

INFORMATION
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NEGOTIATION SECTOR

Employer's sectoral offer on December 17, 2019

presented to the Special Provincial Council - Negotiations
on January 22 and 23, 2020



REGROUPEMENT
DES FIQ



Patients at the heart of the network, staff at the heart of our concerns

The offer of the Comité patronal de négociation du
secteur de la santé et des services sociaux

Presented to the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la
santé du Québec - FIQ

With a view to renewing the provincial
provisions of the collective agreement



CPNSSS

Comité patronal de négociation
du secteur de la santé
et des services sociaux

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NOTE TO READERS

This offer was made in accordance with the current legislative provisions. The negotiation spokespeople will need to take into account the new legislative provisions.

Considering the discussion forums under the stewardship of the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor, certain problems included in the employer intentions can be discussed once the work on the forums has concluded.



Foreword

It is the Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux's (CPNSSS) mandate to negotiate and approve the stipulations covered by the *Act respecting the process of negotiation of the collective agreements in the public and parapublic sectors* (CQLR, c. R-8.2), under the authority delegated by the government to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

With this mandate, the CPNSSS negotiation team conducted a thorough analysis with a view to renewing the provincial provisions of the 2016-2020 collective agreement, in particular through the work done by the various work committees provided for in the collective agreement, as well as a consultation conducted among institutions in the health and social services network and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux (MSSS).

The CPNSSS developed this offer with a clear vision of the network's current issues and with consideration for patients' evolving needs. It proposes intentions that could help the parties reach an agreement. It presents the context in which the parties will negotiate, as well as the priorities for the network. Furthermore, it lays out the guiding principles, which promote effective communication and collaboration with labour organizations. Lastly, it presents the CPNSSS's proposal in four areas of focus, which serve as a foundation for the employer party's intentions.

Context

The sectoral negotiations are unfolding against a backdrop of broader governmental issues. Certain issues are absolutely essential and should remain a main focus for all stakeholders throughout the negotiations. The key issues and objectives addressed in this offer should be taken into consideration at the various intersectoral and sectoral bargaining tables, throughout negotiations, in their respective areas of action.

- a) The issue of workforce availability and maintaining a quality service offer for the population;
- b) The issue of employees' overall health;
- c) The issue of educational success;
- d) The issue of accessibility to health care and social services.

The structural changes to the network; changing expectations and needs of the population; and the legislative, economic, socio-demographic and technological changes over the years have all had an impact on the efficiency of processes, organization of work and workforce availability. In addition, the generational diversity of the approximately 270,000 network employees also has an impact.

The Quebec population has legitimate requirements when it comes to access to care and quality services. At the same time, its health problems are growing and increasingly complex. What's more, the expanse of territory the network covers and the scope of the care and service offer require more efficient work organization, as well as a qualified workforce with flexible availability. All this at a time when job market constraints only exacerbate the issues and workforce availability.

Consequently, our network concerns are focused on staff recruitment and retention strategies and will be for years to come. As partners, we need to show leadership that will help us to tackle these issues in these negotiations.

Considering the scope of health and social services program spending, it is very important that we make appropriate and effective choices in the next few months. Remember that this spending went up by 5.9% in 2019-2020, amounting to nearly \$41 billion dollars and accounting for over 50% of the Quebec government's program spending.

With a view to doing things differently, this offer is a clear demonstration of the network's desire to create access to and continuously improve care and services for the Quebec population. It also demonstrates the network's desire to take care of its employees by offering them good working conditions and a rewarding work environment.

Guiding principles

The CPNSSS firmly believes that as partners we can find innovative solutions to protect and develop the network's efficiency to ensure quality care and services.

To do this, both during discussions with the union party and while adopting negotiated measures, the CPNSSS will govern its actions so as to uphold the following guiding principles:

- Ensure the accessibility of care and services for the population while taking the reality of the network into account;
- Ensure there's a sufficient, qualified workforce to meet the population's growing needs;
- Ensure continuous improvement of the quality and safety of care and services;
- Take into account the importance of recognizing, valuing and supporting employees.

