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ENACTION

FÉDÉRATION INTERPROFESSIONNELLE DE LA SANTÉ DU QUÉBEC | www.fiqsante.qc.ca



At the microphone: Francine Sigouin, CSSS de Dorval-Lachine-LaSalle

INITIAL TRAINING OF NURSES NEW STRATEGY, SAME PRIORITY: DEFENDING THE MEMBERS

At the December Federal Council, the FIQ'S objective was still to continue the work stipulated in the timetable in order to reach a decision by June 2013 in favour of or against the Bachelor of Nursing degree as the entrance standard to practice the nursing profession. However, a new portrait of the situation and an analysis of the trends, challenges and the stakes have led the Federation to shift its strategy to defending the members' interests.

Three meetings of the interministerial-partners working group, steered by the Ministry of Health and Social Services and in which the FIQ takes part, are scheduled before the end of the work in June 2013. Right now, the relevancy of an eventual upgrade is no longer the issue for the FIQ, because the shift of initial training for nurses to a Bachelor of Nursing degree as requested by the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec*, is no longer in doubt. In fact, the latter has the support of the majority of the major players in the working group. Remember that the OIIQ wants the new entrance standard to be in force as of 2014.

KEY TRANSITIONAL MEASURES

Thus, it must be pointed out that the upcoming work for the working group will be on the transitional measures for the upgrade. Since the upgrade in

the initial training of nurses is an OIIQ project and its application is governed by the legislation and regulations, the decision-making power is therefore not in the hands of the FIQ. However, as the labour organization representing the majority of the healthcare professionals in Québec, the FIQ can use its bargaining power in order to influence the decisions in such a way as to insure that this change is made in the best interest of its members, and this, whether they are nurses with a college diploma or a university degree, licensed practical nurses or respiratory therapists.

The FIQ has serious concerns about the quickness with which the work is currently being carried out without a complete analysis of all the impacts and outcomes of such a change being done and taking all the time necessary to do it. The stakes are high as much

for the healthcare professionals, the health network as for the public. For the FIQ, if the Bachelor of Nursing degree becomes mandatory to obtain a permit to practice, the OIIQ, the MSSS, the Ministry of Education, the AQESSS and the CPNSSS must commit to ensuring a certain number of guarantees to avoid disastrous consequences in the Québec health network.

CONTEXTS TO BE CONSIDERED

Various contexts can have an impact on the calling into question of initial training and must be taken into account. At this time, the economic context is the biggest obstacle to the OIIQ project, because significant investments are needed to finance this upgrade, not only for the labour force and the health network in general, but also to organize the education system

CONT'D P. 3

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EXPERTS IN CARE

HEALTH MONTH 2013

This year, the theme to mark nurses day, licensed practical nurses day, respiratory therapists day and perfusionists day during the FIQ's Health Month is "Experts in care". The FIQ thus wants to showcase the work of the healthcare professionals who, everyday, demonstrate their extensive know-how. They are recognized masters in the art of care, they are experts in care. The FIQ hopes that all the work they do and their skills are recognized on these special days. Watch for the poster which will be distributed in your institution in May.

For more information: <mois-sante.info>

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

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MISSION POSSIBLE

Régine Daurand

You have surely heard the announcements about the FIQ aired on English radio stations over the last few weeks. A French language video clip has also aired on some of the French language television stations. This clip includes a portion of the video clip made within the context of the 25th anniversary festivities of our organization. We see a jogger joined by other joggers during the run, making the parallel with the FIQ healthcare professionals who, together in the same labour force, make it possible for their demands to cross the finish line.

Today, I am telling you that, in the current context, together, we must make use of strategies in our battles to win the next races which are looking like they will be rough. The initial training file is a good example. It is extremely important for our organization, because the stakes are high and a large number of players are involved.

The issue of initial training is an opportunity to recall the primary role that the unions play in the protection of their members.

upgrade will be quickly addressed. The Federation thinks that it should take the path that best serves the members.

UNION ACTION ALWAYS IN THE RUNNING

While many myths about the labour movement are constantly being spread by the Right, the issue of initial training is an opportunity to recall the primary role that the unions play in the protection of their members. If the transitional measures set up are not sufficient, fair and respectful of the nurses, whether they have college or university training, it is these same professionals who will suffer the repercussions from them while weakening the health network more.

In light of the evolution of this file and the accelerated pace of the discussions held within the interministerial-partners working group, in which the FIQ participates, we have decided to adopt a new strategy, that of positioning the Federation in its union mission of defending the interests of its members.

