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Patrick Martin, assistant professor at the Faculty of Nursing Science at the *Université Laval*.

A STUDY CONFIRMS THAT NURSES HAVE HAD ENOUGH

It is with great interest that the delegates listened to Patrick Martin, a guest speaker who came to present the key findings and results of his study called “Experienced limitations, a normative ideal and actions taken to transform the practice of the nursing profession in hospitals: an exploratory study on politically involved nurses in Quebec”*.

Although his study is about nurses, during the interviews, Mr. Martin was able to notice that the problems experienced by nurses were very similar to those experienced by licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists and perfusionists.

We must mention that FIQ representatives participated in interviews for Mr. Martin’s qualitative study. There were many circumstances that lead him to conduct this study, chiefly the socioeconomic evolution in Quebec, the 1990 economic crisis, the reorganization of public services, budgetary restrictions, the increasing exodus of young professionals who change career paths after a few years because they are already at the end

of their rope, as well as the mass retirement of over 15,000 nurses from 2011 to 2016.

The resulting consequences are just as grim: forced overtime, violence, burnout, a desire to change professions, affected mental health, depression, etc. Mr. Martin concentrated his study on hospitals, remarking in his texts that nurses mostly encountered limitations in these institutions. The goal of

Mr. Martin’s study was to explore certain issues with politically involved nurses practicing their profession in hospitals. He did so by discussing the state of the nursing profession throughout hospitals in Quebec, the kinds of limitations they faced in their daily work as caregivers, what they hoped to experience in this profession and what ideas or individual or collective mobilization activities they had organized in order to transform the practice of their profession.

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WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

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THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS ON LIFE SUPPORT!

Régine Daurout

It has been confirmed: austerity measures will make their way into 2016. The budget of the Minister of Finance, Carlos Leitaó, which was presented on March 17, 2016, will hurt patients even more. For a third consecutive year, there will once again be significant cuts in the health and social services sector that will send the public system into intensive care.

GOOD NEWS FOR LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES

On March 16, 2016, we became the first union organization to sign an agreement with the government for the creation of the job title of a candidate to the profession of licensed practical nursing (CPLPN). The FIQ gained this significant advancement during the last negotiations. It means that those who have a diploma in licensed practical nursing will be able to practice their profession while they await their license from the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec (OIIAQ)*.

This will allow for a correction of the inadmissible situation that prevented graduates from working in the sector and using their skills to help patients. We are very proud of this gain for licensed practical nurses.

With an expenditure growth of only 2.4% for health and social services for 2016-2017, the Liberal government is imposing significant cuts in all sectors. Patients and healthcare professionals throughout Quebec will be the ones footing the bill. We attended the budget announcement and denounced it vigorously. We gave a voice to our patients and to nurses, licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists and perfusionists.

This budget confirms the government's desire to implement a financing system targeted at patients. For the time being, the Minister of Health's vision for the sector consists of privatizing care in favor of private clinics and entrepreneurial physicians. The Couillard government's ransacking of the public health sector thus continues its course.

Minister Barrette recently announced the implementation of a pilot project that aims to compare production costs of surgeries, with the ultimate goal of introducing procedure-based funding by transferring surgeries to three private clinics owned by physicians. This pilot project would even allow physicians to make profits.

The FIQ publicly denounced the great risk of these clinics coming together to control the cost of surgery. This completely falsifies the data collected from the comparative cost analysis between the public and private sectors. Is this not the very meaning of collusion? What's more, the minister has shamelessly granted a very lucrative 64.5 million dollar contract to a friend's firm to install a computerized accounting method in order to implement procedure-based funding throughout the sector. The minister wants to approve this untendered contract, which is absolutely outrageous!

These attitudes can also be seen when it comes to the SABSA (low threshold services) proximity clinic in Quebec. Minister Barrette refuses to ensure the funding of this clinic, which will consequently have to close on May 1 of this year. Yet, this clinic has demonstrated its worth by showing that, by granting autonomy to first-rate nurses and specialized nurse practitioners, it can be very beneficial to the State and to patients. The SABSA model helps generate savings of around \$200,000 per year with barely significant waiting times for patients. Alas, for Gaétan Barrette, we must continue to wear

our medical straightjackets. He is incapable of conceiving of another way of offering care because he believes only in frontline medical services. The only thing he is willing to offer SABSA is for their specialized nurse practitioner to work for a family medicine group, which is in no way a considerable option.

