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# EN ACTION

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Provincial Council on March 13, 14, 15 and 16

REGROUPEMENT DES FIQ | [fiqsante.qc.ca](http://fiqsante.qc.ca) | [fiqp.org](http://fiqp.org)



Left to right: Patrick Gariépy, Union Consultant, Patrick Guay, Vice-President, Frédéric Poisson, Isabelle Boivin and Mathilde Rajotte, Union Consultants

## GROUP GRIEVANCE:

# A TOOL FOR CONTESTING MOT

Over the last few months, many healthcare professionals denounced the effects of mandatory overtime (MOT). Supported by their unions and the Federations, they helped the public to properly understand it and its consequences.

To more effectively tackle this scourge, the intersectoral committee on overtime and independent labour suggest adopting a new way of addressing MOT challenges. From now on, group grievances will be prioritized for contesting employers' systematic and abusive imposition of MOT to fill their immediate, planned or foreseeable needs.

This type of grievance allows the union to undertake an action that is way more collective than with individual grievances. This method is also rooted in the last convention's orientations, i.e., to

transform union action so that members can regain ownership of the collective bargaining power in the many battles. Consequently, the delegates agreed to put an end to the automatic filing of individual grievances in situations where network employers systematically turn to MOT as a management method.

The proposed shift is not only legal, it is also intended to be consistent with our mobilization vision. It has to come from the field and be based on the members' reality, which is denounced by union teams, which are also supported by the FIQ and FIQP.

Unions will receive a guide for contesting mandatory overtime in order to standardize the cases that will be pleaded in court and to ensure consistency so that MOT is no longer used as a management method. ■



1. Alexandre Pelletier, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins infirmiers et cardio-respiratoires du Bas-Saint-Laurent, invited the delegates to observe a minute of silence for the victims of the Amqui attack
2. Anusree Nath, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de santé du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
3. Manon Lizotte, Syndicat interprofessionnel du CHU de Québec
4. Marie-Chantal Gauthier, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de Montérégie-Centre
5. Mericia Catalina Perez Garcia, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de l'Est-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
6. Stéphanie Fortin, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins de Chaudière-Appalaches

## WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

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It is crucial that we continue to properly channel our anger to fuel our determination and mobilization.

## UNION RESISTANCE, FEMINIST RESISTANCE



Whether coincidence or fate, the last provincial council happened a few days after March 8, the International Day of Women’s Rights. The day’s slogan, “Feminist resistance,” couldn’t have been more appropriate for our organization, as we have begun negotiations to renew the collective agreement for the organization’s 80,000 healthcare professional members.

Since the negotiations began at the end of a pandemic crisis, we would have expected more openness, recognition and good will toward those, primarily women, who prevented the flat out collapse of the health network as Quebec underwent an unprecedented crisis.

Think again! In their usual style, François Legault and his ministers accuse unions of every kind of evil and launch multiple attacks that often border on provocation. But why is there such a paternalistic attitude toward us? The right to make demands is not exclusively reserved for men!

We will have to deal with detractors throughout the negotiations and they won’t only be from the government. We already hear and read, here

and there, that we are inflexible and some are calling the collective agreements rigid. However, many seem to forget this essential point: while the collective agreement set to expire on March 31, 2023 should have been effective for three years, it was actually suspended by ministerial orders for many months. It was the government that had total dominance over the network and its employees. Was the network doing all that well? To ask the question is to answer it. The health network has never been as fragile. It has never before reached the breaking point we are seeing now.

It is therefore crucial that we continue to properly channel our anger to fuel our determination and mobilization. It is because we strongly believe in the merits of our

demands that we will achieve them. We are in the middle of an important battle that goes far beyond the provisions of the collective agreement. And if there are people who still haven’t understood, our sole motivation is to improve the working conditions of our members to ensure quality care and services that are safe and accessible. ■

## HAPPY RETIREMENT!

It was with great emotion that the president, Julie Bouchard, highlighted the retirement of two of the Federation’s employees. Nancy Moss, Labour Relations Sector Union Consultant and Lynda Lachance, Sectors and Services Coordinator. These two hard-working women first worked as a respiratory therapist and a nurse. They then took on union roles at their respective institutions for several years before working for and eventually concluding their professional careers at the FIQ. We wish them a fully deserved retirement!



