

PRESS RELEASE

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MEDICAL RESIDENTS: AVAILABLE UNTIL EXHAUSTION

54.8% OF MEDICAL RESIDENTS SHOW SIGNS OF BURNOUT

Montreal, Tuesday, February 27, 2018 – The *Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec* is disclosing today the findings of two studies conducted on its members. The first study aimed to gauge the level of burnout among Quebec's medical residents, while the second sought to re-assess the number of hours worked on a weekly basis.

Burnout: a major problem

The first study conducted by the FMRQ showed that more than one in two medical residents (54.8%) presents signs of burnout. "While we suspected this problem existed among our members, these findings raise a red flag," emphasized FMRQ President, Dr Christopher Lemieux. The number of respondents to this survey was 947 medical residents, and the poll had a margin error of 2.7%, 19 times out of 20. The questionnaire was based on a scientifically recognized scale, the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS). "The findings also show that 64.5% of medical residents feel exhausted at the end of their work day at least once a week, and that 48.8% of them wake up weary, before starting their work day, at least once a week," Dr Lemieux added.

Medical residents work close to 72 hours a week

The second study medical residents were asked to respond to sought to inventory the number of hours per week they work, i.e., their regular base schedule and their call duty hours. Medical residents were invited to complete one questionnaire a week for four weeks, from January 15 to February 11, 2018. Of the 3,525 medical residents active at the time of the poll, 2,072 responded, or 58.8% of Quebec's medical residents. The margins of error for these four counts of medical residents' hours are between 2.0% and 2.6%. "Medical residents work an average of 70.94 hours a week, or between 70.01 and 71.9 hours a week," Dr Lemieux stated. "This means that, during the day, evenings, nights, and weekends, our medical residents work virtually two weeks in one, compared with other health system employees' average regular work week (around 36 hours a week), all year round, throughout Quebec."

"Like nurses and other health professionals, medical residents are clearly overloaded," Dr Lemieux added, "and solutions must be found to this situation." Unfortunately, in the current negotiations between the FMRQ and the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS), the government is asking medical residents to do even more. "The MSSS even wants to allow healthcare establishments to circumvent the 2011 ruling by a tribunal which stated that being required to work more than 16 hours per 24-hour period was contrary to the Charters of Rights," Dr Lemieux maintained. "The proposals made by the MSSS's representatives are out of touch with reality, and even led to the negotiations ceasing, on December 15, 2017." It was against this backdrop that the FMRQ and its affiliated associations received 97.7% strike mandates from their members in early February.

Dr Lemieux found the Ministry's attitude to medical residents deplorable. "On February 5, 2018, the Federation came out publicly against the disrespect shown by the Ministry, asking the government to send representatives who understand medical residents' reality. We are still waiting. Medical residents want to sign a collective agreement," he pointed out, "but it has to be a two-way street."

Discount Resident/Available until exhaustion

To underscore this unacceptable situation with respect to workplace quality, the *Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec* today launched a visibility campaign on the theme “*Discount Resident/Available until exhaustion.*” Depending on how things evolve, other measures will be introduced in the coming weeks, when the affiliated associations and the FMRQ determine the other pressure tactics to be implemented, up to and including a general strike.

Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec

The *Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec* is made up of the four medical resident associations linked to the healthcare establishments in the University of Montreal, McGill University, University of Sherbrooke and Laval University (Quebec City) healthcare system. It has some 3,600 members, who deliver services to the public in Quebec’s healthcare establishments. One quarter of these medical residents work in family medicine, while the remainder are in other medical, surgical and laboratory specialties.

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