

COVID-19

“No more rhetoric!” The APTS calls for genuine recognition of its members’ work and the risks involved

Longueuil, April 14, 2020 – “No more rhetoric! Madam Minister, this virus doesn’t make the same distinctions as you do about which personnel is at risk. The complacency of your managers and the nonchalance of those heading health and social services institutions and the MSSS will only further the virus. Our union’s 56,000 members are coming home from work with fear in their hearts and are bringing that fear into their homes, terrified of transmitting the virus to their families. You have to walk the talk and put your money where your mouth is. Do your homework.”

That’s how the president of the APTS, Andrée Poirier, reacted to the government’s skimpy efforts to improve the situation and remove the obstacles encountered by professionals and technicians since the outset of the crisis. The government’s lack of recognition of their work and the risks they take every day is infuriating. A month and a day after the order declaring a health emergency in Québec, the APTS finds that the excessively narrow view of the MSSS and management in the institutions is unfortunately still placing the health of its members, their families, and the population in danger.

“Personnel in laboratories, medical imaging, radiation oncology, medical electrophysiology, medical engineering, nutrition, youth centres, rehabilitation centres, mental health and home care services are found throughout health and social services institutions. The government stubbornly refuses to recognize the risks it is taking. Will tragedy have to strike before the government shows genuine concern to protect its employees’ safety?” demanded Andrée Poirier.

Given that the virus is now spreading in the community, particularly by people who are asymptomatic, this tunnel vision on the part of the MSSS is depriving a number of APTS members of proper safety conditions and of the hazard premium that would take into account the dangerousness of their work. Today the APTS is launching an [on-line petition](#) calling on Health and Social Services Minister Danielle McCann to apply the hazard premium to all personnel in health and social services, and guarantee them access to measures ensuring their safety and protection, without the restrictions imposed by the MSSS and managers. [\(insérer le hyperlien en anglais\)](#)

“In disregarding the importance of the work performed by 56,000 professionals and technicians in this crisis, the MSSS and managers in health and social services institutions are underestimating the risks involved for our members during this pandemic. The result is that prevention measures are not being implemented in many activity centres, and the necessary personal protective equipment is not being made available to personnel. To top it all off, the hazard premium is only limited to certain types of personnel, even though the realities of community transmission are placing all personnel at risk,” decried Andrée Poirier.

About 10 days ago, the APTS posted a [webpage](#) for members to share their first-hand stories of the realities on the ground. Close to 200 personal accounts attest to the ignorance of managers, who are hiding behind obscure directives as a pretext for refusing to set up measures enabling employees to work from home and failing to distribute sanitation materials and personal protective equipment. In addition to refusing to provide a uniforms, institutions are requiring employees to wash their contaminated clothing at home. The refusal to grant them a hazard premium is the last straw. APTS members are incensed! [\(insérer le hyperlien en anglais\)](#)

“Ms. McCann has already shown an open attitude in the past that is crucially needed now. What we’ve learned from this crisis so far is that we have to take off our blinders and give proper recognition to the work done by all personnel in all facets of the health and social services system. COVID-19 couldn’t care less about the MSSS directives – it goes wherever there’s a gap in protection against it. All personnel in health and social services must be protected and granted genuine recognition of the risks they’re facing, including the hazard premium,” concluded Andrée Poirier.

The APTS

The APTS ([*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique du réseau de la santé et des services sociaux*](#)) represents 56,000 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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Contact:

Mathieu Le Blanc
Communications and media relations officer
Cell: 514 609-2906