



ENACTION

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Special Provincial Council - Negotiations
on April 6

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The sectoral agreement on working conditions reached by the FIQ and ratified by the delegates on December 8, 2020 is not affected by the rejection of the intersectoral offers.

SALARY, RETIREMENT, PARENTAL RIGHTS AND REGIONAL DISPARITIES THE DELEGATES REJECT THE SAME OFFER AS 10 MONTHS AGO!

“No, Ms. Lebel! Once again, it’s no!” That was the message sent by the FIQ and FIQP delegates meeting virtually in a Special Provincial Council – Negotiations on April 6, rejecting the latest offers from the government. At the same time, the Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS) delegates were doing the same.

One year after the collective agreements expired, one year after the health emergency started, the government proved on March 31 that it still had not understood anything: it presented the APTS-FIQ Alliance an offer similar to the one 10 months ago which was rejected outright.

Once again, the government is offering a 5% salary increase over three years, with lump sums for some under certain conditions. A maximum of 1% additional increase will be given on March 31, 2023 if Québec’s economy is doing well and if inflation is higher than expected. The government is not taking any risks.

The APTS-FIQ Alliance’s salary demand is quite clear: 12.4% over 3 years, including 7.4% in salary catch-up. We must make up for years

of underinvestment in traditionally female professions so that salaries are commensurate with expertise and thus attract and retain healthcare professionals, professionals and technicians in the network.

From the beginning of the negotiations, the government has insisted on proposing the creation joint inter-union committees on retirement and parental rights. The APTS-FIQ Alliance wants to negotiate measures now, that encourage employees to work longer in good conditions, reduce the cost of early retirement, make taking leaves more flexible for parents and improve leaves related to pregnancy.

Once again, and despite the many APTS-FIQ Alliance demands, nothing is planned for regional disparities. This

is a disaster for the regions affected by these provisions!

The APTS-FIQ Alliance position is abundantly clear: as long as the government does not offer a salary catch-up and major gains are not obtained on retirement, parental rights and regional disparities, the APTS-FIQ Alliance cannot reach an agreement that would satisfy the 131,000 healthcare professionals, professionals and technicians in the health and social services network. Their expectations are high, and rightly so, and the government must make a major effort. Negotiations are not over! ■



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WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

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THE HOME STRETCH!

Nancy Bédard

In the coming weeks, we will be entering the home stretch in the negotiation of the collective agreement. Mobilization will be more essential than ever. Together, we have the power to demand the government recognize our expertise!

INVEST IN THE WOMEN IN THE NETWORK, NOT IN CEMENT!

On April 12, after having rejected the latest government offers, about one hundred APTS-FIQ Alliance union representatives gathered in Quebec City, in front of the Treasury Board building and poured concrete on the first three government offers which proposed practically the same salary offers of 5% over three years.

While the Legault government insists on investing in construction and infrastructures to the detriment of the women who hold the health and social services network together, this symbolic action launched a clear message: no agreement without a salary catch-up. The Alliance is demanding a 12.4% salary increase, including 7.4% in salary catch-up.

"The expertise of our 131,000 members, must be compensated" stated the presidents of the APTS-FIQ Alliance, Andrée Poirier and Nancy Bédard. It's not normal that we are still suffering from austerity policies in 2021 because our members are overwhelmingly women. It's time the premier and his companions leave the 1950s and arrive in the 21st century, because the time for being paid a woman's wage is over", they went on to say.

We are in the final kilometers of this extraordinary marathon through the third wave of the pandemic. The delegates outright rejected the employer offer, almost the same as 10 months ago. I have heard your anger, you have had enough with not being taken seriously by a government which chooses to invest in concrete and construction sets aside those that provide care and services in the health and social services network. For the third time in 18 months, the government lacked the political courage at a time when they should support the thousands of women who have held the health network together since the beginning of the pandemic. The insult of putting an offer of 5% over three years on the table again is unacceptable!

The healthcare professionals' must be compensated for their expertise! Far from being generous, the president of the Treasury Board merely protected the purchasing power of the nurses, licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists and clinical perfusionists in the last offer. That does not compensate for the last 20 years during which successive governments have increased

inequalities between healthcare professionals and other male professions with salary increases below inflation.

How can we hope to repair the health network if we do not have the necessary tools, such as safe working and practice conditions, attractive salaries to attract the new generation that we so desperately need and retain the more experienced healthcare professionals? How can essential care and services be maintained if the government does not take the ultimate action to address the labour shortage? How can the government still condone the deliberate discrimination against women working in the public sector when they are the ones who kept the economy going during the pandemic?

Over the next few weeks, we will be rolling out a major communication and mobilization campaign to show the premier and the president of the Treasury Board that there has been enough discrimination against women in the public health network! Recognition of the care professions requires better salaries. It is high time that the government

had the courage to give priority to women, that it finally recognizes the expertise of those who assist and care for Quebecers.

A profession is worth as much as a trade. But for François Legault's government, a male is worth more than a female. The message we are sending to the premier is that being paid a woman's wage in 2021 is over!

Negotiations are not finished. We are the largest labour organization to have obtained a tentative agreement on working conditions that will really make a difference, both for the thousands of healthcare professionals and for the population. But the negotiations will not be completed until we have salary advances, better conditions to guarantee access to services and care in remote areas, guarantees to avoid precariousness at retirement and greater flexibility for parents.

This spring, the premier has an historic meeting with the healthcare professionals. Ready and determined, we will be there to negotiate the end of discrimination that persists against women. ■