Negotiation orientations and priorities

The negotiation orientations and priorities proposed by the CPNSSS are divided into four main areas:

- **AREA 1 CONSISTENCY WITH THE SERVICE OFFER**
Ensure the accessibility, continuity, quality and safety of care and services
- **AREA 2 IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES**
Appreciate and support staff in the health and social services network
- **AREA 3 MORE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION**
Make some of the processes in the collective agreement more flexible and simpler
- **AREA 4 UPDATE THE WORK CONTRACT**
Modernize the collective agreement

With this in mind, the CPNSSS invites the union party to collaborate, discuss problems and share its concerns. As negotiating parties, we will be asked to propose solutions in order to come to a satisfactory agreement to renew the collective agreement.

AREA 1: CONSISTENCY WITH THE SERVICE OFFER

Ensure the accessibility, continuity, quality and safety of care and services

Issues

Quebec currently has full employment, as does the network, leaving some sectors and job titles with a marked workforce shortage. That said, given the legal and administrative context, network institutions remain obliged to offer care and services to the population and having an available workforce is a crucial part of fulfilling this obligation.

Over the years, several measures have been integrated into the collective agreement to promote employee recruitment and retention in the network. However, it is clear that certain benefits that were granted did not enable us to meet this objective, in particular due to challenges in applying the measures and/or changing needs.

Furthermore, while the collective agreement changes with each renewal, some working conditions that were granted in a specific context are no longer suitable.

Workforce shortages and generational diversity increase management challenges related to the organization of care and services, resulting in staff shortages. Moreover, in some job categories, people prefer part-time positions, making it more difficult to create work schedules.

Consequently, we require more efficient management of the network's human resources and must reconsider certain benefits in the collective agreement in order to encourage current network employees to work more.

Employer intentions

Encourage more availability and time at work

It is a challenge to replace staff absences and days off. We will need to maximize the availability of our workforce to maintain services for patients, as well as for teams that sometimes have to work with reduced staff due to absenteeism.

This means we will need to review certain provisions in the collective agreement, in particular by creating more management flexibility in order to boost workforce availability, promote work attendance and stabilize teams.

Review certain benefits granted in specific contexts

Some benefits no longer meet the needs they were initially implemented to meet. Other provisions must be reviewed because they granted benefits at a time when there was a staff surplus.

It is therefore appropriate to review certain benefits in the collective agreement that are no longer adapted to the current situation and that do not promote greater workforce availability.

Promote more flexible processes in the organization of work time

There is not enough flexibility in the day-to-day management of network activities given the rules for overtime, provisions stipulating the number of weekly hours, and the framework for work schedules. Scheduling should be done in a way that promotes regular work hours, not reduces them.

It is necessary to review the provisions so that the network can organize work time in a way that is adapted to employees and to decrease the amount of overtime, while taking patients' needs into account.

AREA 2: IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Appreciate and support staff in the health and social services network

Issues

As previously mentioned, Quebec's full employment exacerbates challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. Naturally, the network is concerned about the need for a qualified workforce to meet the population's changing needs.

While the network has a lot to offer in terms of job opportunities and diverse fields of activity, it faces major challenges when it comes to staff recruitment and retention.

What's more, far too often the network's name is sullied in traditional and social media, making it more difficult to attract new staff and convince them that the network is a top employer. The network has dedicated employees who put their heart into their work, which is why the negative portrayal of the network in Quebec news is so hard to explain.

It is time to take responsibility and explore solutions together that will enhance and promote network jobs, all the while taking care of current employees.

Employer intentions

Appreciate staff by reviewing specific conditions

Due to the population's growing and increasingly complex needs, more effort is required to attract and retain qualified staff. Despite current efforts, there is still an imbalance between staff supply and demand, especially in sectors such as residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) and youth centres (CJs).

Therefore, it is essential that we review certain working conditions in order to better retain qualified staff and ensure that these conditions apply to employees who work directly with specific clientele groups.

Recognize skill development

New technology, the professionalization of jobs, the rise in care and service quality standards, and the changing needs of the population all change or influence the skill set required by network staff. Individuals are still responsible for their ongoing training, even though the network's institutions offer skill development programs.

