

PROMISING SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Montréal, March 18, 2015 – CNW/Telbec – The Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ) has long recognized the importance of improving access to primary medical services. Moreover, an internal work group studied the issue and produced a report outlining a number of possible solutions that was made public in October 2013. Unfortunately, due a lack of political will by the Québec government, these recommendations have so far gone unheeded. To make matters worse, upon taking office last April, Minister Gaétan Barrette has steadfastly ignored the many requests made by the FMOQ to discuss the issue of access to health care and has submitted, without any prior consultation, the dreadful Bill 20. The bill, which promotes the totalitarian management of the practice of medicine, could give rise to numerous negative consequences, including:

- comprised quality and continuity of care, as already overworked family doctors may not be able to handle their patient load
- shorter medical consultations and a potential drop in quality of medical care in order to meet patient quotas
- greater difficulty for family doctors to treat vulnerable patients who require more of their time
- a downturn in family medicine as a career choice for students in medicine
- the premature retirement of family doctors approaching the end of their careers, due to the unacceptable constraints imposed by Bill 20, which are unique to Québec

“Bill 20 not only threatens the quality and offer of general medical care in Québec, but also the future of family medicine. Resolving issues related to access to medical services cannot be envisioned in a dynamic fueled by an absence of negotiation, authoritarianism, penalties and the negation of standards inherent to the practice of family medicine. Should it become law, this bill will not improve what it intends to correct whatsoever: it will only make matters worse! Family doctors therefore ask the Québec government to end this abuse of power and demand that Bill 20 be revoked,” declared Dr. Louis Godin, President of the FMOQ. The brief on Bill 20 submitted by the FMOQ provides detailed explanations of the adverse consequences of the bill, and proposes solutions that could genuinely improve access to a family doctor.

With the wellbeing of their fellow citizens and the future of the health care system at heart, the FMOQ’s elected officials, for their part, did their homework by seriously reflecting on and analyzing numerous options in order to propose innovative solutions to improving access to primary care. Once this was completed, they set out to meet with family doctors across the province to secure their support for the proposed solutions. These are the solutions put forward:

More office practice

Today in Québec, 40% of a family doctor’s practice is conducted in hospitals versus only 20% in the other provinces. The FMOQ wants to turn this hospital-centric focus around to promote the practice of family medicine in clinics and CLSCs.

Advanced access

Gradually implement advanced access throughout the system: reorganize every family doctor’s schedule leaving open periods for urgent last-minute appointments. As this approach is gradually rolled out, patients would receive rapid appointments to see their family doctor.

Interprofessional collaboration

Introduce a system that promotes real collaboration between health professionals in practitioners’ offices. For example, in addition to family doctors, bring in nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists and other practitioners, all in the same clinic.

Superclinics

Create one hundred superclinics designed to take the pressure off hospital emergency rooms. These superclinics would bring family doctors, specialists and nurses together in one location as well as the imaging and lab technology needed to treat patients. The creation of such clinics, with extended hours, would provide rapid access to a family doctor for patients with semi-urgent conditions.

Electronic Medical Records

Proceed with the implementation of electronic medical records. The technology exists and doctors have already taken the initiative and computerized their patient files. The result? Improved efficiency: a major improvement in access and a clear reduction in the risk of error.

Take on more patients

The FMOQ is committed to inciting family doctors to increase their caseloads while maintaining high quality relationships with patients. Without requiring any additional funding in excess of what is already provided for, the Federation undertakes to do everything required to make taking on new patients the number one priority for its members.

The FMOQ invites the public to watch *Traitement 20*, a powerful video in which family doctors explain the proposed solutions. The subtitled [English version](#) will be posted on YouTube (La FMOQ) and on the Web site notanumber.ca during the week of March 22. The English advertising campaign will also be rolled out at the same time.

“Now, more than ever, family doctors are determined to do whatever it takes to improve access to their services. That is why they support the innovative solutions put forward today by their Fédération. Even if the Québec government has created the problem of access to primary care services, largely due to the constraints and sanctions implemented to steer family doctors toward practicing in a hospital setting, family doctors are ready to do things differently to offer their patients better care. We can only hope that the Ministre de la Santé will be wise enough to embrace this commitment from family doctors and support the solutions they propose instead of cultivating a climate of confrontation. For the wellbeing of our fellow citizens, together we can only hope for this small miracle. Otherwise, the Ministre alone will have to bear the burden of missing a historic opportunity and the mess that will be left in its wake,” concluded Dr. Godin.

[Mémoire de la FMOQ](#)

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The FMOQ is an 8,800-member-strong professional union representing the general practitioners of Québec. Its mission is to represent the professional and scientific interests of its members. For more information on the FMOQ, please consult its Web site at www.fmoq.org

Source: Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec

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