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BRIEFS

Stress high in health workers, union says

The Alliance of Professional and Technical Occupations in Health and Social Services (APTS) is sounding the alarm about the mental health of its members. The APTS on Sunday unveiled the results of a survey of its union members, who work in the Quebec health network as physiotherapists, social workers, medical imaging technologists, special educators and other positions. The union reports that 60 per cent of its members report having a high or very high psychological distress index. APTS president Carolle Dubé is not surprised by these results, saying they are part of the reason for the rate of worker absenteeism. The APTS blames budget cuts and the reorganizations imposed by the Quebec minister of Health, Gaétan Barrette. Dubé pointed to the centralization caused by the law, which she said had caused a "loss of benchmarks" without improving services to the population. According to the study carried out with the support of researchers at Université Laval, 35 per cent of the 32,000 alliance members have been absent from work for psychological reasons over the past year. Some 65 per cent say they are running out of time to do their jobs. "Currently, we have six people out of 10, professionals, technicians, who are at risk of depression, living in situations of high anxiety," Dubé said.