Due to the Couillard government, we are in a period of constant privatization that always profits physicians. However, we are not lacking in money-saving solutions. We suggested that the Minister of Finance put an end to physicians' heinous right to incorporation, which grants them countless fiscal advantages. By ceasing this unjustifiable practice, the State could save over \$150 million per year.

We will not give up, we will continue this fight. We will not give even an inch to this government's attempts at privatization. Healthcare professionals represent the solution to the problems of accessibility. ■

Save the SABSA clinic

You can help ensure the sustainability of the proximity clinic of the *Coopérative de solidarité SABSA* (Solidary Cooperative for the SABSA low threshold services clinic) in Quebec by signing a petition which is sponsored by Agnès Maltais, an elected member of the National Assembly.

With over 1,500 active files, the success of the care offered by a specialized nurse practitioner and nurses in this clinic to a marginalized clientele was proven and supported by researchers from the *Équipe de soins primaires intégrés* (Integrated Primary Healthcare Team).

In Ontario, many nursing clinics are already active. Establishing such clinics throughout Quebec could allow its population to have access to frontline services.

You have until April 25, 2016 to sign the petition:
<https://www.assnat.qc.ca/fr/exprimez-votre-opinion/petition/Petition-5883/index.html>



Help us put pressure on the Minister of Health

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A study confirms that nurses have had enough (cont'd)



Claudiane Gélinas, CIUSSS de la Mauricie-et-du-Centre-du-Québec



Marie-Josée Forget, CIUSSS de l'Estrie - CHUS (SPSE)

A STUDY CONFIRMS THAT NURSES HAVE HAD ENOUGH (CONT'D)

All the nurses that Mr. Martin met with during this study mentioned the issue of work overload, the difficulties they encounter in fulfilling their role as caregivers, the decrease in quality of care, deficient management and the prevailing climate of fear: a management that is rooted in fear, the fear of speaking among colleagues and being reported, the fear of harming patients due to difficult working conditions, and the fear of being associated to the union, which pushes many of them to only consult their union when they find themselves in an extreme situation.

WHAT NURSES HOPE FOR

The nurses who took part in this study said that hospitals' structures need to be changed. More precisely, they need to transform the organization of work, plan for long-term labour, delegate tasks to other professionals, especially specialized nurse practitioners who could prescribe certain medications, and involve nurses in the decisions that concern them.

They also want real recognition from managers about the work they do. They want to be able to discuss in greater depth with managers, who are surprisingly increasingly numerous in hospitals, but often away from their regular work areas (reunions, Board meetings, etc.).

They also indicated that strategies need to be implemented to encourage nurses' mobilization and to create more openness about nurses' lived realities in each of their respective work areas.

For the delegates, Mr. Martin's study is truly a reflection of what is happening in the field. Many of them added to his presentation with comments and testimonies. Here are a few of them:

"Your study was very useful to me, in fact, it helped me intervene during a Board meeting in my CIUSSS."

"This study is very worrisome, it would also be interesting to study the feminist aspects."

"You need to be tough to practice this profession. Young nurses are leaving the field early."

"We need to fight back against reprisals that nurses get from their employer when they act individually."

"Caregiving is marginalized by society."

"We need to prepare the next generation of nurses to act so they can change the face of nursing."

"I have been a nurse activist for a long time and I have seen the network deteriorate. We are no longer human, we have become statistics."

"Structural violence is increasing surreptitiously, nurses are afraid of reporting abnormal situations."

Do not hesitate to consult Patrick Martin's study, it could provide you with ideas and solutions in order to gain respect:
<https://papyrus.bib.umontreal.ca/xmlui/handle/1866/13042>

"Nursing students need to be better equipped so they can fully understand what to expect. We need to train and prepare them to become capable of changing things."

Patrick Martin



* Free translation of the French title: « Contraintes vécues, idéal normatif et actions déployées en vue de transformer l'exercice de la profession infirmière en centre hospitalier : une étude exploratoire auprès d'infirmières québécoises politiquement engagées ».

BILL 10

**Reorganization of the healthcare network: daunting challenges!
We must fight for our children's future**



REORGANIZATION OF THE HEALTHCARE NETWORK: DAUNTING CHALLENGES!

The delegates once again discussed the upheaval currently felt in the healthcare network. The transformation of health institutions into CISSSs and CIUSSSs (*Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux - Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux*) has had major impacts on the organization of care, the work of healthcare professionals as well as the means by which we, as a union, work to fulfill our members' the needs.