Our participation in the working group makes it possible for us to take the temperature of the water as the work progresses and to influence the decisions. Right now, many of the major players agree with what the Order wants and the Bachelor of Nursing degree becoming the entrance standard is clearly leading.

I invite you to attend the general information assemblies on this subject in large numbers in your institutions in order to have your concerns heard and to better understand the issues. ■

AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE

I remind you that a modification to the entrance standard for the practice of the nursing profession is an OIIQ project and not a project of the Federation. Our organization is not part of the decision-making process in this file.

Just the same, there remain major components which for the time being are unknown. The Federation must therefore be ready to confront all possibilities. The schedule of the work of the working group indicates that the clock is ticking and that transitional measures for an

“PROFILE OF UNION DENSITY: BEYOND THE MYTHS”

A recent study on the state of union density, carried out by the *Laboratoire d'études socio-économiques* at the *Université du Québec à Montréal*, was presented at this Federal Council. Researchers, Martine Lauzon and Frédéric Rogemoser explained to the delegates that the anti-union talk is not new and that it has existed since the 1940's.

Their socio-economic analysis clearly demonstrates that the myths persist and a lot of work remains to be done to combat the bad press towards labour organizations and to defend their mission and their contribution to Québec society. The real profile of union density using various social and economic indicators gave the delegates additional tools and arguments to succeed. ■



HAPPY RETIREMENT!

At this Federal Council, the president of the Federation pointed out that Paul Chaput, Coordinator of Sectors and Services at the FIQ, was retiring. She wanted to sincerely thank him for his many years of work for the organization. The members of the Executive Committee, the employees of the Federation and the delegates wished him a well-deserved retirement.

INITIAL TRAINING

New strategy, same priority: defending the members (CONT'D)



At the microphone: Brigitte Lacroix, CSSS du Granit - SPSE

NEW STRATEGY, SAME PRIORITY: DEFENDING THE MEMBERS

(CONT'D)

at both the college level and the university level which, presently, do not have the structure to absorb the impacts.

The delegates agreed that the Federation should intervene in all issues likely to have an impact on the healthcare professionals' conditions of practice, on their working conditions, on their organization of work and on the organization of care and services intended for the public in order to obtain formal commitments between now and the end of the work of the working group. They also decided to make the necessary representations with the appropriate decision-makers and bodies in order to delay the effective date of this change set for 2014.

WHAT DO THE DELEGATES THINK?

During this Federal Council, the 600 delegates had the opportunity to discuss with colleagues with the same job title the possible impacts of an eventual upgrade in the initial training of nurses on their professional and union reality as well as the issues that concern them. The delegates could also express their concerns as nurses, licensed practical nurses and respiratory therapists regarding this file. The *FIQ en Action* is publishing the main findings from these discussions.

NURSES

The nurses said they are worried about the requirements for

positions, the recognition of experience and expertise for the nurses as well as access to continuing education. They are, in particular, afraid of a depreciation of the nurses with college training resulting in de-motivation and insecurity for them. They also have a certain apprehension for an increase of tensions and conflicts due to a climate of competition as well as a limitation in their scope of practice.

They have concerns about a professional career path due to a limitation of career opportunities resulting from an increase in positions reserved for the nurse clinicians and not respecting seniority. They also expressed worries about the attraction and retention of nurses on the current shortage, the training in the regions, the work-studies-personal life balance and the way the employers will behave regarding the poor management and the use of their skills.

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSES

The licensed practical nurses are concerned about their own professional reality and an eventual upgrade in the initial training of their own profession. They indicated wanting to find the means to carry out their professional role and to have their profession recognized more and to be respected.

They are concerned that an upgrade in the initial training of nurses will create a priority for the

level of diploma to the detriment of experience and expertise. They also fear impacts on the shortage, on the posting of positions, on mobility, on work overload for the licensed practical nurses without any additional remuneration and a lack of access to positions in all centres of activities for licensed practical nurses and to care for people living in remote regions.

RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS

The respiratory therapists expressed worries about a reduction in the tasks of nurses with college training to the benefit of the nurses with a university education, the non-recognition of experience for access to positions, an increase in the nursing shortage in remote regions, a rivalry between nurses according to their level of diploma and an increase in the workload for all the healthcare professionals.

They also fear it will be difficult for the respiratory therapists to be part of the multidisciplinary teams, the nurse clinicians will take on more professional autonomy to the detriment of the other healthcare professionals and a migration towards front-line care.

