



The Impact of Foundations in the Development of the Healthcare System

By Alain Demers

Director General of the Association of Quebec healthcare institution foundations (AQHIF)

May 24th 2018

I am often asked the following question: why should I give to a foundation associated with a healthcare and social services institution, when the State budget dedicated to the public system is more than 38 billion dollars annually, which is taken from our taxes?

Several dozens of thousands of donors answer this question each year in Quebec, an answer that could be summed up by the following: *because it contributes towards making a difference!*

The evolution of francophone philanthropy is undeniable. However, certain prejudices persist. In a different social and economic context in Quebec in comparison to English Canada and the United States, there is still incomprehension concerning the role played by foundations associated with a healthcare establishment.

A few numbers

During the 2017 Mallet Institution summit, several statistics were highlighted. In 2015, there were more than 2000 foundations in Quebec, who distributed 884 million dollars to the different causes they support, as much in health as in other areas.

Foundations that are attached to a Quebec healthcare establishment represented slightly more than 10% of the total of these foundations (around 225 foundations). According to the numbers compiled by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) the amounts given to the different health establishments surpassed 225 million dollars in 2015, representing more than 25% of the amount allocated to Quebec for the same period.

Between 2006 and 2016, it is over 2 billion dollars that is given to the different Quebec public healthcare establishments. These amounts are specifically earmarked for the development of the system, the operational expenditures being covered by the State budget.

Among these 225 foundations associated to a healthcare establishment, 63 have collected over a million dollars in 2015 and in 2016, with an average of 6.46 million dollars. It is important to specify that this amount does not include several foundations or charities who also work in the healthcare domain without specifically being attached to an establishment, for example Leucan or the Quebec Cancer Foundation. A part of the sums collected by these organizations are added to the amounts invested by philanthropy into the Quebec healthcare system.

The role of foundations in the development of the system

When we make a reference to the foundations of the healthcare system, we first think of those associated to the important hospitals and who at the same time have a significant notoriety and results that allow for a significant impact. Let us note the example of the Jewish General Hospital¹, the CHU Sainte-Justine², the Montreal Children's Hospital³, the CHU of Quebec⁴ or the Cardiology Institute of Montreal⁵.

Several hospital foundations, smaller ones, located as much in the regions as in the city centers, also play an important role. The same can be said of many foundations that are attached to other healthcare establishments, for example, long-term care centers (CHSLD) or palliative care homes.

Historically, donations served for several purposes, notably for the purchase of high technology medical instruments and to support research and education. Several foundations also support skill development for the employees of the CISSS and of the CIUSSS.

There was been a certain evolution in the financial support from foundations, for instance towards supporting the accomplishment of one-time projects of different types that are not financed by the establishment's working budget. The improvement of the quality of living of the beneficiaries in CHSLD is a good example. The support to social service components also starts taking a larger place.

In addition, we could think that the largest portion of donations serve to support services such as oncology, cardiology or pediatrics. It is true that significant sums are still dedicated to these, but, in the past few years, we have seen growing support towards the domains of mental health, palliative care, outpatient care and home-based care.

¹ <https://www.jghfoundation.org/fr/campaign>

² <http://www.fondation-sainte-justine.org/fr/ou-vont-vos-dons>

³ <https://fondationduchildren.com/fr/pourquoi-donner>

⁴ http://www.fondationduchuq.org/a_quoi_servent_les_dons/les_projets_majeurs/

⁵ <https://www.icm-mhi.org/fr/fondation/ou-vont-vos-dons>

For example, the Aline Letendre Foundation⁶ associated itself with the Hôtel-Dieu of Saint-Hyacinthe. This establishment is a shelter that offers long-term care and short-term stays. This foundation's mission is to improve the global quality of life of the residents of Hôtel-Dieu, by improving the care, services and their living environment. Since 1989, more than 7 million dollars were given to the establishment to support this mission.

The *À notre santé* Foundation of the Hôtel-Dieu of Arthabaska in Victoriaville accomplished an exceptional job and benefited from the great generosity of the donors of that region. In fact, the major campaign of 2012-2014, that had an initial objective of 8 million dollars, significantly surpassed this objective and reached 12.27 million dollars. These sums notably allowed to relocate the emergency room of the hospital and to double its size. Significant sums were also dedicated to mental health, intensive and out-patient care⁷.

Finally, the Cité de la Santé of Laval Foundation⁸ created, in 2007, the Chamberland-Lavallée Fund. This fund offers scholarships for students and for professional development for the nursing staff. In twelve years, more than 200 nurses received a support scholarship for their studies at the Bachelor or Master level as well as for other types of continuing education. At the scholarship ceremony, in 2014, the director of nursing highlighted the importance of this contribution to the improvement of care offered to patients. The director also indicated the link between the financing from this source and the sense of attachment between the staff and the institution. Exceptionally, all of the nurses that had received a scholarship from the beginning of the program were still employed by the Laval establishment.

These examples illustrate the contribution of foundations to healthcare establishments. In a philanthropic context where the number of donations has once again receded in Canada, 2016 will have been an exceptional year: more than 260 million dollars were given to Quebec's public healthcare establishments. This great generosity from Quebec donors contributes to making a difference in the development of the Quebec healthcare system.

Rethinking the minimal contributions, compared to those of the State, that manage to still make a difference, the contributions should not be looked at from a quantitative angle but for their complementary and qualitative dimensions.

⁶ <http://www.fondationalineletendre.com/>

⁷ <http://www.anotresante.ca/campagne/majeure-a-notre-sante-2012-2014/>

⁸ <http://fondationcitedelasante.com/fr/>

To go further :

Le Spécialiste (2017), (revue de la Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec), Vol. 19, N°4, décembre 2017, 48 p.

- <https://www.fmsq.org/documents/10275/16188160/leSpecialisteDec2017FRA.pdf>

Épisode et Léger Marketing (2017). Études sur les tendances en philanthropie au Québec en 2017.

Lapointe D. (2017) Focus OSBL. L'obsession des frais d'administration au détriment de la mission. Blogue sur le site Web de Focus OSBL et conférence présentée au colloque de l'AFÉSAQ, novembre 2017.

Rivard-Royer H. (2016). Les Fondations dans le contexte de la réforme: amorce d'une transformation philanthropique tranquille... Le Point en santé et services sociaux, automne 2016, vol. 12, no 3.

Alain Demers, director general of AFÉSAQ



Mr. Alain Demers is well known for his professional experience in the cultural, philanthropic and associative sectors. Experienced manager, mentor and teacher, he brings a vast experience to AFÉSAQ that contributes to its members. Before being the director of AFÉSAQ, Mr. Demers has also occupied the position of director general of the Cité de la Santé Foundation and the Orchestre symphonique de Laval.