Sitting in round tables, the delegates were asked to discuss the issues and challenges that arise from the reorganization of the health network. These exchanges are vital in the current restructuring context because they allow us to share different experiences and to propose potential solutions.

In fact, for several weeks now, the union representatives have been working every day in order to adapt to the restructuring and to

ensure that the rights of all the FIQ members are respected.

A VOICE FOR ALL

The current mergers of the institutions of the health network only target public institutions, thus isolating private and private subsidized institutions. Given this element of our current context, in conjunction with the recommendation from the 2014 convention to undertake work aiming to establish a flagship

labour organization in health, the Federation is convinced that we will have to grant a significant voice to these institutions within our organization; a place to share their preoccupations and make decisions that concern them.

In response to this new reality, we have decided to maintain discussions regarding the framework of this new voice. This is definitely a topic to follow closely! ■



Camil Bouchard

WE MUST FIGHT FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

The delegates were fortunate in welcoming Camil Bouchard to the Federal Council, author of *Un Québec fou de ses enfants* (Quebec loves its children) and many other publications in the fields of education and psychology.

Healthcare professionals' preoccupations mostly centre on the reorganization of the health network and how budget cuts affect the quality and safety of care and sometimes even create inhumane working conditions. However, they are also citizens of Quebec, many of whom are parents.

Thus, the state and future of Quebec's *Centres de la Petite Enfance* (CPE - public daycare centres) also affect them greatly, whether it be directly or not. Furthermore, there are many similarities between the havoc caused in this public service and the healthcare network, which are, of course, both caused by the Liberal government.

Mr. Bouchard himself admits that the cost of CPEs for the government can seem incredible. However, certain facilitating measures that were put in place have had enormous success, likely even surpassing the initial assessments. In contrast, the positive economic impact caused by tens of thousands of women returning to work, who could not have done so otherwise, can be counted in the billions.

Studies have shown that the quality of services offered in a CPE greatly surpasses what is offered in commercial daycare centres. Professional experience is higher (10 years compared to 2) and there is far less staff turnover as well as a significantly higher

number of interactions between parents and educators. In fact, this aspect constitutes one of the most significant distinctions between both types of organizations.

Budget cuts repeatedly imposed upon CPEs are unfortunately changing this narrative. These centres, which offer safe and caring spaces for children and help contribute to the wellbeing of families, are in peril.

The delegates were quite clear: we have to take a stand and collectively fight in order to make the government understand that Quebec is against the way CPEs have been treated. Our children's futures are at stake. ■



IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND INTER-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

This Federal Council provided the delegates with the opportunity to look back on the nurse, licensed practical nurse, respiratory therapist and clinical perfusionist commissions held during the Federal Council of last December as well as adopt the recommendations submitted by three of them.

These commissions are a democratic structure within the Federation that respects the specific issues of healthcare professionals. Their goal is to bring delegates together by employment category so they can discuss their professional practice, their reality and the important issues of their respective professions. The commissions held last December were particularly aimed at discussing the application of Bill 90 and the inter-professional collaboration they take part in every day in their institutions.

The delegates were also able to reflect upon the disparities between their defined field of practice and the actual duties they perform at work (theory/practice). They also explored potential solutions that could be implemented at the local level in order to improve the organization of work and care, their working and living conditions and their professional practice of healthcare professionals.

PERFUSIONISTS

The delegates adopted the recommendation submitted by the perfusionist commission to obtain support from the Federation to produce tools that would allow for their profession to gain more recognition and acknowledgement throughout the province.

RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

The recommendation proposed by the respiratory therapist commission for the Federation to produce a document in order to raise awareness of their profession was adopted by the delegates.

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES

The licensed practical nurse commission proposed five recommendations that were all accepted by the delegation. It was adopted that the FIQ take advantage of the implementation of Bill 10 to impose uniformity in the application of Bill 90 for licensed practical nurses and that they take the necessary steps with the government in order to force employers to apply it in its entirety throughout all healthcare

institutions. It is vital for licensed practical nurses to be recognized as healthcare professionals in the same respect as other category 1 professionals. Regrettably, this recognition currently varies quite significantly from one institution to another.

