

QUEBEC HEALTH REVIEW

October 2025

Facts

- **September 30:** Following the government's offer, the medical federations reach an agreement with the government on a mediation process.
- **October 3:** Québec refuses to grant an additional \$280 million to Santé Québec to continue the SIFA human resources management project.
- **October 3:** As part of the reduction in the number of public servants, the Premier announced that some CEOs in the health and education sectors may lose their positions.
- **October 15:** Santé Québec allows patients who have been waiting more than one year for surgery to go to the private sector to receive care covered by the Québec Health Insurance Plan.
- **October 17:** An extraordinary general assembly of 2,900 physicians censures the President of the Collège des médecins for requesting the suspension of pressure tactics.
- **October 25:** The Québec government adopts special legislation to end physicians' pressure tactics and passes Bill 106 under closure (time allocation).
- **October 27:** The Université du Québec à Montréal announces that it will create a Faculty of Health Sciences within 18 months.
- **October 30:** Resignation of Lionel Carmant, Minister Responsible for Social Services.
- **Provincial — Latest voting intentions (Léger — October 3, 2025):**
Parti Québécois: 36% (-2%) — Québec Liberal Party: 25% (-2%) — Coalition Avenir Québec: 16% (stable) — Conservative Party of Québec: 15% (+4%) — Québec Solidaire: 6% (-1%).

Political Overview

The departure of the Minister responsible for Social Services, Lionel Carmant, following the adoption under closure of Bill 2 on physician compensation, marks a pivotal moment for the Legault government. Officially motivated by family reasons — his spouse and daughter are both physicians — this resignation comes amid an already highly tense atmosphere within the healthcare system.

A trusted figure of the Premier, a signatory of the founding manifesto of the Coalition and one of its earliest political allies, Mr. Carmant leaves a significant void within the government's ranks. His departure acts as a catalyst, adding to a series of events that have intensified tensions within the healthcare network.

October proved to be one of the most strained months of the year on the health front in Québec. After several months of unsuccessful negotiations with medical federations, the Legault government imposed Bill 106 under closure, changing the physician compensation model and ending their pressure tactics. This decision, seen as a forceful

move, triggered a shockwave within the medical community and immediate legal action. The government is demanding performance targets, while the federations are calling for freedom of practice that they argue supports quality of care.

At the same time, in the context of the Gallant Commission, the government refused to grant the additional \$280 million requested by Santé Québec to continue the SIFA human resources management project, once again plunging the administrative structure into turmoil. The Parti Québécois seized the opportunity to call for a full Auditor General review of all health-related IT projects, denouncing costly “bureaucratic excesses.”

The appointment of Dr. Caroline Quach-Thanh as Québec’s new Director of Public Health represents a rare element of optimism: a respected and rigorous figure, she is expected to advance the long-awaited provincial prevention plan.

Faced with mounting congestion in the healthcare network, the government has authorized patients waiting more than a year for surgery to turn to the private sector at the state's expense. This decision, justified by the need to reduce waitlists, confirms what is already well-established in Québec compared to elsewhere in Canada: publicly covered private healthcare services are firmly in place and widely used.

Politically, healthcare is emerging more than ever as the government’s Achilles’ heel. The latest Léger poll places the Parti Québécois in first place (36%), while the CAQ falls to 16%.

Ultimately, we are witnessing a standoff between the government and physicians that is directly reflected in the sharp decline in the government’s popularity. There is a Minister of Health pushing for change and a government that has nothing left to lose, medical federations highly mobilized but whose salary-related demands do not resonate with public opinion, and between the two, a population whose voice is largely absent from the debate.

Human Resources

A Decline in “Empathy” in Long-Term Care Homes Noted by the Québec Ombudsman

The Québec Ombudsman reports a decline in “empathy” within the health and social services network, including in long-term care homes (CHSLDs), where staff at times no longer listen to users or their loved ones. The Ombudsman also expresses concern about pandemic preparedness in these facilities with the transition to Santé Québec.

Arrival of Dr. Caroline Quach-Thanh as Director of Public Health

Well known to Quebecers since the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Caroline Quach-Thanh succeeds Dr. Luc Boileau as Québec’s National Director of Public Health. She also serves as Assistant Deputy Minister for Prevention and Public Health at the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS). Early in her mandate, her priorities include rolling out the 2025-2035 National Health Prevention Strategy.