We need to ensure we are consistent in giving recognition for postsecondary education and recent adaptations, especially with respect to the *List of job titles, descriptions, salary rates and scales in the health and social services network*.

Promote jobs in the health and social services network

Employees are at the very heart of the network's patient care and services. The institutions cannot promote network jobs alone, while also offering an attractive and stimulating work environment conducive to retaining its workforce, while at the same time the media is portraying the network negatively. The institutions need union organizations' and the network staff's help to promote the network and its employment opportunities.

The union organization and employees must join forces with the institutions to restore the good name of the network and promote its jobs.

AREA 3: MORE EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION

Make some of the processes in the collective agreement more flexible and simpler

Issues

The structural and organizational reforms over the last several years have created a discrepancy between some of the collective agreement's provisions and care and service management needs. Considering the network's new organization and patients' evolving needs, we need to change our way of doing things in order to manage the network's resources more efficiently.

Some of the daily challenges in the network include working around union leaves, the many committees, and disability leave follow-up parameters.

As such, it would be good for both parties to review these processes, which have become cumbersome or outdated over time. It is imperative that we implement innovative and appropriate measures and management methods to ensure greater efficiency, while respecting the parties' rights and obligations.

Employer intentions

Be more flexible and efficient in applying the collective agreement

Some provisions in the collective agreement include actions that add no value, generate costs for the institutions, and pertain to processes that are no longer suitable or are detrimental to work attendance. They burden administration when all efforts should be focused on employees' work attendance.

It is time to review and modernize these provisions to create more flexibility when applying them.

Improve dispute resolution mechanisms

Several dispute resolution mechanisms in the collective agreement create unnecessary delays for both the union and employer parties, whether it be for disability cases, complaints, grievances or changes to job titles and wording. In addition to these delays, the procedures generate significant costs for both parties and create confusion around the roles and responsibilities of the various people involved. This creates frustration for everyone involved, which can then have repercussions on the atmosphere at work.

It is necessary to review these procedures and their conditions, and even to evaluate alternative solutions that promote amicable dispute resolution.

AREA 4: UPDATE THE WORK CONTRACT

Modernize the collective agreement

Issues

Labour relations are evolving along with the many applicable laws, which are frequently updated to take into account new work realities and societal changes. It is necessary to adapt the provisions that govern relationships between the parties, to modernize the collective agreement by making the necessary changes to particular legislative and regulatory provisions.

Furthermore, after all these years, there are still challenges in interpreting and applying certain provisions in the collective agreement, which leaves the door open for all kinds of disputes.

By clarifying some segments and eliminating incongruous parts in the collective agreement, the work contract will be able to provide the parties with more security and meet the network's current needs, while also promoting a better work climate.

Employer intentions

Standardize or clarify certain provisions in the collective agreement

Employees' family, personal and professional situations pose challenges for the network, which has to constantly adapt to societal changes. Quebec laws must also adapt to the changes.

It is therefore necessary to adapt the collective agreement to today's realities. Furthermore, we recommend that certain provisions be clarified to make them easier to comprehend and apply.

Modernize the collective agreement and correct incongruous elements

Laws and work environments are constantly evolving. As a result, some provisions become inappropriate or outdated. Parties may question what they mean, leading to inconsistent application in a context that is different from the one in which they were negotiated.

As such, it would be wise to amend or change some provisions in the collective agreement to resolve application problems and update it.

Conclusion

The collective agreement sets out the working conditions for network employees, but it also has a direct impact on the public care and service offer. The negotiating parties have a joint responsibility to review, introduce and consolidate measures that will improve the network's operations, while appreciating and taking care of its employees. The current momentum of negotiations offers an opportunity for innovation.

The CPNSSS is eager to begin discussions with the union party in the coming weeks. We are confident that the parties will be open and willing to make the necessary compromises in order to help advance their respective positions. This is how we will come to a satisfactory agreement that all parties can be proud of, while also benefiting the network's employees and patients.



Montreal office:
1410, rue Stanley, 6th floor, Montréal (Qc) H3A 1P8
Phone: 514-873-1800

Quebec City office:
2400, av. d'Estimauville, secteur 2200, Québec (Qc) G1E 7G9
Phone: 418-663-5225