

At the height of the COVID crisis, a little breathing room for healthcare professionals

New temporary measures to protect and retain staff have just been announced by the government. These new measures, which will last for three months, should be implemented in the coming days.

The urgent need to act in the face of the wave of hospitalizations sweeping through the health network has forced the government to finally listen a little more to the labour organizations, including the FIQ. However, the announced measures were not negotiated. Moreover, they will not solve all the problems that nurses, licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists and clinical perfusionists face, but these measures recognize the additional effort made by the healthcare professionals on the front lines for the past 22 months.

While waiting for all the details of the different measures and their exact rules of application, here is a summary:

Health, safety and well-being at work

- PPEs and N95 masks for employees covered by the CNESST recommendations;
- Easier and expanded access to vaccination and testing;
- Accumulation of ½ day of vacation in a bank for every day of overtime;
- Greater access to self-scheduling;
- Meals provided to those working overtime;
- Parking costs suspended.

Together, the five major labour organizations in the health and social services network hammered home their major priority: the protection of workers and N95 masks for everyone. Strong, clear and simple measures are needed to ensure the staff is protected.

Financial incentives

The government is putting in place temporary measures to retain already exhausted staff and fill a few extra shifts:

- For those who work full time: double time for a 6th and 7th day of work;
- For those who work part time: + \$100 a week if work more than 30 hours;
- The 035 premium is expanded.

The reinforcements promised by the government in the form of bonuses have still not reached the ranks of the public health network. The doubts we raised have been confirmed: the Minister of Health's attraction plan has not worked. It is time for a change of strategy.

**Improving your working conditions means protecting the patients and public health network.
And to achieve this, management by ministerial orders must stop!**