Quebecers Pay Millions Each Year for Medical Care Elsewhere in Canada

Most people believe that if they need medical care in another Canadian province, all costs will be reimbursed. However, Quebecers spent \$10.3 million in 2024 alone to receive care elsewhere in Canada. This is because Québec has not signed reciprocal billing agreements for medical services (except emergency care).

Difficulty Retaining Young Nurses in Québec

A new MEI report shows that the number of Canadian nurses under age 35 who leave the profession each year is rising relative to those entering it. In Québec, a slight improvement has been observed. The study highlights the British Columbia model, which succeeds in recruiting and retaining nurses.

Mental Health Service Closures in Québec City Criticized

Around fifty psychiatrists have denounced “cuts” and “performance” measures imposed by Santé Québec. They strongly criticize the planned closure of two psychiatric resources in Québec City, stating in a letter that cuts are being announced abruptly and without regard for patients or frontline staff.

Nearly 600 People Waiting for Mental-Health Housing

The homelessness crisis is exacerbated by bottlenecks in mental-health housing resources, and the situation could worsen given soaring construction costs forcing the cancellation of projects. The situation is particularly concerning in Montréal, where 271 people are waiting for a place in an intermediate mental-health resource.

Mental Health in Outaouais

As of September 20, 2025, 652 people in the Outaouais region were waiting for mental-health appointments, including 162 waiting to see a psychologist. Psychology students offer services, but treatment durations are limited. Droit-accès Outaouais is calling for long-term government investment in mental health.

Shortage of Family Doctors in La Matanie

The region currently has 22 general practitioners out of a target of 34, and two are expected to leave soon. The Ministry of Health considers La Matanie to be in serious difficulty recruiting family doctors. To address this, the regional medical staffing plan has allocated five positions to La Matanie next year out of 13 for the entire Bas-Saint-Laurent region.

Exodus of Clinical Perfusionists Deplored

The Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ) denounces the exodus of clinical perfusionists, shortly after Quebec cardiologists announced they were preparing a complaint to the Ombudsman. Of the 10 perfusion graduates in Québec last summer, half left to work in Ontario or British Columbia. This exodus has life-threatening impacts.

Inequities in Care for Seniors Highlighted

In a new campaign, the Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS) highlights concerns about care for seniors in Québec, particularly inequalities in home support and the quality of services in care facilities.

Strike Mandate Approved

The union representing public-health professionals in Québec could launch a strike at any time, calling for salary catch-up. In response, the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ) says negotiations are progressing.

RAMQ Pilot Project

The Québec Health Insurance Board (RAMQ) has launched a pilot project in Québec City to issue health-insurance cards to people experiencing homelessness, who are often undocumented. The initiative began in 2024 in partnership with Lauberivière and the local health authority (CIUSSS).

Independent Workforce in Côte-Nord Hospitals

Two years ago, Québec adopted legislation to eliminate the use of independent nursing agencies, which are costly to the public system. The Côte-Nord region has one year left to comply, yet hospitals still depend heavily on agency nurses. In Sept-Îles, without independent staff, emergency rooms and intensive-care units could not remain open.

Infrastructures

Waitlists for intermediate-resource placements

Waitlists for a place in intermediate-resource (IR) facilities — which house seniors experiencing loss of autonomy — continue to grow in Québec. With an aging population, more Quebecers will need access to IR placements. Yet few new spaces are being created, largely because funding provided to IR operators to build new facilities is insufficient.

Pause on the digital transformation in health care

The Ministry of Cybersecurity and Digital Technology (MCN) wants to go further than Santé Québec: it not only wants to suspend the IT project aimed at centralizing internal management of the health-care system, but also to terminate the contract with LGS, the firm involved in the SAAQclie failure.

PQ calls on the Auditor General

With the suspension of the Financial, Procurement and Human Resources Information System (SIFARH) and the postponement of the Digital Health Record (DSN), the Parti Québécois has called on the Auditor General of Québec to conduct a full audit of major health-sector IT projects. The PQ argues this will help prevent “even more costly failures.”

Santé Québec launches tool to track the health-care network

Santé Québec has launched its own dashboard tracking the state of the public health-care system, intended for the general public. Quebecers can access 25 indicators per institution and see whether they are “green,” “yellow” or “red.” The Ministry of Health and Social Services’ dashboard remains available for now.

