

Influenza A (H1N1)

In July, the FIQ had discussions with the Quebec public health authorities on the precautions to be taken if there were a resurgence of Influenza A (H1N1), more specifically concerning pregnant care professionals. The correspondence of June 30, July 3 and July 16 showed the contents of these discussions.

The death of a young pregnant woman last week in Montréal raised new questions and concerns in the health and education communities. In reaction to this situation, Canadian and Quebec public health authorities publicly reaffirmed that the instructions issued last June were still in force, given the low rate of complications and deaths observed to da-

te. The authorities consider that the measures to minimize propagation of the virus – hand washing, isolation of people exhibiting symptoms, coughing into the elbow, etc. – are sufficient.

Regarding the question of protective reassignment of pregnant workers, the *Ministère de la Santé* is waiting for an opinion from the Institut national de santé publique on this subject. In this context, the information transmitted by the FIQ in its correspondence of July 16, 2009 remains relevant.

A pregnant worker working in a care environment may exercise the right to protective reassignment (RPTE) in accordance with Section 40 of the Act respecting occupational health and safety



in order to be reassigned for the duration of her pregnancy, or until epidemiological knowledge justifies a change, to “duties not involving close contact with clients exhibiting a flu-like syndrome (FLS) or a confirmed Influenza A (H1N1) infection”.

The FIQ will continue to monitor the progress of the situation closely.

Abortion clinics

Minister Yves Bolduc was criticized two weeks ago in seeking to impose the application of operating room standards on clinics that have offered pregnancy interruption services for over twenty years. The Minister claimed that the Collège des médecins had recommended such a measure to him, even though the Collège said that it had never requested this.

The FIQ took a position in the debate, publishing a press release to insist on the necessity to maintain free and unrestricted access for women seeking an abortion.

Given that there was no reason to require that abortions be performed in a surgical environment, the Minister finally backed down and undertook to remove these procedures from Bill 34. For some observers, this episode leaves doubts about the Minister’s ability to perform his duties.

Summer period

Summer, which had barely arrived, is already coming to an end. In the past week, we can feel that the back to work movement has begun. However, many people had the wisdom to wait until August to take their annual vacations. Like these vacationers, the news is following the rhythm of these lovely summer days and offers little information to fuel the publication of FIQ Express.

On September 9, summer will be over and the FIQ Express will resume its regular publishing schedule.