

Underinvestment in youth centres: "Hello, anybody there?"

Longueuil, March 24, 2018 – The APTS is calling for reinvestment in services for troubled young people. In the past few years, the Liberal government has cut back in youth centres to the point where their mission is in jeopardy. That mission, we should point out, includes offering specialized rehabilitation services to young people in difficulty and their families. "Our society has devised a tried-and-true system that is unique in the world. But that system nonetheless has to be given the resources it needs to operate at full capacity. Educators, social workers and the teams that take care of our children are at the end of their rope and are holding it together in spite of the entire system being wracked by underinvestment," said APTS President Carolle Dubé with consternation. "How about giving a bit of a breather to young people and the personnel responsible for their care? It's long overdue!"

The APTS calculates that from 2013 to 2017, the number of incidents reported to the Director of Youth Protection rose by almost 10%, whereas budgets were increased by only 6.8%. As a result, wait times are steadily increasing and personnel is increasingly under pressure. "Our members can't keep making up for the lack of human and financial resources. They report that it is not rare for them to have to follow twenty families at the same time – families often grappling with a myriad of complex problems of drug addiction, alcoholism and violence. They are bleeding themselves dry trying to prevent the worst from happening to the children in their care, but there's a limit to what they can endure," decried Carolle Dubé. "They're at the breaking point. Urgent action is needed."

Since 2015, the amount of overtime worked by these employees has skyrocketed. In some youth centres, it has gone up by 33%. "The situation is untenable. Employees are doing this out of love for their work and for the children they have to protect. That's why, starting in this upcoming budget, the government has to put more resources on the ground to give our members the breathing room they need. Let's not wait until something terrible happens," warned the union president. "If Québec really loves its children, now's the time to show it."

To view the first-hand account given by Nancy Poulin, a social worker at the *Centre jeunesse du Saguenay Lac-Saint-Jean*, go to the web page <http://alloyaquelquun.com/fr/temoignages.aspx>.

The APTS

With its 52,000 members, the APTS is an indispensable public-sector union in health and social services. It represents professionals and technicians in over a hundred job titles, in diagnostic services, rehabilitation, nutrition, psychosocial intervention, clinical support and prevention services.