



# LET'S TALK ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM



## LET'S ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE

For a physician, taking care of patients is something obvious right from the beginning of training. However, after working as a clinician and manager for about 10 years, I realized that I could contribute more to my profession. My experience and understanding of the processes allow me to make a positive impact on my environment. And when I work to improve on aspects that lead to the issues that cause frustration in my practice or on things I have no control over as a clinician, my patients benefit.

I regularly encounter colleagues, who, like me not long ago, and without really understanding why, find it difficult that they have to accept the status quo in the health care system. For me, rather than tolerating the situation and trying to adapt, I realized that it was much more rewarding to attempt to find solutions to the problems that were creating frustration. With the QMA, I have been able to find a way that enables me to act. The association's position statements and the concrete means of action it proposes give me a way to contribute to disseminating innovative professional practices and organization methods. In 2013, this was music to my ears... Four years later, I am more convinced than ever that we need to work together to help advance professionalism.

It is in fact a key aspect to use for improving the health care system. Being professionals leads us back to the skills we acquired during our medical training, and also to our collective commitment to society. If physicians do not participate in managing institutions and defining the clinical needs of the population and the health services required, others will do it for us and not necessarily for the benefit of our patients.

Together, we can determine the actions needed in our environments to improve the organization of the health care system, refocus our care on our patients' needs and rediscover the pleasure of practicing relevant, effective medicine.

It is now time to take action. The QMA needs you. In order to get out to meet with you, listen to what you have to say about what you are going through in your environments and try to come up with concrete solutions, the QMA is organizing a tour on Professionalism. Already over 20 sessions have been planned in several Québec regions. Some of these meetings have already happened, while others will take place in the coming weeks and months. The idea is to present a report in the spring with the findings resulting from this consultation.

As QMA president, I will lead some of these sessions. My colleagues on the Board of Directors will also do the same. We want to engage in a constructive discussion with you. At our meetings, we first look at the careful thought that the QMA has given to professionalism since 2013. We then discuss potential solutions that can be implemented.

How would you like to practice your medical professionalism on a daily basis?

What leadership should physicians develop?

How can we promote clinical governance in the health care system?

How should the medical profession redefine its organization?

I look forward to hearing your views and discussing the issues with you. I hope many of you will join us at the upcoming sessions for this stimulating reflection on the future of our profession.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hugo Viens, B.Sc., M.D., FRCSC  
President

## A BOARD OF DIRECTORS' TAKE ON PROFESSIONALISM

The notion of professionalism is overused. Many reduce it to specific training characterized by skills or the quality of work carried out. However, at the outset, as seen from the Anglophone perspective, it also implied a commitment to society. The medical profession, thanks to the privileges (autonomy, income) that it is granted by society, refers to the latter. The Board members have therefore gone through the exercise of giving you a concrete idea of what professionalism represents for them.

"I am very aware of the issues related to overdiagnosis and the excessive use of our diagnostic and therapeutic modalities. Professionalism as defined by the QMA resonates with me because it encompasses this societal responsibility of reasonable, meaningful use of our resources for the good of our patients."

– **Dr. Guylène Thériault, Board member**

"Like everyone else, it makes me uncomfortable to belong to a profession that has been taken to task so often over the past few years. Participating in this tour gives me a chance to talk about it with my peers, to make some sense of it and to regain the feeling of vocation that was so clear during my studies, but that may have been lost over the years."

– **Dr. Yun Jen, Outgoing president of the Board**

"With the QMA, I can promote a professionalism that I can relate to. A professionalism, inspired by the Anglophone perspective, that goes beyond individual skill, that focuses on what is beneficial for our patient, but also for patients in general. The one cannot exclude the other, especially in a universal health care system funded by the government and with limited resources. What is given to one person is taken away from another: today's professionals must incorporate this social responsibility."

– **Dr. Hugo Viens, President of the Board**

"The medical profession is constantly changing and we are currently facing some major challenges. In a context where the population's view of physicians seems to be growing ever more sceptical, a collective professionalism seems to me to be the key for maintaining this valued, basic trust that allows us to practice medicine."

