulation has not covered all the licensed practical nurses, but it has been made available though, to those for whom these activities are a priority in their practice, especially in short-term care. About half the licensed practical nurses, including the students entering the profession, have already been trained⁸ to participate in intravenous therapy.

As for the second regulation, the Regulation respecting certain professional activities that may be engaged in orthopedics by persons other than physicians, it allows licensed practical nurses to perform different professional activities linked to applying a cast, splints and orthopedic appliances and ambulatory devices, under certain conditions of practice⁹ and training.

These two regulations have also contributed to the enhancement of the practice started with Bill 90. The Federation is closely following the professional regulation for licensed practical nurses and the way the profession will continue to evolve and play its role in the healthcare system.

The FIQ believes that in order to facilitate an understanding of the role of the licensed practical nurse and its importance in the health network, as well as to promote the full and complete use of its field of practice, broader access to the training necessary for carrying out the different professional activities that are available to the licensed practical nurses must remain a priority for the administrators. Although the FIQ continues to defend appropriate human resources development, the licensed practical nurses must also demand it in their institutions with the support of their local union team.

Practice settings

Licensed practical nurses practise in more and more varied sectors of activities such as home support services, the operating room, hemodialysis, geriatrics, pediatrics and emergency. In Québec, the guidelines written jointly by the professional orders govern the practice of licensed practical nurses more in the operating room, for both the scrub technician and the circulating nurse. There is also a Canadian trend towards diversification in their practice settings, to acute care, long-term care, community health, the operating room, the emergency department or home care, among others.

The presence of licensed practical nurses in these practice settings concretely contributes to the development of the profession. They are an integral part of the care team and collaborate on it in different ways, whether on the multidisciplinary teams, in diads, in an interdisciplinary practice, etc. They are key contributors with the patients.

7. OIIAQ (2011). "Professional Activities of Licensed Practical Nurses". [Online]. [www.oiaq.org/en/issues/1/professional-activities-of-licensed-practical-nurses.pdf] (September 24, 2013)

8. 13 093 sur 26 935 membres de l'OIIAQ au total. OIIAQ (2013). « Rapport annuel 2012-2013 », [Online]. [http://www.oiaq.org/documents/file/rapports_annuels/ra-12-13-web-final.pdf] (September 24, 2013)

9. Gazette officielle du Québec (September 11, 2013) Regulation respecting certain professional activities that may be engaged in orthopedics by persons other than physicians.

Licensed Practical nurses attest to their enhanced practice

The FIQ Special Report wants to introduce you to licensed practical nurses who are able to practice all the reserved and regulated activities relevant to their centre of activities. They are even able to give an account of the positive impacts on their work and on the care given to the patients. This is concrete proof that the licensed practical nurses are professionals whose knowledge and skills significantly contribute to the delivery of quality health care in various workplaces. These expanded practices need to be promoted at the local level.



Photo: Josée Roy

“ In my centre of activities, all the members of the care team have a place and collaborate to give quality care to the patients. There is good communication here between us, everyone knows the role and field of practice of each person and is able to contribute to the care. I can therefore participate in the assessment of the patients' state of health.

Among other things, I administer medications, I apply dressings, I participate in vaccinations, I observe the state of consciousness of the patients and I maintain the various equipment according to the therapeutic nursing plan and the orders. The challenge of the clientele in long-term care today is interesting. I like my work that allows me to develop a long-term connection with my patients and to insure continuity in their care. For me, a licensed practical nurse has a great role, treating human beings. ”

*Brigitte Beaudoin, Licensed Practical Nurse,
Centre d'hébergement Christ-Roi, CSSS de la Vieille-Capitale*

“ I like being in Emergency and working with ambulatory clients because I can carry out all the reserved activities in Bill 90, according to the patients' needs. More specifically, I administer medications, I take various specimens, I insert nasogastric tubes, I participate in vaccinations and I take vital signs. I am also asked to insert intravenous catheters, an activity covered by regulation for which we received the required inservice training.

Communication and knowledge of the field of practice for everyone on the care team are important here. I notice, however, that the steps must continue for the collective prescriptions so that they can be used more. I find that here, we contribute to the quality and access to care. Working in a small town is sometimes difficult because I know the people who come into Emergency, but it is also easier because the patients and their families feel more at ease in talking to me. ”

*Tamara Niven, Licensed Practical Nurse, Emergency Department,
Barrie Memorial Hospital, CSSS du Haut-Saint-Laurent*



Photo: Jacques Lavallée

“ I work nights in Emergency with three nurses, one of whom who is in triage. I carry out several professional activities such as taking blood and urine samples, wound dressings and treatments, monitoring of neurological signs, administration of subcutaneous medications, among others, the insertion of nasogastric tubes and IV fluids without additives. I also take medical orders related to my professional activities and I write notes in the patients' files.

