



COALITION CONTRE  
l'obésité morbide

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**The Coalition against Morbid Obesity favorably receives the MSSS action plan  
on bariatric surgery**

**Montreal, May 15, 2009** - Jennifer Schultz and Josée Roy, cofounders of the *Coalition against Morbid Obesity* (<http://lepoidsquitue.com>), reacted positively to the Quebec action plan on bariatric surgery tabled today by Quebec's Health and Social Services Minister Yves Bolduc. "This is the action plan we were promised two years ago. At long last, we have a health minister who recognizes the importance of bariatric surgery, the only treatment for people suffering from morbid obesity," declared Mrs. Roy. "As he already had outlined it during the April 23 parliamentary session, bariatric surgery is *an issue close to this heart*," she added.

**Universal access**

"At a recent meeting with Dr. Yves Bolduc, he readily acknowledged that, in Quebec, bariatric surgery was the only type of surgery that did not benefit from universal access – a situation that needed to be corrected," affirmed Mrs. Schultz. "Accessibility and free healthcare are the two fundamental principles on which is based the MSSS action plan, and that is fair and non-discriminatory towards the morbidly obese people of Quebec," said Mrs. Schultz.

**A role to play**

The Coalition against Morbid Obesity was created in 2007 to increase awareness of the issue of morbid obesity and to foster better access to bariatric surgery in Quebec. "Minister Bolduc recognizes the major contribution of the *Coalition against Morbid Obesity* in raising awareness and providing information. This recognition that we greatly appreciate paves the way to a collaboration between the *Coalition* and the MSSS at a critical moment: the introduction of the action plan on bariatric surgery," explained Mrs. Schultz.

**Public waiting list**

The action plan clearly indicates that the objective is to improve access to bariatric surgery considering that the present waiting period can extend up to seven years. "To this end, we would like to see bariatric surgery waiting lists posted on the MSSS Web site, just like it is done for other types of surgery," concluded Mrs. Schultz.

(<http://wpp01.msss.gouv.qc.ca/appl/g74web/default.asp>)

**Morbid obesity**

Morbid obesity is the starting point for different types of diseases that are often fatal, such as arterial hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, or heart disease. An individual's obesity level can be evaluated by means of the body mass index (BMI), which is calculated by dividing the person's weight by his or her height squared (Kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Morbid obesity corresponds to a BMI higher than or equal to 40, or higher than or equal to 35 if accompanied by comorbidities.

**Bariatric surgery**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), bariatric surgery is considered to be the only effective treatment for morbid obesity. Bariatric surgery includes a series of techniques that are based on two intervention principles: gastric bypass (reduced volume) and intestinal malabsorption (derivation). In Québec in 2005, the *Agence d'évaluation des technologies et des modes d'intervention en santé* (AETMIS) tabled a report entitled "Surgical Treatment of Morbid Obesity – Update", which reviews all of the bariatric surgery techniques. The AETMIS recommended establishing an action plan in Québec to define the need for bariatric surgery and devise ways to respond to it.

**About the Coalition against Morbid Obesity**

*Created in February 2007, the Coalition against Morbid Obesity is a non-profit, Québec-based organization that draws on the strength of association to increase awareness of the issue of morbid obesity and to foster better access to bariatric surgery in Québec. Its signature, "Weight that kills", expresses the dramatic situation that is experienced by people who are suffering from morbid obesity. As its name indicates, this disease leads to a faster death for those who are afflicted. For more information, visit [www.lepoidsquitue.com](http://www.lepoidsquitue.com).*

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