

Quebec DCs Fight Government Order to Forbid Use of Diagnostic Tools

Editorial Staff

We read it first in the *Montreal Gazette*¹: reports that this past spring the *Office des Professions du Québec (OPQ)* had sent notices to laboratories in the province that tests ordered by chiropractors were no longer authorized. The OPQ is a governmental office that "assures that the public is protected by each professional group and by the optimal functioning of the professional system" in the Canadian province of Quebec.

The OPQ went a step further: requesting that the Université du Québec à Trois Rivières (UQTR) exclude biomedical analysis from the chiropractic curriculum. The Quebec Chiropractic Association - *Association des chiropraticiens du Québec (ACQ)* fought back and obtained a Superior Court injunction that required the OPQ to reverse its notification. The court will hear both sides of the argument, but not until the spring of 2002 at the earliest.

"The curriculum is unchanged at this moment," A.M. Gonthier, DC, FICC, told *DC*. Dr. Gonthier is the director of the doctoral chiropractic program at UATR. UATR opened its doors in 1993 as the first French chiropractic program at a university. The course is a five-year doctoral program.

Dr. Gonthier noted that the OPQ has "settled back," thanks to the efforts of the ACQ.

"The only difference is that we now function with a private lab outside the university," he admitted.

While the issue may have "settled," the Quebec chiropractors, not surprisingly, are "infuriated," or so they have been described. Dr. Gonthier explains: "What we are facing is in fact the right for the doctor of chiropractic not only to have access to diagnostic tools in clinical activities, but also the right to prescribe or order the necessary tests as needed for the care of patients. This is the issue. This is a right for the DC in Quebec since the legalization of the profession in 1974. This was also very clear at the time of the creation of our program in 1993. Why is the *Office des Professions* questioning this now, almost nine years later, and without any complaints from the public (patients) whatsoever?"

"Laboratory analyses are indispensable to chiropractors, not only for diagnostic purposes, but also to determine whether a patient should be referred to a physician," Dr. Mireille Duranleau told the *Montreal Gazette*. Dr. Duranleau is the president of the Quebec Chiropractors Association.

The action by the OPQ, seen from south of the Canadian border, smacks of medical sanction.

Dr. Gonthier concurs. "This situation is probably, or will be proven as, a very good and actual example of medical dominance and of medical interference in a supposedly neutral and objective professional system."

Dr. Gonthier speculated on next year's court date: "It will be interesting to see the arguments of the OPQ and the position taken by the medical profession. And it will be very interesting to observe the arguments and the position of the chiropractic profession, either by the Order (*L'Ordre des*

chiropraticiens du Québec), the Association (ACQ), the chiropractic department of the UQTR, or the representatives of the chiropractic profession at large, like the Association of Chiropractic Colleges, the CCA, the ICA, the ACA, as they all might be asked to come in front of the court and testify.

"It will be a very interesting battle and the issue is highly important for the future of our profession, not only in Quebec, but around the world," Dr. Gonthier concluded.

Reference

1. Doctors angered by lab-test ban. *Montreal Gazette*, Aug. 16, 2001.

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