

*Negotiations for public sector collective agreements*

**Legault government shows utter disrespect for  
professionals and technicians in the health and social services system**

**Longueuil, October 20, 2020** — After several months of contract talks, the APTS (*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*) is pointing out that the process of renewing the collective agreement of its 56,000 members has been brought to a complete standstill by the Legault government. In failing to give its negotiating team clear instructions, the government is not just causing APTS representatives to waste their time at the bargaining table. It is also showing utter disrespect for thousands of workers who are doing everything they can to fight the worst public health crisis in a hundred years.

“It’s as if the government hasn’t bothered to tell its negotiating team that we’re in the middle of a pandemic, work overload is at an unbearable level in the health and social services system, there’s a shortage of professional and technical personnel, and youth protection is in crisis,” says APTS president Andrée Poirier. “Our government couldn’t care less about professionals and technicians representing 106 job titles. Negotiations are completely stalled, and Quebecers will unfortunately pay the price for the government’s inaction at a time when strong action is needed to rebuild our public system.”

**Government’s latest response is deeply unsatisfactory**

The APTS has assigned priorities to its demands – a major task carried out in order to quickly tackle issues of work overload, attracting and retaining workers, youth protection, and members’ health and safety. The government, on the other hand, has hardly budged since filing its offers on May 21. Worse yet, it has completely ignored union proposals and seems determined to aggravate the erosion of working conditions for professionals and technicians.

The government’s disregard for Class 4 employees, who are represented by the APTS, was made obvious when the Ministry of Health and Social Services refused to give them the premiums that are conferred on personnel with other job titles.

“When our businesses need support, the government finds money,” says Poirier. “But when it’s time to support health and social services workers in labs, in medical imaging, in rehabilitation, or in mental health – to name just a few areas – there’s nothing. Since the beginning of this crisis, the Legault government has deliberately ignored the work that our members do and refused to give them benefits that are awarded to other job titles. It’s infuriating!”

**A deteriorating work climate**

The situation is far from rosy in health and social services institutions, and the Legault government’s hardline approach is poisoning the work climate. This is the message that the APTS will bring to the

bargaining table this afternoon. The patience of its members is exhausted – they are sick and tired of being viewed as a joke by a government that seems to believe that the health-care system is made up of only three professions. The APTS will present the employer party with a schedule of meetings during which it will outline solutions to rebuild our public health and social services system.

“I invite the Legault government to assess what the impact would be on care and services if professionals and technicians, to protect their physical and psychological health, stopped doing overtime and started taking their scheduled breaks and lunch periods,” says Poirier. “What would happen to analysis times and waiting lists? I would also suggest that it pay attention to our members’ state of mind after months of being denied fair and equal treatment and the minimum level of respect they are owed. If the Legault government wants to avoid the worst, if it truly wants to improve the public health and social services system, it needs to give instructions to its negotiating team right now so that we can finally reduce work overload and increase the retention of professional and technical staff by improving working conditions in significant ways.”

### **The APTS**

The APTS ([Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux](#)) represents a total of 56,000 members 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.

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