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## Update from the AMRQ — Is the Mirage Over?

By Frédéric Morin, MD

**T**he *Association des médecins rhumatologues du Québec* is committed to long-term efforts to improving the conditions of practice for rheumatologists in Quebec, as well as to increasing access for patients already under care and for new patients suffering from rheumatic diseases.

In the last two annual articles, I announced the implementation of a program, in cooperation with the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services, designed to provide a more optimal environment for the practice of rheumatology. In the end, over 75 full-time equivalent positions could be deployed in Quebec to assist rheumatologists to fulfil their caring role without being bogged down by all the clerical burdens associated with practice. Of course, resources and needs differ from one environment to the next, so we're aiming to develop an innovative "à la carte" model, enabling each rheumatologist to benefit from half of a full-time equivalent position to support their practice. Now that the project's acceptability phases have been completed, we are on the verge of rolling out three pilot projects to demonstrate improvements in access and quality of care. Should everything go well, this project could be deployed across Quebec. For my part, although the process is long and tedious by our standards of governance, I can see a real interest on the part of the authorities in setting up these structures. We remain vi-

gilant but hope to see the program fully implemented by 2025. Finally, can we look forward to a concrete improvement in rheumatology practice conditions in Quebec without any mirages?

No more hybrid conventions! Quebec rheumatologists met face to face with a record attendance of over 120 participants at my alma mater, Trois-Rivières. In addition to a scientific conference of the highest level, a lively evening of 50's festivities let us rediscover the talents of the organizing committee's dancers, including the skillful stylings of Drs. Guylaine Arsenault, Josiane Bourré-Tessier, Ariel Masetto, Geneviève Oigny-Longpré, Jean-Pierre Raynauld and Édith Villeneuve!

The AMRQ has honoured Dr. Isabelle Fortin, a pioneer of rheumatology in remote regions, with the *Bourse du mérite 2023*. On her own and covering the vast territory of the *Bas-Saint-Laurent*, Dr. Fortin has worked closely with front-line and specialist physicians in her region. She has also developed a successful clinical research organization. Through her initiatives, Dr. Fortin has always put our arthritis patients at the core of all her decisions.

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