

THE APTS IN GENERAL COUNCIL

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IMPORTANT DECISIONS AND NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT

The General Council held in Lévis from November 13-15 was especially important, given the topics on the agenda and the decisions to be made.

We kicked off our discussions on provincial negotiations, which are central to our work and our very purpose as a union. Although our collective agreement only comes to an end in March 2020, each round of bargaining requires considerable advance preparation as it involves a process of consulting and mobilizing our members. At this General Council, we had to agree on a decision-making structure and alliances to be built with other unions for the upcoming round of collective bargaining.

The APTS has embarked on a new stage by proposing, after much consultation, guidelines for roles and responsibilities at the local level. This marks the end of a lengthy process to achieve a consensus to guide our union activities.

Given the under-representation of women in APTS decision-making bodies, an action plan was proposed to encourage greater involvement. This gave rise to intense discussion and equally interesting decisions.

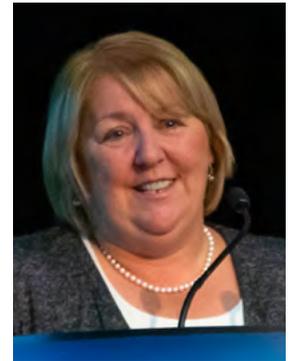
The articles that follow provide an overview of the other items on the agenda.

Currently in most institutions, local bargaining is continuing with a mediator present. To date, only three teams have reached an agreement with their employer: Abitibi-Témiscamingue,

CIUSSS du Nord-de-l'Île-de Montréal and *CIUSSS Montréal West Island*.

These negotiations are complex, given the diverse range of Class 4 job titles and work realities. Our members' level of mobilization over the fall helped drive home the message to management that the best way to ensure access to quality services for the population is by agreeing to decent working conditions.

This is the message that the APTS has been sending the new government. As soon as the *Coalition Avenir Québec* came to power, we conveyed to them the importance of settling local negotiations in the interests of all parties, stressing that professionals and technicians are **INDISPENSABLE** in order for the healthcare system to run smoothly. The APTS is prepared to wipe the slate clean after the last government, but in return we expect the new government to treat our demands seriously about reinvesting in the healthcare system, respecting our members' professional autonomy, and placing greater value on interdisciplinary collaboration.



Carolle Dubé, President

APTS-FIQ ALLIANCE

Delegates approved the proposal to join forces with the *Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec*—FIQ, allowing us to speak on behalf of 130,000 members, 85% of whom are women, who provide direct services that are greatly appreciated and who garner a lot of public sympathy. The two organizations also share similar concerns about work overload and importance of respecting employees' professional autonomy. The night before, the FIQ voted unanimously to support the same resolution that a majority of the APTS delegates adopted at the General Council.

This alliance does not exclude the possibility of a coalition with other unions.



ANALYSIS OF THE NEW POLITICAL JUNCTURE

Marie-Claude Raynault, political officer, and Noëline Allard, socio-political action co-ordinator, shared their thoughts about the new political context in which the APTS will be navigating for the next four years. There are a number of concerns: will the CAQ government use its financial surplus to reinvest in the healthcare system or merely reduce income taxes? Will its efforts to promote multidisciplinary collaboration in healthcare and social services be directed only at nurses or at APTS members as well? Will the new minister – who is known for her interest in performance enhancement and her support for LEAN projects – be receptive to our demands promoting professional autonomy?

Delegates were invited to support our union’s current socio-political action initiatives, which include raising awareness about poverty through the Christmas card campaign organized by the *Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté*, promoting a universal public drug insurance plan, and signing the climate pact calling for urgent action.



In the longer term, we’re preparing discussions on APTS socio-political action priorities, which will be held at the fall 2019 convention, in the aim of developing a political platform.



PROVINCE-WIDE BARGAINING IN 2020

Guillaume Desrochers, bargaining co-ordinator, and Robert Comeau, second vice-president and political officer responsible for bargaining, presented the decision-making structure for the next round of province-wide bargaining, which was adopted by delegates in a unanimous vote. The role of members released from their duties to assist the provincial bargaining team was also reviewed. They will be required to help prepare arguments, support and mobilize teams on the ground, and take part in meetings with the employer side. These members have to be from a variety of professions, regions and missions. A standing committee in charge of mobilization will also be formed.

In the next round of provincial bargaining, the APTS will focus on the idea that “It’s our turn.” This will be our fourth set of negotiations and president Carolle Dubé summarized the proceedings and outcomes of the three previous rounds.

The General Council passed a resolution to consult local executives in the pre-consultation phase. The document for consulting members will be presented at the March 2019 General Council. Once approved, it will be used in a round of consultations with all our members. When the consultation process is complete, our set of union demands can then be adopted in October 2019.

NEW GROUP INSURANCE RATES

Delegates approved the new rates for health insurance, dental care, life insurance and disability plans. Sylvain Sirois, Jennifer Lavoie, Marc-Olivier Pagé and Éric Rousseau on the provincial social security committee outlined the results of negotiations with the SSQ, our insurer. Given the premium holiday made possible by the government contribution, participants' premiums for health insurance will be reduced by about 5% and dental care by 2.2%; the current life insurance and disability insurance rates will remain the same. For details, look for the article in the next issue of our online magazine, *BlueAPTS*.



