

Ongoing mobilization for local negotiations

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Group insurance plan
Participate in the online consultation!

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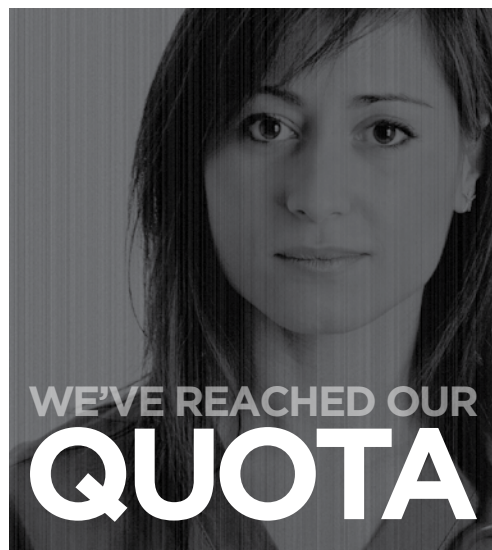


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Provincial Council on March 20, 21 and 22



HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL-TO-PATIENT RATIOS

RATIO PILOT PROJECTS FOR SAFE CARE

At the last Provincial Council, we presented an action plan for healthcare professional-to-patient ratios that extends up until the next collective agreement. While the purpose of the action plan is simple, it still presents us with a major challenge: taking steps to implement safe ratios throughout Quebec as quickly as possible.

The four projects underway are a result of local actions and the role of influence in health care. They synthesize all the various current priorities (local and provincial) and major events, both union (negotiations, raiding) and political (elections):

1. Raising awareness among, mobilizing and training union reps and members: *advocacy* training, members' accounts
2. Conducting local actions for safe staffing: Safe Staffing Form, additional tools
3. Demonstrating how unsafe current health care is: research data, solid reasoning
4. Pushing for legislation: publishing the *Black Book of Care Safety*, determining ratios, developing a political strategy

The delegation discussed both past actions (distributing the *Black Book* to senior management, boards of directors, MNAs and mayors), possible future actions and ways to improve existing tools. The *advocacy* training (an updated version will soon be available) has also been very popular.

The FIQ and FIQP are proud of the members who mobilized and spoke up over the last few months. These efforts were instrumental in moving along the ratio pilot projects, especially in terms of promoting the FIQ/FIQP's vision of safe ratios and strengthening the organization's bargaining power. Implementing safe ratios across Quebec and creating legislation are long-term battles. It is therefore by continuing to speak out and carry out the planned actions that we will be able to achieve safe ratios for Quebec healthcare professionals and patients.

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING NO. 17

The steady outcry from nurses completely tipped the balance with respect to Letter of Understanding No. 17 (regarding the analysis of the healthcare professional-to-patient ratios) and the discussions held with the Health Ministry. Last fall, progress was slow and littered with obstacles, but now there seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel with a change in the Ministry's spokesperson's mandate.

There are still many challenges ahead, but thanks to the meetings between the FIQ and Health Minister and accelerated efforts, the first ratio pilot projects are slated to begin in April.

As a result, the Provincial Joint Committee on Task and Organization of Work went from studying the relevance and feasibility of safe ratios to determining and implementing them. Instead of two projects "without new money," there will be 17 projects funded in every region across Quebec.*

Ratio projects are planned in:

- Medicine
- Surgery
- CHSLDs
- Respiratory therapy
- Private subsidized institutions
- Home care
- Emergency departments

The major phases for implementing the ratio projects have been mapped out and will be explained at a later date. The objective is to launch 13 pilot projects before summer. A provincial implementation committee will be formed to set up the projects, from start to finish, and the delegation already approved funding specifically for this purpose. ■

IMPORTANT

On March 29, Health Minister Gaétan Barrette made an announcement concerning the ratio pilot projects. The following three projects will begin in April and May:

- Lakeshore General Hospital (medicine unit)
- CHAUR de Trois-Rivières (surgical unit)
- CHSLD de Bagotville

Ten other ratio pilot projects in medicine, surgery and long-term care facilities will also be implemented by summer. Their start dates will be announced at a later date. 17 projects in total will be implemented in regions across Quebec.



