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COVID-19

**APTS calls on Minister McCann to guarantee access to protective equipment
for members being sent into CHSLDs**

Longueuil, April 11, 2020 – "I don't accept that occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists and social workers are being used as cannon fodder in nursing homes hit by outbreaks of COVID-19, without personal protective equipment. I am calling on Minister McCann to solemnly pledge to provide these essential measures to protect our members' safety, or if that's not possible, to let them exercise their right to refuse this work."

That was how the president of the APTS, Andrée Poirier, reacted to Health Minister Danielle McCann's intention to transfer some APTS members into CHSLDs that are grappling with multiple cases of COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, professional and technical personnel have been left to fend for themselves when it comes to sanitation materials and protective equipment.

"Our members want to go and help elderly residents in CHSLDs and private nursing homes, but not at the expense of their health and that of their families. Now that the virus is being spread in the community, particularly by asymptomatic people, we have to raise our prevention and safety standards to support employees. The same holds true for their mental health," added the union president.

The opposite is what is happening, however: directives are circulating at the *CIUSSS du Nord-de-l'Île-de-Montréal* indicating that no uniforms will be supplied to health and social services professionals and technicians who have to go to CHSLDs that are struggling with outbreaks of the virus. They will have to wash their contaminated clothing at home.

"It doesn't make any sense! How could the Ministry of Health authorize a CIUSSS to send directives like that? Our members are coming in to work with fear in their hearts, and are being ordered to bring their contaminated clothing back home with them and risk infecting their loved ones. It's completely unacceptable! The health minister can no longer turn a blind eye. She has to take action to ensure the safety of our members. She has a responsibility toward them," concluded Andrée Poirier.

The APTS

The APTS ([*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux*](#)) represents 55,000 members whose role is indispensable in ensuring that health and social services institutions run smoothly. Our members offer a myriad of services to the population in all regions of Québec, including diagnostic services, rehabilitation, nutrition, psychosocial intervention, clinical support and prevention services.

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