– **Dr. Isabelle Samson, Vice-president of the Board**

"This tour allowed me to see that the erosion of the public's trust in the medical profession has made physicians want to be part of improving the quality and organization of services in order to meet the needs of the population. The challenge lies in finding a way to achieve that."

– **Dr. Vincent Demers, Board member**

"The practice of medicine is going through a major transformation. The data flows, scientific progress and new organization methods are shaking up traditional professionalism. The QMA's tour is a unique opportunity to discuss and compare our experiences in the field. It is up to physicians to renew professionalism in order to regain their place in society, as well as the pleasure of practicing and the desire to get involved."

– **Dr. Michel Welt, Board member**



*Interview with  
Dr. Isabelle Samson,  
vice-presidente of  
the QMA Board  
of Directors*

## A TOUR TO MEET WITH YOU

The QMA is the only professional association that gives a voice to the entire medical profession. At the request of its Board of Directors and with an ad hoc committee, Vice-president Dr. Isabelle Samson set up a training and consultation tour on professionalism. At the QMA, because of the work we have done since 2013, we firmly believe that medical professionalism is THE solution to the crisis that the medical profession is experiencing.

### Why did the QMA organize this tour?

**Dr. Isabelle Samson:** The QMA has been working on the issue of professionalism for several years now and wanted to consult with the physicians to continue the discussion with them. The goal is to come up with a picture of their perception of professionalism and to discuss their ideas with them so that the profession has a successful future.

### Why is it important to consult Québec physicians on professionalism?

**I.S.:** It's essential to seek out the experiences of physicians in the field to learn more about the challenges they face, but also to better understand their strengths. By going out to meet with physicians, the QMA wants to learn more about the solutions and experiences elsewhere to be able to gather and use this information to help advance professionalism on a larger scale.

### Why is it urgent to act?

**I.S.:** In the current context, physicians must get involved and show their professional leadership. Over the past few years, the medical profession has regularly been taken to task by the media, in particular because of the difficulties in accessing services in the health care system. If we want to maintain our autonomy and put an end to the spate of government interventions we are facing, as a profession we have to show leadership and professionalism.

### How can professionalism help to improve the health care system?

**I.S.:** Through clinical governance. Our profession must promote leadership so that we can have better clinical governance at all levels in the health care system. Clinical governance is inevitable. It's what ensures that decisions are more consistent with the needs of patients and caregivers, but also that there is real co-management between the different decision-making levels.

### What do physicians have to gain by focusing on professionalism on a daily basis?

**I.S.:** Trust is essential for the practice of medicine, but over the past few years, this trust has been eroded. In 2003, 70% of Canadians felt that physicians were trustworthy. In 2013, only 46% felt the same. This is a drop of 24% in 10 years. For the moment, this doesn't seem to affect the bond of trust directly between physicians and their patients, but it is urgent to act to restore the trust.

### Why should physicians participate in the tour?

**I.S.:** At the sessions I led, many physicians told me that they had never had a chance to talk about the issues this way, whether it was during their studies or after. With this tour, physicians can reflect on how to better take their place, and how to be better organized amongst themselves. All of this is part of professionalism and it's essential to have these discussions in the current context if we don't want others to decide for us.

