



50 ans de santé et de solidarité d'un quartier!

**Clinique communautaire de Pointe-Saint-Charles**

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### **History: Community Clinic of Pointe-Saint-Charles**

In 1968, students in medicine, nursing and sociology at McGill University, concerned with lack of adequate medical services in the neighbourhood, set up the Community Clinic of Pointe-Saint-Charles. They quickly got local residents involved in the project.

At that time, in addition to the medical students, the staff consisted of a nurse, a parttime doctor and a psychologist. The kind of medicine they practised tied together health problems and social problems, and focused on their root causes.

In 1970, the Clinic obtained its charter as a community organization. The first citizens' board of directors was established and the work team now had 17 members. The community-based health and social services of the Clinic became the model for the local community service centres (CLSC) network.

The Government of Quebec set up the CLSC in 1974. The Clinic asked that the legislation be broadened to include recognition of popular clinics. From that time on, the Clinic was recognized as an independent community organization with the mandate of a CLSC. As the years passed, the Clinic expanded its services and its staff grew from 30 in 1974 to 90 in 1986.

In 1992, the adoption of the Act respecting health services and social services was a crowning point in the Clinic's struggle for independence. The Ministry gave the Clinic a choice, which was not a choice at all: continue as a community organization or become a CLSC. This attempt at assimilation failed due to large-scale mobilization by the neighbourhood's population and community groups.

Today the Clinic has 125 employees covering the range of employment status. It is still independent and continues to fulfill its CLSC mandate. It sees close to 5500 people a year in a neighbourhood of 13,000.

The recent overhaul of the health care network (merger of institutions and creation of the health and social service centres, CSSS) is a big challenge to the Clinic's survival. In discussions about this major reform, the Clinic didn't hesitate to make public its deep commitment to the kind of medicine that is social, public, preventive, and community- and citizen-based, just like its founders wanted close to 40 years ago!

Today more than ever, this original community project, so closely linked to our public health system, is something to keep watching and a great, continuing story of a neighbourhood.