



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Health Minister confirms medical specialists' worst fears**

**Montreal, September 12, 2008** – That is the sad finding by the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ) following the Minister of Health's statements to the press. "The Minister of Health confirms a top figure of 700 beds in the future CHUM superhospital, confirms a reduction in activities (particularly surgery), confirms that the new CHUM will concentrate on 3rd- and 4th-line care and provide very little in the way of 1st- and 2nd line care (thus making training more difficult), confirms that private partnership will be necessary to round out services, but he cannot confirm that expansion is possible," commented Dr. Barrette.

These statements require reaction from the FMSQ, but they do not meet the Federation's five points that have to be met if a teaching hospital is to be recognized as such. "The most frustrating part is that we have asked from the outset that the political authorities as a whole rise above petty politics and build a CHUM of which Quebec can still be proud in 10, 20 or 30 years' time".

The FMSQ points out that the main mission of a teaching or university hospital is to teach medicine in all its forms and all its specialties, from the simplest of cases to the most complex, not only to general practitioners or specialists but to all health professionals. The CHUM must therefore provide a full range of services if it is to fulfill its main mission in a proper manner.

The FMSQ is shocked to find that the Minister is trying to use medical specialists' intervention in the last 3 weeks as justification for the innumerable delays that have dogged this project over the last 10 years. The Federation also deplores the fact that the Minister is casting doubt upon the degree to which medical specialists' opinions are representative. In a survey (response rate of 50%) and during the information meeting held this week (at which one-third of CHUM specialists were present), medical specialists expressed their concern to the Federation, based on their knowledge and experience of their working environment. "The Minister asks on what basis CHUM specialists' say that the new superhospital will be short of beds? Their basis is the fact that they are the ones caring for patients in their hospital, sir!" replied the FMSQ President. "They know what they're talking about because, year after year, they have been subjected to a constant reduction in the services they can provide; they rightly fear what might occur in the future and the results of decisions based on population and consumption data as explained by the Minister".

In trying to link medical specialists' remuneration to their desire to maintain the volume of care provided, the FMSQ considers that the Minister is indulging in basement politics. "If the Minister wants to play that kind of game, we won't be joining in. If physicians who are paid on a fee-for-service basis see their income decrease, it will be because they are treating fewer patients and, in the final analysis, it will be the public who suffers most".

"The Minister does not seem to be listening to us or understand what we're saying," concluded the FMSQ President. "As we have always said and repeated many times, 'Yes, medical specialists want a CHUM'. But we don't want the worst, we want the best: A superhospital with abilities and characteristics comparable to those found elsewhere in the world. A superhospital worthy of Quebec".

The Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec numbers more than 8,000 members in Quebec, representing 35 medical specialties. It is the sole organization recognized by government with respect to negotiating medical specialists' collective agreements, and is also consulted on all aspects of the organization of medical care in Quebec.

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