UQAM to open a “holistic health” university clinic

Starting winter 2026, the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) will open a “holistic health” clinic in the Quartier latin. Students, supervised by instructors and professionals, will offer services including sexology, educational support, and social work. The clinic is part of the Quartier latin revitalization plan and aims to address addiction-related needs.

New Faculty of Health Sciences

UQAM also plans to establish a Faculty of Health Sciences within 18 months. The goal is to rethink health beyond the lens of illness. The faculty is currently developing programs based on the profile of the health-care and public-health professionals of tomorrow.

Service interruptions avoided this summer

According to Santé Québec, more than 1,000 potential service interruptions were avoided this summer. The state agency reiterated its commitment to implementing mechanisms ensuring that the population retains access to care. Temporary service closures were paired with mitigation measures.

Pharmaceutical Industry

Decrease in Santé Québec's deficit

After previously forecasting a \$1.5-billion deficit last year, Santé Québec now estimates its deficit at \$235 million for 2025–2026, which should protect the network from further budget cuts. This \$235 million shortfall is primarily attributed to the cost of new medications.

Delay in delivery of COVID-19 vaccine doses

The Québec Association of Pharmacy Owners (AQPP) reports that some pharmacies are still waiting to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses. It notes that this delay could lead to the postponement of already-scheduled appointments and stresses that pharmacies are not responsible for the situation.

Approval of the first drug to slow Alzheimer's disease

Canada has become the 52nd country in the world to approve lecanemab, marketed as Leqembi, a drug that can slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease. However, Sherbrooke neurologist Christian Bocti notes that potentially serious side effects, high costs, and the need for frequent exams (MRI scans) will place a significant burden on the healthcare system.

Medical Technologies

Developmental SACCADE model to decode autism

Two Quebec experts have developed a specific method for autistic individuals, now being implemented at the Centre 4 Poches in Boucherville. This innovative model has been used for several years in French-speaking countries, but remains relatively unknown in Québec. The Centre 4 Poches is the first institution in North America to adopt it, and early results are already promising.

Progress in neurodegenerative disease treatment

New advances are transforming the daily lives of patients with diseases such as Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, ALS, and Alzheimer's. For example, treatments for Parkinson's disease are becoming increasingly accessible and help better control symptoms in advanced stages. For more than a year, a subcutaneous pump called VYALEV has been available in Québec and is reimbursed under certain conditions.

Development of a new tool to fight glioblastoma

Montréal researchers have developed a new technology to help combat glioblastoma, an especially aggressive brain cancer. The aim of the new tool, called Sentry, is to assist surgeons in removing as many cancer cells as possible before they can regenerate.

Concerns from the Québec Telephone Helpline Association (ACETDQ)

The ACETDQ, which represents 22 listening centres including Tel-Aide, is sounding the alarm about the growing trend of individuals confiding in conversational agents such as ChatGPT. This practice carries certain risks, especially for people in psychological distress. The attraction to conversational agents may reflect limited access to mental-health resources, according to the association.

Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

President of the College of Physicians strongly rebuked by peers

The Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) has formally reprimanded its president, Dr. Mauril Gaudreault, notably by creating a mechanism allowing for his removal and requiring him to issue a public apology. He had called in September for the suspension of pressure tactics used by the province's two major medical federations during their standoff with the Legault government over Bill 106, which affects physician compensation.

Consequences of the clinical teaching strike

More than a month after the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec and the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec halted clinical teaching in response to Bill 106 on physician accountability, medical faculties confirm that this will delay graduation for multiple students.

Adoption of special legislation – Bill 2

Bill 2, which imposes a new compensation model on physicians and ends their pressure tactics, was passed under closure. Opposition parties harshly criticized the move, denouncing a “fast-food medicine” approach. The Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ) has announced it will challenge the law in court. Other physician organizations are also strongly opposed to the legislation.

Québec seeks to prevent physicians from leaving for the private sector

The special law ending physicians' pressure tactics and reforming their compensation model also includes measures to prevent doctors from moving to the private sector or to other provinces.