The unit head has worked hard to integrate the licensed practical nurses here in the Emergency so that they would have their place. Training and meetings took place so that our integration would go smoothly, which contributed to increasing the feeling of confidence among the healthcare professionals. All the members of the care team can thus assume their role with the patients. Teamwork, respecting each person's tasks as well as training adapted to the evolution of the profession are what I see for the future of my practice and the care. ”

Mélinda St-Louis, Licensed Practical Nurse, Emergency, Hôpital Le Royer, CSSS de la Haute-Côte-Nord-Manicouagan



Photo: Karine Bujold



Photo: CSSS Domaine-du-Roy

Lise Deschênes (centre) surrounded by her licensed practical nurse colleagues in the operating room, Lise Tardif, Stéphane Painchaud, France Drolet and Lynn Desmarais

“ I like working in the operating room because of the multidisciplinary teamwork and the chance to help and care for people. The stability of our care team minimizes the possibilities for errors and we work together for the safety of the patients. My work consists of participating in the preparation of the equipment required for the surgery and making sure the room is properly set up with the required equipment.

I also help with positioning the patient, I act as the scrub technician and technical assistant during the surgery, I help apply the dressing and the transfer of the patient once the surgery is over. In the Endoscopy Room, I start the intravenous drips. My work continues to pique my professional curiosity, which is rewarding. Things evolve quickly in this profession, there are always new instruments, new equipment and new ways of working to explore. ”

Lise Deschênes, Licensed Practical Nurse, Operating Room, Hôtel-Dieu de Roberval, CSSS Domaine-du-Roy

Accounts that highlight the work of licensed practical nurses in innovative settings

The FIQ Special Report wants to introduce you to licensed practical nurses who practice in innovative practice settings and who give an account of their contribution to these centres of activities. One nurse also gives an account of her work with licensed practical nurses and an assistant director of nursing explains how her workplace promotes the enhancement of the licensed practical nurses' practice. Lastly, a licensed practical nurse, supervisor of internships and teacher briefly explains the training for students in this field. Concrete attestations make it possible to demand a practice for the licensed practical nurse in different care settings at the local level.

“ I am working on a pilot project that started last September in which two licensed practical nurses participate in school vaccinations in collaboration with the nurses. Within the context of this project, which will last nine months, I, along with another licensed practical nurse, look after the inventory of the vaccines, prepare the supplies and participate in the vaccination days. After the nurse has assessed the child, I greet the child and put her/him at ease, I check the information. I give the vaccine and I write notes on the vaccination.

I also participate in the period of observation post vaccination. Meetings were held before the project started to define everyone's roles. We were well trained, particularly concerning the *Protocole d'immunisation du Québec* (Québec Immunization Protocol), and we were given a good orientation programme.

Meetings are also held regularly to carry out a follow-up on the project. I find that Bill 90 is a plus for the practice of licensed practical nurses, we can practise in more settings and new possibilities will surely open up for us in the years to come. ”



Photo: Jacques Lavallée

Patrice Lalonde, Licensed Practical Nurse, School Health Pilot Project, CLSC, CSSS Jardins-Roussillon



Photo: IUCPQ

“ The integration of the licensed practical nurses into different settings and the enhancement of their practice are part of the committee on care [joint committee dealing with any issue directly related to care] action plan here. In my centre of activities, I work in diad with a nurse with an ambulatory clientele. We divide up the tasks according to our field of practice, the priorities of care and the requests for examinations. I also participate in the assessment of the patients whose health condition is more stable. I work in a forward-thinking setting where we have access to clinical support in order to adjust to new technologies and techniques, among others. A tool that details the roles of each member of the care team was also developed.

I am the president of the Licensed Practical Nurses Committee (CIIA), which also works in an integral manner with the Council of Nurses (CII). Welcoming the licensed practical nurses and the nurses is done together here, which makes it possible to be aware of each person's role. A good orientation programme was also set up. I have noticed however, that there is still work to be done to consolidate the expanded role of the licensed practical nurse and to govern its practice by adapting the care methods that would use the field of practice of the licensed practical nurses even more, among others. ”

*Carine Vézina, Licensed Practical Nurse,
Postinfarction/hemodynamics/electrophysiology clientele,
Institut universitaire de cardiologie et pneumologie de Québec*

“ In addition to a helping relationship side, there is a lot of physical care here, in both rehabilitation and geriatrics, in which I participate. Licensed practical nurses have a place in mental health. Our colleagues are able to appreciate our complete training and our contribution to the work of the care team.