## QMA and professionalism since 2013

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
<p><b>THE QMA TACKLES THE ISSUE OF OPTIMIZING CLINICAL PRACTICE</b> Over \$5 billion improperly spent in the health care system</p> <p>"Everyone can contribute. Optimizing Québec's health care system is the responsibility of the entire medical profession, stakeholders in the system, managers, the government and patients. Everyone must make an effort. Physicians are central to the solution. They have the ability and responsibility to take on a decisive role to transform health care in Québec."</p> <p>– <b>Dr. Ruth Vander Stelt, 2011-2013 president</b></p>	<p><b>THE QMA TARGETS OVERDIAGNOSIS, A MAJOR ISSUE IN OPTIMIZING CLINICAL PRACTICE</b> Organization of the first Québec symposium on overdiagnosis attended by health care professionals, patients and system managers</p> <p>"Furthermore, unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures put greater pressure on the resources in our health care system. By eliminating overdiagnosis and overtreatment at all levels in the health care system, we could free up human and economic resources in order to offer better quality care and greater access to this care."</p> <p>– <b>Dr. Laurent Marcoux, 2013-2015 president</b></p>	<p><b>THE QMA BEGINS A CONSULTATION ON THE SOCIAL CONTRACT</b> Publication of a survey and report on the role of the medical profession in the governance of Québec's health care system</p> <p>"With the current transformation of the health care system, it is even more important for physicians to fulfil their side of the social contract in the interests of society. We no longer have a choice. The credibility of our profession is being increasingly called into question and we have to show leadership if we want to keep our professional autonomy."</p> <p>– <b>Dr. Yun Jen, 2015-2017 president</b></p>	<p><b>THE QMA BROADENS THE DISCUSSION ON CLINICAL GOVERNANCE</b> Publication of a report showing the importance of clinical governance for more efficient management of health care and services</p> <p>"The effect will not be instant, but by combining their efforts, allowing a new medical leadership to emerge and being more receptive to interprofessional collaboration, physicians will be able to improve access to care and the integration of changes. By engaging in a new clinical governance, where responsibilities are shared between administrators and physicians, and where their knowledge contributes to medical administration decisions, physicians would be part of the change, rather than its victims."</p> <p>– <b>Dr. Yun Jen, 2015-2017 president</b></p>	<p><b>THE QMA CONSULTS PHYSICIANS ON THE RENEWAL OF PROFESSIONALISM</b> Training-consultation workshops across Québec to get a general overview of the current situation of medical professionalism and to define winning options</p> <p>"Individually, we are capable of making wise use of public resources. Collectively, the medical profession must play a leadership role in organizing and improving health care services for the population. We are in fact in a very good position to do this. The medical profession knows what patients need and has the tools to improve the organization of services, namely through the intervention of physician executives."</p> <p>– <b>Dr. Hugo Viens, current president</b></p>

## THE TOUR IS IN FULL SWING!



### Upcoming workshops

The tour will continue in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2018 according to the interest shown by physicians.

The upcoming workshops are as follows:

**Montréal : December 4**

**Roberval : December 11**

**Thedford Mines : January 11, 2018**

**Verdun : January 15, 2018**

**Joliette : January 17, 2018**

**Longueuil : January 18, 2018**

You can register directly on the AMQ Website, under *Courses and CPD*.

If you would like to organize a workshop near you, don't hesitate to contact Julie Lapointe:

**1 800 363-3932** or [julie.lapointe@amq.ca](mailto:julie.lapointe@amq.ca)

Since October, 12 workshops have already been held in Victoriaville, Chicoutimi, Montréal, Gatineau, Amos, La Sarre, Val d'Or, Rouyn-Noranda and Québec City, and there are just as many more to come in the next few months!

These consultations are always very well received by participants. They appreciate being able to discuss topics to improve the profession and the public's trust.

Several problems have been mentioned, such as overdiagnosis, the population's loss of trust in physicians, the organization or funding of the health care system, and also the disempowerment of physicians.

Several potential solutions have also been suggested: engaging patients in their own care, decentralizing the system, and training students for leadership and clinical governance.

### You can read below some comments of participants:

"It's rare to have the chance to discuss and reflect on these matters on a daily basis. We talk a lot about money and working conditions, but very rarely about professionalism and the related values."

"It's actually easier to be technicians than physicians. However, by being technicians, we risk losing our profession."

"The existence of legislation such as Bill 130 shows that we have a problem... If we're not there, we will be organized by others."

"The system is as centralized as it can get now. Because everything seems to swing like a pendulum, we'll eventually end up decentralized again. It's important to get involved now to be a significant player at the right time."

"Mentoring in management and administration could be a good way to train successors. The approach could be modelled on what we use with specialists to learn by practising. We have to ensure there is a transfer of management knowledge and expertise."

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### AMONG THE AVENUES SUGGESTED, WHICH ONE DO YOU THINK IS A PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPING MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM?

- A. Optimize medical practice (e.g.: tackle overdiagnosis, interdisciplinary work, etc.)
- B. Promote the management roles filled by physicians
- C. Support collective management of the population as a whole (population-based responsibility)
- D. Encourage better sharing of clinical information between various professionals
- E. Other

Answer the survey here: [fr.surveymonkey.com/r/professionnalism](https://fr.surveymonkey.com/r/professionnalism)