CALL FOR BIDS FOR JANUARY 2020

Since we'll be issuing a call for bids for the renewal of APTS members' group insurance plan in January 2020, last winter we sent out a questionnaire to all members for whom we had personal e-mail addresses. About 8,040 people responded. Overall, they indicated that they wished to keep the current coverage.

In the coming months, our insurance specifications will be sent to the four qualifying insurance companies: SSQ Insurance, Desjardins Insurance, La Capitale and Industrial Alliance. We'll then be able to analyse the bids in the spring so the General Council can vote on a recommendation in June 2019.

Co-ordinator Jennifer Lavoie spoke briefly about the items that will be included in our specifications



MESSAGE TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT

To prepare for a meeting between the APTS president, Carolle Dubé, and the health minister, Danielle McCann, delegates wrote and signed postcards addressed to McCann, then dropped them into a box marked "Hello? Anybody there?" Click here to watch the [video](#).

REVIEW OF LOCAL BUDGETS AND EQUALIZATION ALLOWANCES

Isabelle Thibeault, Chantal Daoust, Sylvain Sirois and Marc-Olivier Pagé presented the second progress report from the committee in charge of reviewing local budgets and equalization allowances. Delegates then adopted a new by-law on local budgets.

Consensus was reached on the measures set out in the provisions for local budgets. Delegates agreed that having local members contribute 0.12% of their contributory earnings to local union life was sufficient. As for equalization allowances, a new by-law will be proposed at the General Council next spring.



GUIDE FOR LOCAL TEAMS

After months of consultations and drafts, the *Guide de pratique des équipes locales* was presented to the delegation by members of the committee in charge of preparing this guide (France Lizotte, Andrée Poirier, Pascale Leclair-Gingras, Anick Gilbert and Nicole Déry). The entire process reflected the committee's concern for rigour, user-friendliness and flexibility, and recognition of the variable composition of the APTS. A motion inviting local teams to apply the guide and put their own stamp on it was carried unanimously.



PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The provincial representative for the Outaouais region, Andrée Poirier, was elected to the provincial APTS executive committee as secretary. It is also important to note the recent arrival of Nancy Poulin on the provincial council, following her election as provincial representative for the Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean region.



"MASSE" MOVEMENT

Working or unemployed, women face the same injustice and the same battle. That's the slogan for the current campaign denouncing sexist discrimination in employment insurance (*De travailleuses à chômeuses, même injustice, même combat!*) Representatives from the *Mouvement autonome et solidaire des sans-emploi (MASSE)* staffed a booth at the General Council to inform delegates and invite them to sign their [petition](#).



FOSTERING EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION

Philippe Hurteau, Chantal Pelletier, Danielle Duguay, Éleine Giroux and Marie-Claude Raynault presented the action plan developed by the feminist action committee to encourage women to become actively involved in representing members and in decision-making positions at the APTS.

The action plan has four key components:

1. Promoting greater participation of women in all their diversity, among members and local executives.
2. Enlisting women candidates and supporting their interest in elected office.

3. Ensuring better conditions for those actively involved in the APTS.

4. Developing structural measures to achieve equitable representation.

The delegation adopted two proposals to strengthen the action plan: the introduction of an election mechanism to ensure that women have at least 50% representation on provincial and local committees, and a policy to limit the encroachment of union work on elected officers' personal time.

CONTROVERSIAL ASSESSMENT TOOL (OCCI)

The computerized clinical treatment pathway (*Outil de cheminement clinique informatisé - OCCI*) is being introduced in integrated centres (CISSS and CIUSSS), Support Programs for the Autonomy of Seniors (SAPA), rehabilitation centres for clientele with intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder (CRDITSA), hospitals and CHSLDs. The OCCI tool will likely be imposed on professionals and technicians in social work, occupational therapy, specialized education, physiotherapy and nutrition as well.

The APTS has been studying the implementation of the OCCI tool since May 2018. We conducted a survey in which 81% of the 997 respondents reported problems using the tool and stated that it added to their workload, undermined their professional autonomy, and was not suited to their specific needs.



At a meeting on Oct. 17 with the CPNSSS management bargaining committee for the health and social services sector, the APTS briefed its spokespersons about the concrete problems experienced by our members, and denounced the aberrations arising from the imposition of the OCCI tool. The employer viewed this simply as resistance to change.

While waiting for the results of the second survey, the APTS invited its members to display the slogan "Je suis débordé-e, l'OCCI vient en rajouter!" (I'm overworked and the

OCCI is adding to it!)

An [article](#) by Alexandre Touchette pointed to the pitfalls of using a decision-making tool in lieu of clinical judgement.

Delegates voted in favour of steps to promote and defend members' conditions of practice, working conditions and other professional concerns related to the introduction of the OCCI, in order to maintain accessible, good quality services.