"The FIQ and FIQP is counting on healthcare professionals to mobilize to achieve safe ratios. The FIQ and FIQP will ensure Quebec receives safe care," said Jérôme Rousseau, FIQ Vice-President.



* Please note that these projects are still under discussion and therefore subject to change until they are officially announced.

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

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WORKING TOWARD RATIOS!

Nancy Bédard

Safe healthcare professional-to-patient ratios were a main topic at our very first Provincial Council of the Regroupement des FIQ. While the meeting was underway, FIQ representatives were negotiating pilot project implementation with the government.

As such, delegates received a full report in real time on how negotiations were proceeding. We also discussed several other important issues, such as the local negotiations underway in all institutions.

We took a moment to reflect on the tumultuous times we just went through. The FIQ maintained a strong public presence throughout this period. Not one day has gone by in the last two months that the FIQ wasn't mentioned in the media. Our voice and messages have been broadcast across the country and abroad: in the Le Monde newspaper, the Washington Post, on the BBC, on a local Italian TV channel, etc.

As I said at the convention last November: healthcare professional-to-patient ratios are my top priority. And we won't deny that external events and a unique context have

helped us. But we also made our own luck. This movement is built on our past actions and decisions. The training programs we developed for our members, especially the advocacy program, the Safe Staffing Form, our communication strategies focused on our specific professional roles, as well as member recognition, all contributed to what is happening today.

We should be thrilled that we were able to obtain an agreement that is more than satisfactory to implement 17 ratio pilot projects, 13 of which will be set up by September. The agreement doesn't just affect the ratio projects: it marks the beginning of implementing safe ratios throughout the whole health network. I know that some people are still sceptical and that others feel it won't resolve excessive workload issues in the short-term. But just remember that your

unions are still striving to eliminate excessive workloads by obtaining more full-time positions and team stability in your institutions. When it comes to ratios, we just took a major step in the right direction. In several countries that managed to implement ratios, it took a lot longer for them to get where we are today. You should be proud and trust that we will succeed.

That said, we aren't naive. We know that there are more obstacles ahead and that is why we aren't letting up. And we will need your help, your mobilization.

Thank you. ■



HAPPY RETIREMENT!

The President, Nancy Bédard, took a moment at the Provincial Council to announce the retirement of one of our long-time union reps who, over the years, was both a union consultant and coordinator at the Federation. We wish you an amazing retirement, Michelle Poirier!

CONCERN OVER SNPS

This Provincial Council was an opportunity for delegates to get an update on the provincial joint committee's work concerning specialty nurse practitioners (SNPs), a gain that the FIQ obtained at the last provincial negotiations.

As stipulated in Letter of Understanding No. 18 in the provincial collective agreement, the Provincial Joint Committee on Task and Organization of Work was given the mandate to document problems around attracting and retaining SNPs as well as issues related to their ongoing training and working conditions.

In an effort to fuel reflection and optimize its work on the joint committee, the FIQ formed its own work group. Five SNPs from different institutions, each with different areas of expertise, will participate in the advisory work

group, which will serve to shed light on SNPs' daily reality.

The joint committee's work continues. From the meetings that have been held thus far, the FIQ was able to form a picture of the problems SNPs experience. Another meeting will be held in the next few weeks and the employer party will be expected to explain its take on the problems SNPs face as well as its orientations with respect to the bursary program aimed at supporting SNPs during training.

NEW REGULATIONS

The new regulation concerning SNPs came into force in March 2018. The FIQ is well aware of its members' fears with regard to the new regulations and has brought up these concerns to the Office des professions du Québec and the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ). Since the Ordre's guidelines have not yet been released, the Federation will put off sharing its own views with local union teams until it has a complete picture of the situation. ■

LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS

**ONGOING MOBILIZATION FOR LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS
PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL'S 30th WORLD CONGRESS**



ONGOING MOBILIZATION FOR LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS

During the Provincial Council, delegates were brought up to date on local negotiations. For some institutions, negotiations are progressing fine but in others, the outlook is bleak.

Several employers are still trying to increase flexibility at the expense of team stability as if they were completely unaware of the crisis among healthcare professionals. In the face of such unjustified obstinacy, some negotiating committees have had to step away from the bargaining table.

