

Special commission on the rights of children and youth protection

**Commission's findings and orientations call
for immediate and concrete action on the part of the Legault government**

Longueuil, November 30, 2020 – The APTS (*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*) is in complete agreement with the findings and orientations put forward today by Régine Laurent, president of the CSDEPJ (special commission on the rights of children and youth protection). The APTS welcomes the Commission's "recommendation" to appoint a provincial director of youth protection – in fact, it has put forward a similar recommendation to appoint an ombudsperson for children and young people. The APTS also wants to remind the Legault government not to postpone all other action until this appointment is made.

"Once again, the Commission has confirmed findings and issues that the APTS has been bringing up for far too many years. These are discussed in our brief," says APTS president Andrée Poirier. "Minister Carmant needs to respond immediately to these findings. Creating a provincial director of youth protection is undoubtedly a major step. But he also needs to look at the situation of youth workers on the ground and provide the favourable conditions that will ensure better services for children and their families."

Staff shortages on the ground and the distress of youth workers were acknowledged by Ms. Laurent at her press conference. And one of the Commission's orientations, to provide "better support for youth workers, better conditions of practice, and a more consistent clinical services offer across Québec," directly challenges the Legault government to provide better working conditions for thousands of workers committed to protecting children. Over a year has gone by since the APTS brought solutions to the bargaining table that directly respond to the Commission's concerns, but the government is still ignoring these proposals.

"Piecemeal solutions are not going to work," says Andrée Poirier. "If we really want to improve youth protection services, we need to act now on more than one front. Contract talks for the renewal of our collective agreement are a perfect opportunity to set a new course. Reducing youth workers' distress and work overload is one of the ways we can respond to the Commission's findings."

The APTS also notes the Commission's focus on prevention and front-line services. These must be improved to make sure the DPJ (director of youth protection) is no longer the only way to access services for young people.

"The Barrette reform was a disaster for our youth services system. The whole prevention component, provided by CLSC staff, was especially hard-hit," says Andrée Poirier. "Funding was increased in the government's last budget, but unless there's a significant improvement in workers' conditions of practice and work, services will still be insufficient because there won't be enough staff. It's time to acknowledge the highly specialized nature of these job titles – Régine Laurent is right about that. And we need to give the people involved in protecting our children the working conditions they deserve."

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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