

# The dismantling of the Clinic and CLSCs: We never voted for that!

**I**N THE FACE of the threats to the Clinic after Minister Couillard tabled Bill 25 last November, the Clinic's Board of Directors called for a demonstration outside the office of our MNA, Nicole Loiselle.

Several other actions were taken in the first two weeks of December:

- We sent Minister Couillard a brief about the Clinic;
- We took part in the parliamentary commission on December 8, together with the Solidarité Santé provincial coalition;
- We helped organize the "Santa Couillard Parade," held outside the headquarters of the Liberal Party of Québec on December 10; some 600 people were there;
- We joined the demonstration on December 11 in Pointe-Saint-Charles, in solidarity with the CSN unionized workers in the neighbourhood;
- We participated in the December 14 demonstration staged by the Montreal coalition "I never voted for that!" This is a coalition of community groups and unions.

We made some small gains. For example:

- The Clinic was given assurances that its independence would be respected; and

- The Minister amended his bill slightly so that, in big cities like Montreal, CLSCs and CHSLDs are not forced to merge with hospitals.

Nonetheless, the essence of the Minister's bill was adopted, and that's dangerous for the citizens of Pointe-Saint-Charles and the rest of the population. In fact, we really fear that the CLSCs' mandate to practice prevention will gradually disappear in the effort to get people out of hospital as fast as possible.

Given the new situation created by the adoption of the bill, we will have to develop service agreements with the other institutions in the South-West that will be merged. Meetings have already been held in the South-West between the CLSCs and CHSLDs (St-Henri, Verdun-Côte-St-Paul, Lasalle, Pointe-St-Charles), and with the participation of the Hôpital de Verdun, to work out how services will be delivered to the population.



*Part of a crowd of over 600 people who participated in the «Santa Couillard Parade» on December 10, on St-Denis Street in Montreal.*

**We will continue to attend these meetings to defend our neighbourhood's particular needs and with a view to hold on, as much as possible, to what we have managed create: our services, our resources and our budgets.**

# Point St-Charles Community Clinic: 35 years to build a citizen's health Clinic!

*This past autumn we witnessed the signs that many steps backwards would be taken where the right to health was concerned. We fiercely defended the very mission of the Clinic and the CLSCs in Québec.*

**O**nce again, we demanded that our services and our independence be preserved—something that forced the Minister to say publicly that the Clinic would keep its Board of Directors. We can congratulate ourselves for that.

Even though we didn't succeed in stopping the government in its determination to merge health institutions, as a citizen of our neighbourhood, I feel proud of the actions we carried out. These actions were made possible by the commitment of citizens and community groups and also, to a large extent, by the Clinic's employees' involvement; they played a very active part in every step of organizing the fight.

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**«We have put more than 35 years into building our citizens' health clinic, which brings together the medical and the social, employees and citizens. Ours is a Clinic where those who come to us are considered as people,...»**

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*The vast majority of Quebec's population supports the social movement's demands.*

In coming months, we will continue to work and fight. As usual, we will consult you in different ways and at several levels so that our positions and demands reflect the neighbourhood's current needs.

We have put more than 35 years into building our citizens' health

clinic, which brings together the medical and the social, employees and citizens. Ours is a Clinic where those who come to us are considered as people, not as health problems, and where we work to give them the means to take charge of their living conditions, which determine their state of health.

In this New Year of 2004, I hope we can manage to preserve this unique health endeavour called the Community Clinic. For us to be respected will require involvement by the greatest possible number of people.

More than ever, I wish us all good health in solidarity.

**Anna Kruzynski**

President of the  
Board of Directors