Across all institutions, ongoing mobilization is getting more intense. The delegates at the Provincial Council made themselves clear: they will not accept intolerable situations and refuse to watch healthcare professionals' work conditions deteriorate. Moreover,

union reps showed their solidarity by demonstrating outside of the office of the CEO of the CIUSSS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal to support the local team. ■



PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL'S 30th WORLD CONGRESS

A detailed report of the FIG's participation in the Public Services International's (PSI) 30th World Congress was presented to the delegates. In November of last year, Nancy Bédard, President, and Linda Lapointe, Vice-President, accompanied by two union consultants, attended this important event in Geneva.

PSI is an international labour federation dedicated to promoting public services and represents 20 million workers from 700 unions around the world. At its last congress, it established its 2018-2020 action plan with 1,000 participants in attendance.

The participants adopted a number of priorities, including the goal to promote greater social justice, to better protect union and workers' rights and to fight against the privatization of public services. While there, the FIG asked the delegates from the unions in attendance to support a draft amendment that would allow PSI to fight for open access to reimbursed contraception and abortion services. The FIG also explained to participants just how important it is to establish safe healthcare professional-to-patient ratios, convincing them to work with governments to implement standards similar to what was achieved in California.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Here, we understand health care.



What's the plan for your garden?

WHAT THEY WOULD SAY TO THE MINISTER FACE TO FACE

Three healthcare professionals came to the Provincial Council to tell delegates their personal stories about disobedience and mobilization. They also shared what they would say to Health Minister Gaétan Barrette if he were standing in front of them.

Group insurance plan
Participate in the **online consultation!**

Be sure to participate in the FIQ's online consultation on your group insurance plan, which will run from April 23 to May 6, 2018. Visit our website for full details.

fiqsante.qc.ca

Émilie Ricard, Isabelle Têtu and Natalie Stake-Doucet may have all led very different lives, but they all share a love of their profession and a firm belief that they have a role to play in defending health care. Each one of them has questioned the health care system, which is clearly crumbling, can no longer adequately meet the public's needs and has created inhumane conditions, both for patients and healthcare professionals.

Émilie Ricard is a night nurse in a CHSLD who denounced her intolerable working conditions in a Facebook post on January 29. 56,000 shares later and still angry, she told delegates what happened after publicly expressing that she was fed up. She emphasized the importance of defending the nursing profession and, especially, of coming

together to wake up public bodies and health and social services network administrators. What would she say to Gaétan Barrette? "Come with us on one of our rounds!" Then he'd see for himself that his administrative reform has been disastrous for health care.

Isabelle Têtu, a specialty nurse practitioner, started the SABSA co-op with colleagues because she saw how rigid the current system is and wanted to be able to provide comprehensive care to people who are marginalized. Her motto: adapt to people who need care, not the other way around. As for what she'd say to the Health Minister, well, she'd let the patients speak and force Gaétan Barrette to listen to all the challenges they face in order to receive care.

Natalie Stake-Doucet, a nurse and co-founder of the General Assembly on the state of health and the McGill Nurses for Health Policy groups, denounces the way healthcare professionals are treated and the fact that they don't have a say in what happens. She says that citizens need to know how the successive reforms have chipped away at the health system and that they need to mobilize. Natalie firmly believes that healthcare professionals are on the right side of history and that they must speak up and increase their bargaining power. What would she say to Mr. Barrette? "Why are you managing the health system as if it were a *business!*?" ■



Nathalie Perron, President of the Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de la Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec

FAIR REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

At the last Provincial Council, we brought the delegates up to speed on how the project on the place of women in the organization is progressing.

Despite a workforce made up of 90% women, over time the FIQ and FIQP have noticed a drop in the number of women involved in the organization. To reverse this trend and increase participation among women, we have drafted a policy on the fair representation of women in positions of power. The policy is based on the results of consultations and group discussions held with members in 2017.

To facilitate women's involvement, we will present an action plan to the delegation in December 2018, which will include support measures, such as a drop-in daycare for meetings or mentorship for newly elected reps. We set a 75% target for women at meetings. This target is non-binding and will serve as a reference point for the implementation and monitoring committee to assess the impact of the policy. Men are

our allies in eliminating gender inequality and we will be counting on their solidarity to apply this policy.

In April and May, we will be conducting a consultation among affiliated unions in order to complete a first evaluation and then adjust the project as needed. ■