We work with the stable patients in collaboration with the other professionals. It is like a living environment here, the patients can stay for up to two years, so we need to know them in order to respond to their needs which can change from one day to another. My work contributes to the development of the multidisciplinary team’s physical, behavioural and cognitive plans for the patients. There are still taboos about the practice of the licensed practical nurse in mental health although when inservice training is available, we have the tools to carry out our role well. ”

Isabelle Boulanger, Licensed Practical Nurse, Mental Health, Hôtel-Dieu de Sherbrooke, Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke

Photo: Jacques Lavallée



“ I work in a CLSC in a Family Medicine Group. For about ten years now, the licensed practical nurses and our activities have been valued here. I collaborate with the team of professionals in the patients’ walk-in clinic. I look after welcoming the patients, collect their information and take their vital signs. Depending on the reason for their visit and with a physician’s order, I can take specimens, do dressings and vaccinations.

I also work with minor surgeries such as cysts, moles, warts and ingrown toenails, among others. I prepare the patients, provide the equipment for the surgery to the physician, write patient notes in the file, do dressings and participate in post-surgery follow-up.

I really like my work which lets me do different tasks with a diverse clientele and improves my skills. I receive continuous training and I have the chance to use my field of practice. ”

Sabrina Inkel, Licensed Practical Nurse, Family Medicine Group, CLSC King Est, CSSS - Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke

Photo: Jacques Lavallée



“ When I started practising nursing in the surgery department, there were not a lot of licensed practical nurses and the nurses worked alone more. With the nursing shortage, the institution introduced the modular care system five years ago. Resource people took the time necessary to properly explain the functioning to us.

Now, I always work on a team with a licensed practical nurse. We do not feel there is a hierarchy here, it is truly work in professional collaboration. The licensed practical nurse looks after giving prescribed medications to my patients, while I assess the patients. I have complete confidence in the work of the licensed practical nurses with whom I work and with their participation in patient assessment. They have good basic training and are autonomous.

Communication is very important to avoid both of us doing the same work. We talk to each other regularly in order to establish and structure each other's work. The implementation of the modular system has been beneficial for me, and I like working in this way. It is more dynamic and the patients feel that they are taken care of. ”

Cathy Mccowan, Nurse, Medicine and Surgery, Hôpital Fleurimont, Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke



Photo: Jacques Lavallée

Cathy Mccowan and her licensed practical nurse colleague, Caroline Breton

“ The licensed practical nurses work on all three shifts in almost all the centres of activities. They cover several specialties, in particular ophthalmology, radiation oncology, the operating room, neonatology, mental health and the medical-surgical units. The licensed practical nurses are full members of the care team. They work in triad with a nurse and a beneficiary attendant according to a coordinated model of care structured according to the patients’ needs.

Their authorized and non-authorized activities have been clarified with the Licensed Practical Nurses Committee and have been integrated into a document. This tool is re-evaluated every year, according to changes in equipment and the inservice training given. It is a challenge for every member of the care team to fully understand her reserved activities and why it is important to respect her field of practice in order to maximize her contribution to the patients. It is clear that the input of the licensed practical nurses to the work of the care team promotes access to care. ”

*Hélène Loiselle, Assistant Director of Nursing,
Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke*

Photo: CHUS



“ In the context of my work as a licensed practical nurse in Emergency, I supervise and monitor the trainees. I also teach part time in laboratories. I therefore have the chance to share my knowledge and my practice. The responsibilities and the tasks of the licensed practical nurses are always growing. Bill 90 and the new activities have certainly promoted complementarity between the health-care professionals. A licensed practical nurse must be able to work on a team and establish good contact with the patients.

I explain to students that we are an important link on the care team and that we need to establish a relationship of confidence in order to be credible and recognized as autonomous professionals. Many people do not know about our training. We have good basic knowledge of the human body, pathologies and medications. The course that the students follow is pretty intense, there are several hours of training and the minimum passing grade is high. The internships allow them to better understand the role of each member of the care team. ”

*Carolyn Linde, Licensed Practical Nurse, Emergency, Hôpital Fleurimont,
Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke, and teacher and supervisor of internships,
Lennoxville Professional Training Centre*

