

Let's expand the public coverage of oral health care in Quebec. And let's start right now!

Quebec is the province in which households spend the most on dental care in the country. Faced with this alarming situation, the Point St. Charles Community Clinic's Health Action Committee has mobilized eight national partners to call for an expansion of public dental care coverage in the province. They are asking that the political parties all express a firm commitment towards the creation of a Quebec dental care program.

A recent update of a study published by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS) reveals that in 2019, Quebec households spent on average \$461 for direct dental care expenses, an amount that has gone up by 14.1% since 2010.

"As a first step, it is vital that all dental care be covered by the Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec (RAMQ) for anyone under the age of 18 or over the age of 64," explains Lise Lapointe, President of the Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec (AREQ). "The health of our children and seniors is at stake!"

"The Point St. Charles Community Clinic's initiative for the universal coverage of dental care in Quebec is in keeping with the various goals of APTS, as we are convinced that the health and well-being of the population are best served by public and universal care and services. We must not only act defensively against the privatization of health and social services, but also actively work towards the expansion of coverage within the public network," adds Émilie Charbonneau, 2nd VP of the Alliance du Personnel Professionnel et Technique de la Santé et Services sociaux (APTS).

Another demand is the obligation for dental clinics to post their fees for routine care such as exams/cleanings, fillings, root canals and tooth extraction. "Why are dental clinics not subject to the same obligation to post their various fees, as is the case with medical clinics? We demand that the MSSS adopt a regulation requiring dental clinics to post their prices in a clear and intelligible manner so that the population can be properly informed before being asked to pay outrageous sums for examinations or surgeries," says Stéphane Defoy, community organizer at the Point St. Charles Community Clinic.

According to all the partners rallied by the Point St. Charles Community Clinic, it is essential to focus on prevention in order to improve the oral health of all Quebecers. This is why we are collectively demanding an increase in the number of dental hygienists in the health and social services network as quickly as possible. This will allow us to work on prevention with schoolchildren and seniors living in collective housing (CHSLDs - RPAs - housing NPOs).

The important issue of expanding public dental coverage in Quebec has been completely ignored in this provincial election campaign. "This is absolutely inconceivable," adds Lauréanne Dussault-Desrochers, a member of the Board of Directors of Médecins québécois pour un régime public (MQRP). "The astronomical

costs of dental care deprive a significant portion of the population, especially the most vulnerable, of services that are essential to maintaining good health."

This is why the Point St. Charles Community Clinic and its partners are calling for a firm commitment from all the provincial parties. "We are asking each and every one of the political parties to express a clear commitment, if elected on October 3, towards the creation of a Quebec dental care program that would initially cover all care, both preventive and curative, for children under the age of 18 and seniors aged 65 and over," concludes Dominique Daigneault, President of the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CSN).

The Community Clinic and its partners consider the fight for greater access to dental care as one of the cornerstones for improving overall health in Quebec.

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About the Point St. Charles Community Clinic:

The Point St. Charles Community Clinic is a health organization run by the citizens of Point St. Charles. It provides preventive and curative services, and brings citizens together around health issues in order to improve health conditions in the short and long term. The Clinic's Health Action Committee advocates for a public health system that is universal and accessible to all.

About the Community Clinic's National Partners:

L'Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec (AREQ) – Médecins québécois pour un régime public (MQRP) – Conseil central du Montréal Métropolitain (CSN) – Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS) – Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) – Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté – Coalition pour la dignité des aînés - Coalition solidarité santé

Contact :

Stéphane Defoy
Community Organizer
Point St. Charles Community Clinic
Phone : 438 822-8298
E-mail : stephane.defoy.psch@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Céline Bianchi
Communications agent
Point St. Charles Community Clinic
Phone : 514 937-9251 poste 7239
E-mail : celine.bianchi.psch@ssss.gouv.qc.ca