

Press release

For immediate release

Youth protection authorities 2020 annual report

We can be “stronger, together” only if urgent need to end work overload is addressed

Montréal, September 23, 2020 — For the APTS (*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*), the 2020 annual report of the DPJ (youth protection authorities), released today, confirms the labour shortage afflicting youth services. It also demonstrates, once again, the urgent need for the government to truly address youth workers’ work overload, to review the organization of services, and to find better ways of integrating new employees.

“The theme of the 2020 report is ‘Stronger, together!’,” says APTS president Andrée Poirier. “This speaks to us directly. Youth workers have to be given the leeway they need to work in partnership with the community and better fulfill their youth protection mandate – which is what the report is advocating.”

The APTS contends that tragedies could be averted if greater resources were assigned to prevention. Massive reinvestment in primary care is needed to support Québec families. We also need to maintain a strong social net by making it possible for youth protection authorities, the school system, educational daycare services, and community organizations to work together in partnership.

In a context where Québec is beginning to experience the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the APTS is concerned about the situation of vulnerable children and is asking Quebecers to be more vigilant. With an increase of 12% a year over the past five years, the upward trend for situation reports is clear – although the first wave of the pandemic led to a worrisome 20.5% drop over April, May, and June. As social distancing measures and home schooling return, the APTS is insisting that every effort be made to ensure that no child falls through the cracks.

Concrete solutions to attract and retain workers

To provide better services for Québec’s children and families, it is crucial to conduct an in-depth review of the conditions under which youth services employees are working and practising their professions. While Minister Carmant has announced investments to create new youth worker positions, it is already proving extremely difficult to recruit candidates to assist professionals who are currently handling unbearable workloads.

Attracting and retaining employees is key to improving services, enabling youth workers to participate in spaces for concerted action, and finding better ways of integrating new employees. One way of doing the latter would be to release experienced colleagues from part of their workload so that they might provide support.

“There are plenty of things we can do to better protect our children, but the political will has to be there,” says Poirier. “Right now, we’re negotiating the renewal of public sector collective agreements – which means this is a moment when we can solve problems we’ve been denouncing for years in youth protection services. The government cannot and must not pass up on this opportunity. We have to do everything we can to rise above the fray and make things better for the children.”

The APTS

The APTS ([*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*](#)) represents some 56,000 professionals and technicians who play a key role in ensuring that health and social services institutions run smoothly. Our members provide a wide range of services for the population as a whole, including diagnostic, rehabilitation, nutrition, psychosocial intervention, clinical support, and prevention services.

– 30 –

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