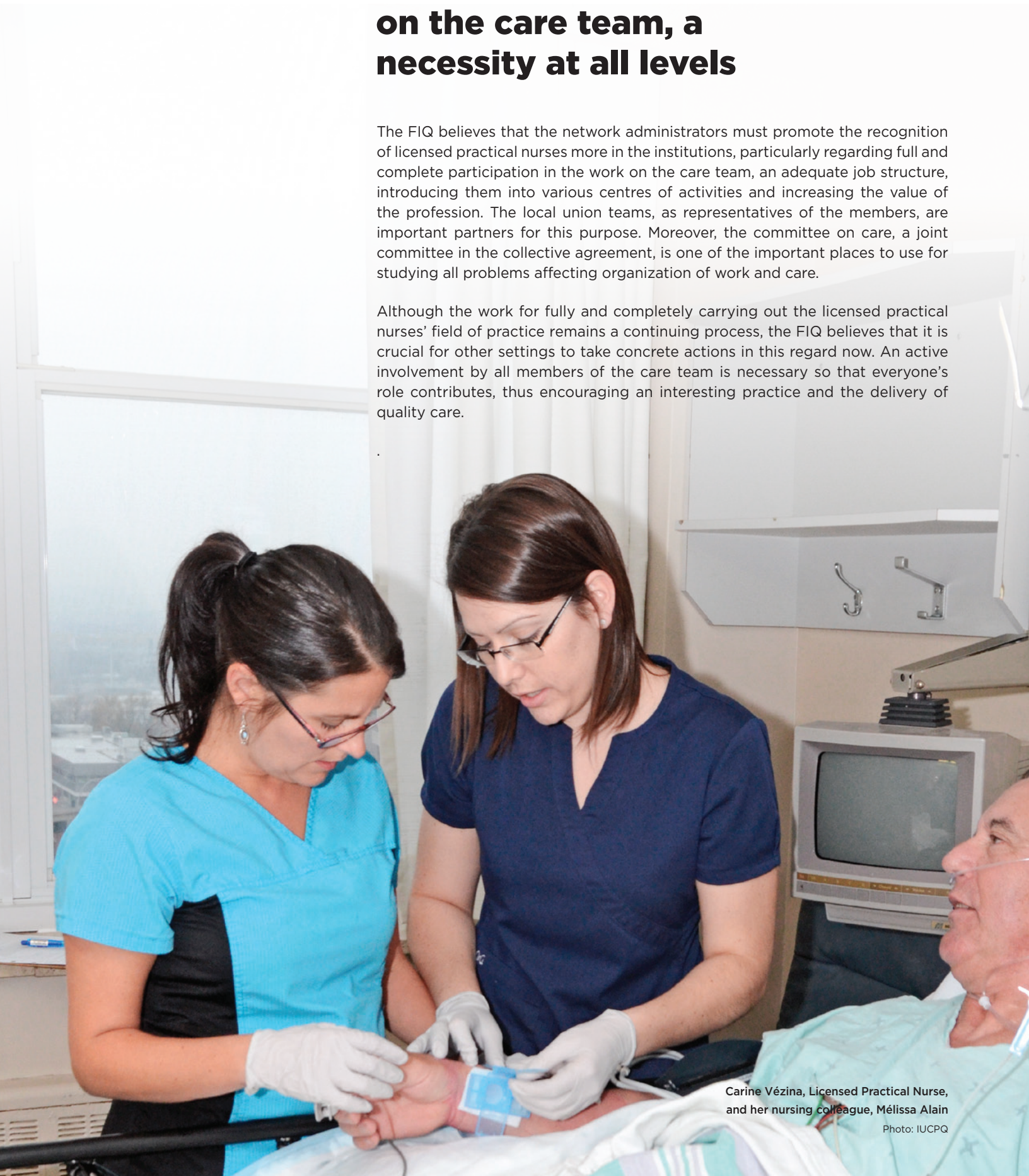
Photo: Jacques Lavallée



Valuing the role of the licensed practical nurse on the care team, a necessity at all levels

The FIQ believes that the network administrators must promote the recognition of licensed practical nurses more in the institutions, particularly regarding full and complete participation in the work on the care team, an adequate job structure, introducing them into various centres of activities and increasing the value of the profession. The local union teams, as representatives of the members, are important partners for this purpose. Moreover, the committee on care, a joint committee in the collective agreement, is one of the important places to use for studying all problems affecting organization of work and care.

Although the work for fully and completely carrying out the licensed practical nurses' field of practice remains a continuing process, the FIQ believes that it is crucial for other settings to take concrete actions in this regard now. An active involvement by all members of the care team is necessary so that everyone's role contributes, thus encouraging an interesting practice and the delivery of quality care.



Carine Vézina, Licensed Practical Nurse, and her nursing colleague, Mélissa Alain

Photo: IUCPQ

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



For the FIQ, the local union teams and the licensed practical nurse members, who are at the heart of the reality of care, are important contributors to promoting better recognition of their profession. Together and mobilized, they are able to demand active participation in all questions concerning organization of work. Their input at the local level is critical to improving the working and living conditions of the healthcare professionals and maintaining quality care.



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