**STATUS OF WOMEN**

**Make the FIQ an anti-racist union**



Left to right: Sarahjane Pavillon, Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee member, Françoise Ramel, Vice-President, Sonia Djelidi, Union Consultant, Myriam Philippeaux, Monica Toro Ospina and Nagia Idel Mehdaoui, Ad Hoc Anti-Racism Committee members

**MAKE THE FIQ AN ANTI-RACIST UNION**

It was with a full docket that the first ad hoc anti-racism committee in the history of the FIQ and FIQP presented its work to the delegation. Created in March 2022 after a resolution was adopted at the last convention, the committee reflects the political will to fight against systemic racism and to make the FIQ and FIQP anti-racist organizations.

The committee members reminded the delegation of their mandate, to:

- Document and analyze the representativity of racialized members in the delegation and make recommendations to the Provincial Executive Committee;
- Make an inventory of cases of racism or racial discrimination against members in order to find out the context in which they happened and to find solutions;
- Define means of information and action so that members become agents who eliminate racism and integrate racial concerns into the Federations' overall approach.

It is therefore in this perspective that the committee announced a new measure that will be implemented in the coming months. Indeed, after a recommendation from the ad hoc committee, the Provincial Executive Committee mandated the Technology-Documentation Service and the General Secretariat

to develop an efficient mechanism that will allow for the collection of sociodemographic data and, in turn, to conduct a statistical analysis of the participation of racialized and Indigenous members in the regular and special FIQ and FIQP decision-making bodies. ■

**UPCOMING CONSULTATION**

In the coming weeks, the Federation will begin a member consultation to get an initial overview of the issues of racism experienced in the workplace. The goal is not simply to know what the situation is, but above all to set up an action plan and develop the training and awareness-raising tools. It is a difficult but essential process that will require everyone's cooperation to practice feminist, anti-racist unionism.



Pierre Fortin, Economist, professor emeritus and columnist for L'actualité

**THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND: WHEN THERE'S NOT ENOUGH STAFF YOU HAVE TO RAISE SALARIES**

While Quebec's new budget was slated to come out a few days later, the delegates attended a conference given by Pierre Fortin, Economist, professor emeritus, and columnist for L'actualité, and had a Q&A with him after.

Women have long been excluded from the political sphere and economic discussions. But now this trend is being reversed. More and more women are getting a college and university education, even more than men now. The active population has become more feminine and Quebec is a global leader in this, alongside Sweden and Switzerland as regards women's activity rate. Women's contribution to the economy has had a very positive impact on Quebec's economic health, as well as on reducing the

ever-persistent wage gaps between men and women.

In his conference, Mr. Fortin also took time to debunk some current beliefs. While the labour shortage is slowly shrinking in several activity sectors, why are more and more healthcare professionals leaving the public health network and what should the government do? Mr. Fortin thinks the answer is clear. It is impossible to attract and retain employees without significantly improving working conditions.

In line with this logic, why does the Legault government's offers to healthcare professionals barely follow the market trends when other economic sectors have a less severe labour shortage? Looking at this question will give us the best tools for the current negotiations. ■

“The pressure of the demand on public services is so enormous right now, it's astronomical, and resources are limited. So, the government's first move should be to stop saving.”

“The minister himself told us that the biggest problem in the health sector is the labour shortage.”

“When we have a labour shortage like this, the law of supply and demand dictates that we not only raise their salary but provide better working conditions too.”

**PROVINCIAL  
NEGOTIATIONS**

**The FIQ wants to pick up the pace and  
the government doesn't!**



**THE FIQ WANTS TO PICK UP THE PACE  
AND THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T!**

The Negotiating Committee presented the delegates with an update on its work. Three negotiation meetings have been held since the end of January. Despite the fact that the FIQ proposed a series of dates to the employer party to increase the frequency of meetings, the government seems to want to stretch out negotiations at this time.

Up until now, the Negotiating Committee has only been able to briefly explain the demands at the bargaining table. Even though the FIQ refused to participate in the government's care team forum, it insisted on this route over the last few weeks. The government even sent a new offer by email on February 22!

on rapidly applicable solutions. It is just an employer table where the government wants to be able to control how negotiations play out and force labour organizations to have common demands. The FIQ is ready to negotiate and discuss the government's issues, but at its own bargaining table.

(additional 4% for the evening shift and additional 2.5% for the night shift) could therefore come to an end on March 30.

How does the government plan to retain healthcare professionals on evening and night shifts while lowering their salary? The FIQ continues to pressure the government to maintain these premiums.