Despite the perfectly legitimate worries brought to light, the discussions of the three groups were full of information and provided solutions. ■

GENERAL INFORMATION ASSEMBLIES ATTEND THEM!

The FIQ hopes that all the healthcare professionals can identify and promote their point of view on the upgrade in the initial training of nurses. This file also generates many questions particularly on the working conditions and the future of the profession. This is why local general assemblies will be held over the coming weeks in order to have a collective analysis and reflection.

In this respect, the Federation is producing a special publication on the initial training of nurses. Your local union representatives will be meeting you in your workplace to give you a copy. You can also consult it on the FIQ website.



NEGOTIATION

THE FIQ,
A STRONG VOICE,
ACTIONS THAT COUNT



PAY EQUITY AUDIT

A report was given to the delegation during this Federal Council on the work carried out by the Federation in the scope of the pay equity audit.

AGREEMENT FOR FOUR JOB TITLES

Last February 15, the FIQ reached an agreement with the *Conseil du trésor* concerning the pay equity audit for the following four job titles:

- Care Counsellor Nurse
- Nurse First Surgical Assistant
- Specialty Nurse Practitioner
- Specialty Nurse Practitioner Candidate

Remember that these four job titles, created following demands from the FIQ during the 2005 round of negotiations, were excluded from the jobs to be evaluated during the 2006 pay equity exercise, because the Pay Equity Act stipulated an evaluation of the predominantly female jobs that existed in 2001.

An amendment to the Pay Equity Act in 2009, forced the *Conseil du trésor* to carry out a pay equity audit by December 31, 2010 in order to correct the differences generated by the pay equity exercise and to pay the compensations, if applicable. The agreement concluded corrects this shortcoming and proposes a salary readjustment as of June 30, 2008.

Thus, the salary scale of the care counsellor nurse is increased by 2.33% as of June 30, 2008, that of the nurse first surgical assistant by 7.14%, that of the specialty nurse practitioner and the specialty nurse practitioner candidate by 3.00%. The amounts owing as a result of this agreement will be paid as of mid May. Take note that the salary classification obtained by the audit in December 2010 does not change.

Moreover, the FIQ is maintaining the appeal it filed in 2009 in Superior Court to have certain provisions of the Pay Equity Act, amended in 2009 overturned, notably the one concerning the frequency of pay audits every five years. The FIQ is also pursuing the battle to defend the unions and all the other Class 1 employees in the different job titles, members of the FIQ, that have filed complaints with the *Commission sur l'équité salariale* (Pay Equity Commission) in the spring of 2011.

2015 AUDIT

The work on the 2015 pay equity audit started last February with the *Conseil du trésor* following the agreement concluded in December 2012. This agreement stipulates

an evaluation of jobs with no predominance, in particular. The Federation only represents one job category with no predominance, the clinical perfusionists, and that one will be evaluated by the *Comité national des emplois*.

The union and management parties are presently reviewing all the tools to be used for the 2015 audit and the salary relativities, including the survey questionnaire to evaluate the jobs and the job evaluation programme. There is good reason to bet that the results of this review will be transposed to other files where there is an evaluation of the jobs.

A major issue for the carrying out of the work in the pay equity audit is the appeal by the FIQ and other labour organizations presently before the *Commission de l'équité salariale* (Pay Equity Commission) on the 2010 audit. If the conclusions for 2010 remain unknown, what would be the basis for undertaking discussions for 2015? Therefore, a file to follow... ■

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY 2013

The national demonstration will take place on April 27 in Montréal. This year, the *Coalition du 1^{er} mai*, in which the FIQ takes part, wants to send a clear message to Stephen Harper: workers stand firmly together against the attacks of his government and vehemently oppose the repressive measures of employment insurance.

Check the FIQ website to find out the hour and the location of the gathering. Activities are also scheduled in the regions. Find out from your local union team.



RETENTION-ATTRACTION-MISMANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

The delegates had had enough of the mismanagement and waste of public money in the health network. Faced with most administrators not listening and a lack of leadership from the Minister of Health, they adopted an action plan to denounce the various problems that are unacceptable.

The action plan includes several activities that will take place in the weeks ahead. The public denunciations made at the local, regional and national level will highlight the aberrations that exist in the health network and that are the daily lot of the healthcare professionals.

The 600 delegates took advantage of this Federal Council to kick-start the action plan by demonstrating in front of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). Choosing the MUHC was very appropriate because it has been making headlines with allegations of fraud in the construction project and the employer is proceeding with cost-containment measures to the tune of 50 million dollars.