The delegates also adopted the recommendation mandating the FIQ to organize mobilization and visibility measures to gain support from the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec* (OIIAQ) as well as directors of nursing in order for LPNs to truly obtain the entirety of the activities reserved to their profession, and not only in theory. Finally, it was also adopted that the FIQ communicate with the OIIAQ in order to encourage them to take part in provincial discussions, such as other professional orders.

As a result of the adoption of these recommendations, the Federation will come up with concrete measures that they will present to the delegation during a subsequent Federal Council. ■



STATUS OF WOMEN

THE FIQ, A STRONG VOICE, ACTIONS THAT COUNT



Line Larocque, 1st Vice-President, Pascale Navarro, journalist, Caroline Flageol and Patricia Lajoie, members of the Status of Women Committee, Ginette Raymond, Union Consultant for the Status of Women Sector, Line Mercier, Julie Daignault, Lucie Ménard and Claire Alarie, members of the Status of Women Committee.



Pascale Navarro

In the upcoming months, the Status of Women Sector, in collaboration with the Status of Women Committee, will meet with the unions affiliated to the FIQ in order to discuss ways in which to maintain women's involvement within the Federation and to share the important feminist issues and battles that are currently shaping our reality.

THE FIQ, A FEMINIST ACTIVIST RIGHT FROM THE START

During this Federal Council, the delegates reiterated their desire to support women's involvement in the Federation's decision-making bodies. The 1st vice-president and political officer of the Status of Women Sector, as well as the members of the Status of Women Committee, emphasized the importance that women be able to continue to enter into positions of power as activists within the organization.

Let us remember that, in 1987, the FIQ stated its official position as pro-choice in regards to abortion and decided to feminize all of its texts due to its membership being composed of over 90% women, a fact which remains true in 2016! Despite women gaining more and more ground in society, we still encounter barriers, and concrete solutions need to be implemented in order to allow women to get involved, to participate and to invest in decision-making bodies.

Guest speaker Pascale Navarro, a journalist, cultural columnist and author of many feminist publications, explained that, even though equality may seem to have been achieved because women can now be seen in schools, companies, and governmental bodies, this is actually not true because, the higher up you go in a power structure, the fewer women there are, despite these decisions affecting each and every one of us, no matter our gender.

According to Ms. Navarro, achieving equality is up to both women and men. We need to debunk these gender equality myths and give ourselves the tools to work around them. All institutions should concretely recognize the notion and the value of gender equality in their structures by applying different measures and tools.

The FIQ's history proves that women are strong, resilient, influential and creative. They have often stood out thanks to their strategies and mobilization actions to convince the public and the government that their cause and demands were legitimate.

They also joined forces with certain groups, such as the *Intersyndicale des femmes*, the *Collectif Échec à la guerre* and the *Coalition en faveur de l'équité salariale*. The women of the FIQ take part in decisions that affect them and propose solutions to people in decision-making

positions because they are the best placed when it comes to their working conditions and their rights.

RÉGINE LAURENT, A ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN IN POWER

On March 5, 2016, *La Presse+* published a special issue on women who helped shape Quebec's events in the past year. Régine Laurent, President of the FIQ, was one of the women who were named. Journalist Sophie Ouimet described her as a "quiet strength" and highlighted the work she has done in the defense of healthcare professionals as well as the public health system. In 2015, Régine Laurent also received the first *Hélène-Pedneault Award*, which aims to recognize women in Quebec who stand out due to their contribution to the advancement of women's cause. ■

A NEW STEP TOWARDS A CULTURE OF ADVOCACY

Given the success of the training session *Advocacy 1*, the Federation is proud to reach a new stage in achieving humane working conditions for healthcare professionals as well as safe and quality care for patients. As of this June, the FIQ will be offering a tool for the organization of work, supported by the training session *Advocacy 2*, by which they wish to mobilize their members and representatives.

Healthcare professionals are first-hand witnesses to what occurs in the healthcare network and the FIQ wants to multiply the platforms on which they can speak and share their stories. The health network has been suffering for quite some time, and the current reorganization will solve nothing. In the context of this great upheaval, nurses, licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists and perfusionists have to denounce the unacceptable situations they are confronted with, and they must be able to do so without fear of reprisals from their employers. It is with this in mind that the training session *Advocacy 2* was developed.

Healthcare professionals are truly experts of the science and the art of care. Through a collective movement of advocacy, managers will have to adapt their methods in order to take this expertise into account in their decision-making process, just like their preoccupations with patients' needs.

Additional information about this project will be given to the delegates during the Federal Council of May 31, June 1 and 2, 2016.