Québec to send patients to private clinics after one-year surgical wait

Under a draft regulation submitted to Cabinet on August 13, a Quebecer waiting more than one year for surgery could receive treatment at a private clinic at the state's expense. Santé Québec proposes a three-step process to accelerate surgeries and reduce waitlists. To test the new mechanism, pilot projects — including for medically necessary plastic surgery — will be launched this fall in selected facilities.

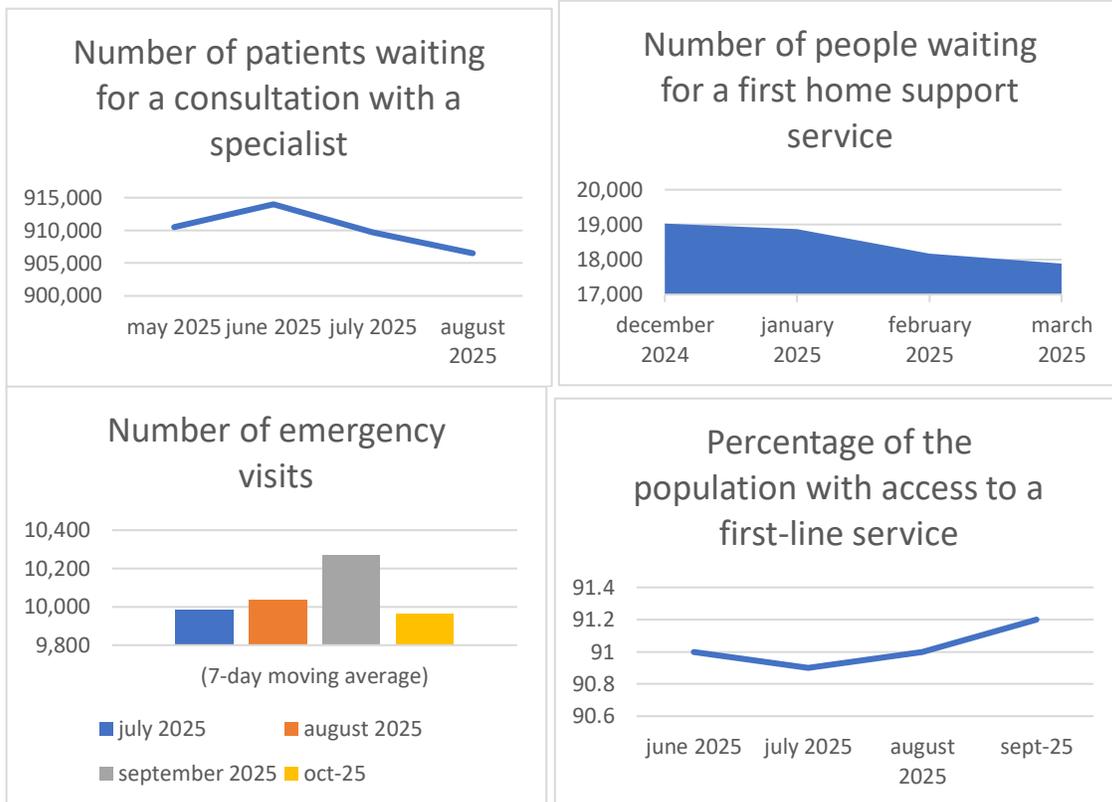
Dental coverage: tens of thousands approved in error

Around 70,000 people were mistakenly approved for coverage under the Canadian Dental Care Plan, Health Canada has announced. Individuals who received care will not have to repay the amounts covered by the public insurance program.

Forced sterilizations of Atikamekw women from Manawan

More than 30 Atikamekw women from Manawan have come forward in a class-action lawsuit against the Lanaudière health authority (CISSS) and three physicians over forced or non-consensual sterilizations dating back to 1980. In February 2025, the Québec Court of Appeal authorized the class action filed by two Atikamekw women. Since the case was launched in 2021, more than 30 women have reported undergoing such procedures.

Dashboard — Health Network



**Data on specialist consultation, first-line service and home support are the most recent to date.*

Appendix: Statistics

- Conducted by Ipsos on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association, the online survey of 3,300 physicians, residents, and medical fellows between March 14 and April 15 found that 46% of respondents report a high level of burnout. This rate is lower than in 2021 (53%), but still significantly higher than in 2017 (30%).
- According to the survey, 65% of physicians have used at least one form of wellness support, including employee assistance programs. This represents a notable increase compared to 2021 (54%).