

BARRETTE ON A CRUSADE

On March 9, Gaéтан Barrette was more than thrilled to address the media to reassure everyone about the OPTILAB process, after certain unions painted a grim picture of it, as he put it. That morning in Sept-Îles, at the end of a press briefing on a totally unrelated subject, he took the opportunity to answer journalists' questions and assert that no job would be lost on the North Shore. In the afternoon, after a meeting with doctors in hematology and oncology in Rivière-du-Loup, he held a press briefing – open only to journalists – to put things in perspective and give «objective information.»

All of a sudden the minister appears to be devoting himself to a bona fide educational mission, which proves that our mobilization campaign is getting to him. It's important to keep the pressure on and amp it up between now and April 1.

Our medical technologist's upcoming **blog postings** will take a closer look at our dear minister's arguments to reassure and educate the population.

Stay tuned...

BOMBARDING OUR MNAs WITH LETTERS

No doubt about it, the statements Minister Barrette made in the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Côte-Nord regions are part of a public relations campaign to counter the impact of the formidable opposition to OPTILAB on the union, municipal and grassroots fronts.



The next step in keeping up the pressure is to bombard members of the National Assembly with letters. They are accountable to the population, and the ones who remain silent in the face of such an important issue have to take some of the blame for Minister Barrette's botched projects. We have to pressure them to put their cards on the table and choose between the population and the health minister.

To make things easier for you, the APTS has added a page on our website that enables you to send a letter directly to the MNA in your riding. Go to <http://AlerteOPTILAB.APTSQ.ORG> to take part in the campaign. Feel free to encourage people in your entourage to send letters to MNAs as well, to ensure widespread participation in the movement. If the health minister wants to try and explain himself to all the citizens we've reached through our awareness campaign, he'll have to follow the trail of lab samples being sent from one end of the province to the other!

ACTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 20, 2017

This week, demonstrations will be held in front of a number of Québec health-care institutions to remind Minister Barrette that he's going to hit a wall with his ill-planned implementation of the OPTILAB reorganization. These demonstrations illustrate the APTS's determination to keep fighting to slow down the OPTILAB reorganization process and limit the damages: the loss of quality, expertise and jobs in all regions of Québec. All this waste... for the possibility of saving a few million dollars in several years. Come and demonstrate with our placards and your graffiti messages!



ON THE LABOUR RELATIONS FRONT

In recent weeks, employers in certain OPTILAB lab clusters submitted a draft memorandum of understanding to us for the transfer, and opened discussions in view of the April 1 deadline. For the time being, only labs with a change of employer will have to agree on terms and conditions for transfers to the hub lab's integrated centre.

The memorandum of understanding is necessary to preserve and transfer the rights of the employees concerned. The rights in question include seniority, acquired experience, annual vacation leave, bank of sick leave, the RREGOP (including phased retirement), parental rights, etc.

The APTS wants to ensure that this transfer doesn't cause detriment to the members we represent. This transfer, as you know, is being done at the behest of the MSSS and its head honcho, Gaéтан Barrette.

Despite advances in the memoranda of understanding concerning the transfer, we are assessing the situation of certain lab clusters with a view to contesting the employer's «virtual» transfers.

We also recently received a copy of the partial transfer of activities that the employers have to send to the TAT administrative labour tribunal under *An Act respecting bargaining units in the social affairs sector and amending the Act respecting the process of negotiation of the collective agreements in the public and parapublic sectors*.

The TAT administrative labour tribunal has stated that decisions based on the outcome of the union allegiance votes will be issued on March 31, certifying the winning union for institutions targeted by the OPTILAB project whose vote results are known. This measure precludes the possibility of a vote recount. Decisions for the other institutions will be issued on April 21.