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ENACTION

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



FILING OF THE SECTORAL DEMANDS 65,000 HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WANT TO NEGOTIATE

November 10 marked the official filing of the FIQ sectoral demands for the renewal of the provincial provisions of the collective agreement for the healthcare professionals which expire on March 31, 2015.

“We have been saying for a long time, the FIQ is in solution mode. We know the problems in the healthcare network, we live with them and endure them every day. What we are proposing to the government today, are measures which will improve our healthcare system. We are doing it because we believe in it.”

Régine Laurent

Meeting in a special federal council in Quebec City, the delegates took part in a major demonstration to publicly present their demands and to remind the government that they fully intend to exercise their right to negotiate a satisfactory collective agreement.

The first rally took place in front of the offices of the *Comité patronal de négociation du secteur de la santé et des services sociaux* (CPNSSS) where the political officers for the provincial negotiations, Daniel Gilbert, 2nd Vice-President, and Nancy Bédard, 4th Vice-President, accompanied by the coordination for the negotiations

and the members of the Negotiating Committee, stated that the FIQ demands primarily focus on putting solutions on the table that form a consensus among the members so that they can have working conditions which will enable them to achieve their full potential as professionals and to safely give care.

The delegation then went to the National Assembly where the president, Régine Laurent, spoke. Chanting, “*Ça suffit!*” (That’s enough), she stated that the FIQ will hammer at the government so that it gives the healthcare professionals the means

to give state of the art care. “What we are demanding is better working conditions and better conditions to practice our professions in order to be able to offer better care. What we want, is to have a healthier work environment for us and for the patients” she emphasized.

The FIQ sectoral demands are grouped under four major themes, a reduction of the workload, a reduction in job insecurity, an improvement in the working conditions with a perspective of attraction-retention, and the recognition and enhancement of training/education. ■



NEGOTIATIONS

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WOMEN AND AUSTERITY

Line Larocque, Political Officer for the Status of Women Sector as well as the union consultant and the members of the Status of Women Committee felt it was important to take a moment during this special federal council to make the delegates aware of the negative impacts of the austerity measures imposed by the Liberal government, specifically on the healthcare professionals, workers, women, mothers and informal caregivers.

As a labour organization representing a majority of women, the FIQ cannot remain silent before a government project destroying public services and social programmes. The social inequalities generate poverty, abuse, violence, a lack of education and even serious health problems.

Watch: the *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal* produced a very interesting video on the fact that more women in disadvantaged situations experience inequalities.

<http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/iss/>

TWO DISTURBING DRAFT BILLS

The FIQ recently tabled two memoranda in parliamentary commissions on Bills 10 and 15 that are presently being studied. An overview of the issues that these bills raise was presented to the delegation.

Several delegates talked about the many worries and concerns of the members in a context of multiple administrative reorganizations which, as usual, deflects attention away from the alarming and recurrent problems that the government should be addressing.

BILL 10: TOWARDS A DISMANTLING OF THE STATE

For the FIQ, Bill 10 - An Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies - provides nothing for the healthcare professionals or for the patients. If it is passed as it stands, this bill will distance the care from the patients instead of bringing it closer. It will also centralize the decisions in the hands of the minister instead of decentralizing them in order to provide care which corresponds to the needs of the citizens in all the regions.

In addition to these direct impacts on the health and social services network, and on the public finances, Bill 10 would generate a real upheaval in the management

of labour relations and would set, without a doubt, the tone for more privatization of health care and services and for subcontracting. Despite the precarious state of public finances, the FIQ feels that the solutions are elsewhere rather than in austerity measures and in the radical transformations of structures proposed in this bill.

The pursuit of a balanced budget must stop resting solely on cutbacks. Instead, focus must be placed on increasing the income column through alternative taxation measures the effectiveness of which has been demonstrated. The members are asked to participate in the mobilization activities in all the regions of Québec to mark the tabling of the memorandum on Bill 10.

BILL 15: CONTROL IN ORDER TO CUT

For the FIQ, Bill 15 - An Act respecting workforce management and control within government departments, public sector bodies and networks and state-owned enterprises - is a threat to the availability, accessibility, safety and quality of the care. It shows once

again the government's desire to attack public services. This bill in no way defines or specifies the composition of the workforce for the State.

The main objective of this bill seems to be none other than to reduce the workforce working in the public sector, to slash the current staff and to stop any future renewals of it. Ironically, the essential services legislation, when it is used, requires a larger number of healthcare professionals to ensure services then we find at the present time on the care units in several Québec healthcare institutions.

The government would be better served to apply the existing provisions of an Act respecting health services and social services on workforce planning. Good workforce planning costs the State less and makes it possible to offer better quality care.

The FIQ memoranda can be consulted on its website: fiqsante.qc.ca

Here are 10 good reasons to scrap Bill 10 from the Couillard government:



- It pushes care further away instead of bringing it closer.
- It centralizes the decisions instead of decentralizing them.
- It does not guarantee savings in the end.
- It does not promote democracy.
- It in no way assesses the previous reform which has not been completed.
- It is based on ideas that failed in Alberta.
- It causes chaos in the management of labour relations.
- It sets the stage for more privatization.
- It promotes subcontracting.
- It does not improve access to care.