The committee believes that sending an offer in this way shows a lack of respect for the negotiation process and healthcare professionals' demands. The committee wanted some clarifications on the offer and to talk at the table but the employer party refuses to comply for the moment.

**EXPIRY OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT**

The current collective agreement will expire on March 31, 2023. Since the union demands were submitted on November 7, 2022, the committee has been demanding the extension of retention premiums until the collective agreement comes into force. As it stands, the employer party refuses to maintain them. The 3.5% premium that healthcare professionals are getting and the premiums offered in 24/7 centres of activities to full-time employees

The next negotiation meeting is scheduled on March 30. The FIQ wants to get into real negotiations and plans to mobilize healthcare professionals if the government remains avoidant. There's a limit! ■

- 1. Nathalie Nolet, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins des Cantons-de-l'Est
- 2. Nancy Berthil, Syndicat des professionnelles en soins du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Stay up to date on  
your nego!  
[fiqsante.qc.ca/nego](https://fiqsante.qc.ca/nego)

Remember that the FIQ believes the forum does not provide the space necessary to discuss healthcare professionals' demands or to agree



Laurier Ouellet, Vice-President, and Julie Ratté, Union Consultant

**UNION REP MOBILIZATION STRUCTURE:  
INITIAL FINDINGS**

The delegates have received a first report on the union rep mobilization structure pilot project since it was adopted in June 2022. Composed of one representative from each of the FIQ and FIQP affiliated unions, this structure aims to share information and ideas, facilitate networking, training and the organization of healthcare professional mobilization.

Since last June, 10 meetings were held. The structure can address various issues, but given the provincial negotiations underway, most of the meetings focused on negotiations. Consequently, the next meetings will focus primarily on negotiations since they are the Federation's top priority. The union reps in the structure are responsible for rolling out the provincial negotiation mobilization plan in their respective unions.

Some issues were mentioned, including the instability of union reps attending the meetings, the lack of resources on local union

teams and the need for union reps to build bridges between members and their local union rep structures. Adjustments will be made to improve the structure's efficiency and operation.

For the delegates, it's an overall positive report. They believe we must continue to invest in this important structure to more easily reach and mobilize members. It is a structure that is under construction, but that will pay off in the end to organize, structure and ramp up healthcare professionals' mobilization across Quebec.

The three-year pilot project will end at the 2025 June Convention. At that time, the conclusions will be presented and delegates will be able to assess the relevance of making it a permanent structure. ■

**SOCIOPOLITICAL  
SECTOR**

**Safe ratios: no law yet, but good progress since 2021**



Left to right: Nassima Cheurfa, Union Consultant, Jérôme Rousseau, Vice-President, Vanessa Bevilacqua, Sandra Gagné, Sara Caron-Guay, Karine Pelletier and Justine Lecomte-Rousseau, Union Consultants

**SAFE RATIOS:  
NO LAW YET, BUT GOOD  
PROGRESS SINCE 2021**

The provincial council was an opportunity for delegates to adopt the report on the 2021-2023 ratios campaign action plan that aimed to obtain a law on safe ratios after the 2022 provincial elections.

While the National Assembly still hasn't adopted a law on ratios, the Intersectoral Ratios Committee, made up of representatives from the FIQ's sectors and services, was happy to have brought safe ratios to the public eye, especially during the last election campaign. While the political efforts made with all parties generated strong political support for ratios, the local union teams rolled out the action plan in the field, organizing a ton of activities around ratios.

The plan had some great actions, including two webinars to deconstruct the myths around ratios, which brought together a thousand participants, both live and

via replays, and The Safe ratios: a rallying *advocacy* project! training was given about thirty times in seven regions in Quebec. Launching the plea for ratios in spring 2022 was also a key moment in the plan. Meanwhile, 12 organizations from various backgrounds joined forces to demand a law on ratios, which led to the creation of a micro website and significant networking, thanks in part to the production of a newsletter.

**DEMAND AT THE  
BARGAINING TABLE**

Healthcare professionals want a law on ratios: they clearly said it during the consultation on negotiations last fall. The demand to adopt a law on safe healthcare

professional-to-patient ratios is an integral part of the demands fought for at the FIQ's bargaining table.

In the coming months, we will demand a law on ratios through our mobilization for negotiations. Once negotiations are done, a new action plan will be developed based on the context. ■



Dr. Claudel Pétrin-Desrosiers, Family Physician, in charge of planetary health at the DMFMU of the Université de Montréal and President of the Quebec Association of Physicians for the Environment

**CLIMATE CHANGE: THE GREATEST HEALTH  
THREAT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

For a labour organization representing 80,000 healthcare professionals, contributing to the fight against climate change is intrinsic as it has direct consequences on the population's health and the care it needs.

