

*Special Commission on the Rights of the Child and Youth Protection*

**Now is the time for the Legault government to commit to implementing the commission's guidelines**

**Longueuil, October 21, 2020** — Given yesterday's announcement by Régine Laurent that the special commission on the rights of the child and youth protection had to delay publication of its final report, the APTS is calling on the Legault government to pledge right now to implement the commission's guidelines to improve youth protection services, first-line services and mental health services.

"We understand the Commission's need for more time to properly wrap up this major report for youth protection -- but the government can't use this as an excuse to put off measures that will improve services in youth protection, first-line support and mental health. Ms. Laurent announced that the guidelines will be made public by November 30. Minister Carmant has to pledge his commitment to make these guidelines the government's, and to implement them as soon as they're unveiled. There have already been too many tragedies," declared Laure Letarte-Lavoie, 4<sup>th</sup> vice-president of the APTS.

For years, youth services have been undermined and shaken by serious problems of work overload and labour shortages, caused in large part by deplorable working conditions and conditions of practice. This situation has been compounded by public-sector managers' failure to listen, particularly when it comes to the organization of work.

"The government boasts about investing \$137 million in youth protection in the past two years, but what we're seeing on the ground is job openings that haven't been filled. It's not normal for the government to offer working conditions that aren't sufficient to attract Quebeckers to one of the most important missions in our public healthcare system: ensuring the well-being of children and families. Twenty years after Camil Bouchard's report was published, is Québec still as crazy about its children? What about its government?" demands Laure Letarte-Lavoie.

**Solutions to improve youth protection**

Eliminating work overload and giving the health and social services system room to breathe are the main objectives set by the APTS in the current talks to renew public-sector collective agreements. This includes offering due recognition in pay to workers who provide specialized services in youth protection.

Yet after being rebuffed by the Treasury Board for the umpteenth time at the bargaining table, our union doubts the government's commitment to improve services for the population. After months of negotiations, the government is stubbornly set on eroding the working conditions in health and social services even further. Professionals and technicians who are members of the APTS feel ridiculed by this lack of consideration for their demands.

"Last year, Ms. Laurent rightly stressed that many children can't afford to wait. They don't have that luxury. The government doesn't either. It has to immediately stop paralysing the health and social services system and give the Treasury Board's negotiators a clear mandate to break the stalemate. We can't wait until the Commission's final report is tabled in the spring before moving forward in our contract talks and improving the working conditions of those who protect our young people. As of now, we have to get on with the task of

improving services for children, families and the population as a whole. The APTS has no shortage of solutions to help accomplish that,” concluded Laure Letarte-Lavoie.

### **The APTS**

The [\*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux\*](#) (APTS) represents 56,000 members who are indispensable in ensuring that public health and social services facilities fulfill their mission. Our members offer an array of services to the Québec population, from diagnostic services to 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