

subcommittees chaired by Dr. Tania Cellucci and Dr. Jaime Guzman; all members had the opportunity for input into the development of the guidelines which deal with access to care, and appropriate institution of second- and third-line pharmacologic treatment. Following approval by the Guidelines Committee of the CRA, the manuscript will be submitted for publication in the fall.

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## AMRQ: It Is The Same Old Story...

By Frédéric Morin, MD

**O**n this very date last year, I wrote that we were in forced negotiations with the Quebec government. At that time, balancing the provincial budget was the number one priority.

All medical specialists were expected to do their part by reopening the agreement signed years earlier, which provided for a salary increase over seven years to reduce the gap between Quebec and the other Canadian provinces. In spite of all this, we came out of negotiations fairly well, without cuts and having preserved the promised increase, albeit postponed to a later date. The irony of this "imposed amount" is that Quebec's current health minister is the same person who negotiated the agreement when he was president of the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ). Politics can sometimes turn people into false friends...

We now find ourselves swept up in the same maelstrom! In a few weeks, the Quebec government will adopt Bill 20, which dictates, among other things, the conditions for accessing specialized medicine. If applied, a physician who fails to meet the objectives set out in the bill could be penalized (10% per quarter). For example, 90% of

consultation requests by first-line caregivers will need to be fulfilled on a priority basis determined by a central office. Imagine implementing this kind of monitoring: "Big Brother is watching you." Obviously, we are attempting to extract ourselves from this mess by negotiating realistic and unified objectives. Implementation of this bill is planned for January 2016. The hope is that an agreement will be signed shortly that makes Bill 20 obsolete.

To end on a happier note, the Association des médecins rhumatologues du Québec (AMRQ) held its 2015 annual convention at the beginning of October in the picturesque region of Estrie. The convention was a resounding success with record participation from our members. Dr. Anne St-Pierre ably guided an amazing team. Kudos for a job well done. Congratulations also to Dr. Alessandra Bruns, the recipient of the 2015 Merit Scholarship!

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