In the coming decades, our healthcare settings will be directly affected by climate change. According to Dr. Claudel Pétrin-Desrosiers, the biggest overwhelm for healthcare staff will be from heat waves. From now until 2065, we expect 20,000 deaths in Quebec caused by heat waves. Our capacity to provide care will be seriously put to the test.

Increases in lung and heart diseases as well as diseases spread by ticks; more forest fires and floods, which have a devastating effect on populations; worse air pollution, which damages all body organs and brain health, creates allergies and stress. The impacts of global warming are endless.

Despite everything, Dr. Pétrin-Desrosiers has a message of hope. What if the climate change fight was the biggest health opportunity of the 21st century? What if healthcare professionals could play an important role in raising public and decision-makers' awareness? The trust we put in them would allow them to be the ideal messengers and would mean that public decision-makers would listen to them more.

One thing is certain, and we need to constantly remember it: it will never be too late to take action! That's why we must continue to push our municipal, provincial and federal governments to take action, to focus on prevention, so that in the long term we will see a real decrease in the pressure on the health network. Now that is taking action on social determinants of health!

"Canada's future does not have to hold a steady rise in costs, illnesses and deaths from the effects of climate change on health. If governments speed up measures to strengthen healthcare systems and tackle the fundamental causes of vulnerability, then health risks and costs linked to climate change can be reduced considerably."

- Canadian Institute for Climate Choices

**ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES**

**UNITED.  
DETERMINED.  
MOBILIZED.**

**CONCRETE ACTIONS TO CARRY OUT THE CONVENTION'S ORIENTATIONS**

Now that in-person meetings are permitted, the delegates were finally able to get together in small groups to participate in various workshops. Their content was closely linked to the Convention's areas of focus and the union renewal the FIQ proposed. Since June 2021, the ad hoc strategic planning committee's work had ensured the organization's actions were consistent with these main orientations.



Four workshops were developed, based on the three main areas the FIQ chose for carrying out its actions:

**PROGRESSIVE WOMEN**

Union reps were invited to join in an exercise in getting to know the economic, social and political context by reviewing news articles. The objective was to help them better understand the influence of the general context and government decisions on union activities and to explain it to their members, at general assemblies for example.

What should our union priorities be? What are our main objectives? What guides the decision making? To

answer these fundamental questions, union reps participated in a workshop on how to implement a permanent and feasible process for determining and reviewing the union's priority orientations and actions by involving and engaging its members.

**WOMEN OF ACTION**

The union renewal the FIQ is proposing is based on the secrets of a successful organizer concept. A workshop was held to give unions tools for gathering information from their members, who are at the heart of the approach, especially through mobilizing conversations.

**WOMEN FIGHTING AGAINST SYSTEMIC RACISM**

Knowing how to recognize one's own biases –conscious, unconscious and confirmation bias– is the first fundamental step in fighting against systemic racism. Union reps were invited to join in various exercises to identify stereotypes and discuss those that exist in the healthcare environment. ■



Left to right: Anthony Murray, Union Consultant, Isabelle Trépanier, General Secretary, Johnathan Denis and Héléne Côté, Union Consultants

**STILL ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE**

At the March Provincial Council, delegates reaffirmed that there is zero tolerance for violence. Union reps adopted a revised version of the 2014 policy to fight violence "Towards well-being at work: a policy to fight violence," which serves as a guide for playing an active role in making the public health network a more respectful, violence-free workplace.

Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to fight violence upon new foundations. As an agent of change, the Federation must be aware of social changes and continuously readjust to respond to contemporary realities regarding violence, harassment and discrimination. That is why it subscribes to Joyce's Principle and why it is making the fight against racism a priority for the organization. This is also why it addresses the discrimination of sexual and gender identities head on.

The policy's main objective is to tackle the root of the problem, which means taking preventive action. It is imperative to prevent conflicts, harassment and violence, to not tolerate them in any form and to support their resolution. It is through preventive action that we can break the isolation of victims.

Consequently, the Federation intends to promote egalitarian relationships based on respect and cooperation, to promote respect and civility in every work-related situation and to encourage collaboration with employers to avoid or put an end to any form of violence via the appropriate means.

Violence is a complex matter, in particular since there is still a strong culture of silence around it. We hope to upend this trend with the revised policy.