



Press release

For immediate release

*These negotiations are vital!*

### **APTS launches its summer consultation tour in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean**

**Saguenay, July 6, 2020** — As Quebec begins to recover from the first wave of the pandemic that hit us hard this spring, the APTS (*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*) is kicking off its province-wide round of summer consultations in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, under the theme *These negotiations are vital!*

For years, the APTS has been denouncing the serious staff shortages, overwork and stress that have been taking a heavy toll on personnel. Compounded by various health and safety problems, these conditions are eroding the quality of services that Quebecers are entitled to. The health crisis has confirmed the importance of a *public* system of health care and social services, while exposing its fault lines. Despite its shortcomings, the public sector ensured continuity of services, unlike the private sector, which proved to be incapable of doing so.

"The fact that Québec has managed to make it through this first wave is largely due to the professionals and technicians in our public system who never stopped fighting the coronavirus, despite intolerable working conditions and serious gaps in measures to ensure their safety and protection. The government has a duty to provide lasting solutions to the problems that are jeopardizing our public health and social services system, and to duly recognize the value of our members' work. The first step to achieve this is to improve professionals' and technicians' working conditions and conditions of practice. Not only is it necessary, it's vital!" declared Andrée Poirier, president of the APTS.

#### **Demands to consolidate our public health and social services system**

The government won't be able to remedy the problems of labour shortages and overwork that are afflicting our system unless it genuinely understands the work done by our 56,000 members, and their vital contribution to our health and social services system. It will have to address the issues of management-imposed performance indicators and work pace, which fail to consider the human factor in the care and services provided by professionals and technicians, and deny their professional autonomy and clinical judgment. The government will also have to provide decent pay increases to redress the pay inequity that APTS members have been subjected to for far too long. Over 85% of our members are women.

This round of contract talks offers us a crucial opportunity to make public health and social services an attractive sector to work in. The APTS is calling for improvements in the premiums and lump-sum amounts offered to its members, and better working conditions and conditions of practice for professional and technical personnel, particularly those working in youth centres and residential resources with continuous assistance. We are also demanding full recognition for psychologists, lawyers and other job classes that are offered much more advantageous conditions outside the public sector.

#### **The APTS, an indispensable force in the region**

"In Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, there are 2,700 APTS members providing care and services to the population. It's urgent that these jobs be attractive to future employees, and to current ones who are thinking of leaving because of the lack of recognition. We have to rectify the errors of the past and rebuild on fair and equitable foundations. We expect a government that promises to be there for the regions to understand what a strong,

better-funded system of health and social services means," said Nancy Poulin, APTS provincial representative for Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

From July 6 to 9, the APTS will be crisscrossing the region as part of its summer round of consultations to meet with its members and discuss the issues at stake in these contract talks, hear members' concerns for the future of our public health and social services system, and launch mobilization actions to ensure that professionals and technicians receive due recognition for their work.

### **The APTS**

The APTS ([\*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique 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. The APTS has 2,700 members at the various institutions in the CIUSSS du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

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### **Contact:**

Nancy Poulin  
Provincial representative for Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean  
Cell: 418-376-8909

Mathieu Le Blanc  
Communications and public relations advisor  
Cell: 514-609-2906