

AMRQ Update

By Frédéric Massicotte, PhD, MD, FRCPC

I would have loved to have had the chance to begin my presidency at the Association des médecins rhumatologues du Québec (AMRQ) under a clear, blue sky, but the storm that is Quebec Health Minister Dr. Gaetan Barrette rages on in Quebec. Bombarded with successive Bills 10, 20, 92 and, most recently, 130, the Quebec medical network is struggling to stay afloat. Adopted two years ago, Bill 20 required general practitioners to use a different provincial consultation request form for each speciality. The establishment of this new impractical structure was obviously a disaster. Despite physicians' exemplary participation, and with one year of delay, we are still in the early stages of implementation. In fact, nearly two thirds of the specialties still have not even begun to use this so-called prioritized access. Far from being slowed down by this fiasco, the minister continued in his great wisdom and implemented Bill 130. This bill gives absolute power to the bureaucracy, which, as early as within the next six months, will be able to impose completely excessive obligations on hospital specialists. Never has our professional integrity been so severely threatened as it is by this Bill, which forces us to prioritize political will over the quality of patient care. This has created a chaotic climate for Quebec rheumatologists.

But after the rain comes the sun! So let's move on to happier things this holiday season. I would like to start by warmly thanking Dr. Frédéric Morin, our outgoing president, for his unconditional support and sound advice. We are coming off another year of highlights, including the awarding of the merit scholarship to Dr. Marie Hudson. Furthermore, the "Top 3 in Rheumatology" event, hosted by Drs. Anne St-Pierre and Angèle Turcotte, was a resounding success and will become an annual event. We were visited by fellow French rheumatologists last year during our annual conference, which also marked the beginning of a new tradition, with nearly thirty Quebec rheumatologists "reluctantly" accepting an invitation to the French national rheumatology conference in April 2018 in Bordeaux.

Finally, despite these austere times, the new generation of rheumatologists is doing very well with record years for recruitment. Like my predecessors, I intend to guide these newcomers through the storm, and to help them practice with passion the wonderful profession that is rheumatology.

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Dr. David Collins – Clinical Associate Professor, Rheumatology, UBC, Vancouver

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