

Info

Héma-Québec



BULLETIN FOR HÉMA-QUÉBEC PARTNERS, VOLUNTEERS AND BLOOD DONORS

Vol. 7 No. 1 – AUGUST 2004



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Every day, Héma-Québec's team works hard to fulfill the organization's mission to efficiently ensure adequate, safe supplies of products delivered to meet the very important needs of Québec hospitals and their patients. At the close of another busy year, it is with pleasure and great pride that I invite you to read our 2003–2004 Annual Report, which is now available on our Web site. To celebrate the first five years of the organization's existence, we have prepared a five-year summary of our major achievements, as well as a report of our activities for the year ended March 31, 2004.

Speaking of adequate supplies of products, this year stands out with the development and implementation of a supply strategy integrating various traditional and innovative collection methods over a five-year period.

In the same vein, several projects required a significant investment in human resources and in time, including the BDPE (Blood Donation Positive Experience) project, which is now in full swing, the opening of the Place Laurier Globule blood donor centre in Québec City, and the introduction of 10 new pieces of equipment for collecting platelets by apheresis at the Globule blood donor centres.

Also of note for 2003–2004 was the panoply of safety measures established to counter the effects of the West Nile virus on the blood supply, as well as a series of precautionary measures related to severe

acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). We also implemented an additional test to screen for the presence of the hepatitis B virus in blood donations, as well as a bacteria detection system for apheresis platelet donations.

We are proud to be able to say that, once again, Héma-Québec fully met the needs of hospitals in Québec. Moreover, our new television campaign made it possible to further heighten awareness of the importance of blood donation among Quebecers and increase the intention to donate. For the first time, using the theme of "Give blood. Give life.", we showcase donors as well as recipients. You will also notice that our recipient spokespersons are pictured on the cover of the 2003–2004 Annual Report.



www.hema-quebec.qc.ca

Aware of the commitment required of all our partners in the community, we are very grateful to all blood drive organizing committees, as well as to volunteers and donors, for their tremendous contribution to Héma-Québec operations and the well-being of Quebecers. We could not fulfill our mission without their support.

Five years already! And we look forward to the next five with a great deal of enthusiasm! Together, we make a great team for a great mission.

Francisca Basso

This summer, carry the torch.

From June 14 until September 5, Quebecers are encouraged to *carry the torch* and give blood generously, in the spirit of the athletes making their way to the Olympic Games in Athens. All donors are anonymous heroes whose performance can be clearly measured by their contribution to the health of us all, and by the number of lives saved. Summer is a crucial time for maintaining the level of the collective blood supply. About 7,000 donors are expected every week to give the gift of life at blood drives and Globule blood donor centres.



NEVER TOO LATE FOR A GOOD DEED...

Émile Paquet, 506 donations



Mr. Émile Paquet is a real gem for Héma-Québec. This 76 year old, who retired from the civil service 15 years ago, contributes to the organization's mission in many ways.

First of all, Mr. Paquet has one of the most impressive donation careers, having donated some 506 times. Mr. Paquet even remarked to us that blood donation is a sort of "second calling" for him. When he was in his 40s, he began giving blood at blood drives held at his place of work. Then, at 56, he made the jump to donating plasma. He has now made a total of more than 450 plasma donations!

Mr. Paquet's contribution doesn't stop at his numerous donations, however. No longer eligible to donate blood because of his age, he is now a volunteer, recruiting plasma donors by making telephone calls. About twice a week, he heads to the Place Laurier Globule in Québec City or to a blood drive in the area to encourage donors to donate plasma. "I have performed lots of volunteer work in my life: pastoral committee, symphonic choir, church choir, and so on. But I prefer being an Héma-Québec volunteer!"

A true ambassador for donation, Mr. Paquet encourages those around him to give the gift of blood, the gift of life. And he is quite proud to admit he even succeeded in convincing one of his grandsons.

What is his motivation for being so enthusiastically committed to this cause? He answered, "Not everybody has the ability to save somebody from a fire or from drowning. I like the idea of being able to save lives, simply by giving blood."

Thank you, Mr. Paquet, for your exceptional dedication!

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU



We recently received a wonderfully heartening message from the mother of a young recipient encouraging employees and volunteers to continue their efforts:

A HUGE THANK YOU on behalf of my four-year-old daughter who, without you, would have TREMENDOUS health problems. She receives a transfusion every 28 days for her immune deficiency. She regularly visits blood drives with me to thank donors. I find this act to be extremely important. Keep up the good work!

P.S. I have included a photo of my little darling with one of her big, bright smiles—a smile that, I know, would no longer exist without your work.

Isabelle, mother of Éloïse

A SALUTE TO VOLUNTEERS!

On June 28, 2004, Steve Shutt, former Canadiens hockey player, and Jacques Demers, former Canadiens coach, paid a special visit to Héma-Québec. They were there, as part of the Helping Neighbour program, to pay tribute to Héma-Québec volunteers—in particular, to Doris Croteau-Quenneville.

Ms. Croteau-Quenneville has been calling blood donors to ask for their contribution for more than 20 years. In 2002 alone, for example, she made about 35,000 telephone calls! This generous and devoted volunteer also helps out at various blood drive locations.

Mr. Demers and Mr. Shutt awarded an honorary plaque to Ms. Croteau-Quenneville. Ms. Marie-France Boisvert accepted, on behalf of all volunteers, another plaque thanking and recognizing them for their exemplary community service.



From left to right: Marie-France Boisvert; Jacques Demers; Doris Croteau-Quenneville; André Roch, Héma-Québec Vice-President, Public Affairs; and Steve Shutt, surrounded by volunteers and employees.

HÉMA-QUÉBEC'S EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

Dr. Francine Décary, recipient of the 2004 Women of Distinction Award

At the 11th annual Women of Distinction Gala organized by the Women's Y Foundation of Montreal, Héma-Québec's Chief Executive Officer took top honours in the *Business and Professions* category. This prestigious award pays tribute to Dr. Décary's achievements as both a businesswoman and manager. In granting this honour, the Women's Y Foundation especially emphasized the importance of the Public Cord Blood Bank recently launched.

In the thank-you speech she gave during this evening dedicated to women, Dr. Décary noted that 77% of Héma-Québec staff is female. She also declared that she is proud of the entire team, as they have made this young organization a true success story.

Marketing team honoured by Publicité Club de Montréal

Héma-Québec's current television campaign with the theme of "Give blood. Give life." won first place in the *Society Campaign* category of the Publicité Club de Montréal's 45th annual *Concours de création publicitaire*. The goal of the competition is to highlight creative excellence in French-language advertising in Québec.

Bos agency and the Marketing team tied for the *Coq d'or* award with the producers of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec's "Pierres tombales" campaign.

The Canadian Public Relations Society recognizes the work of the Public Affairs team

The Public Affairs team received the Canadian Public Relations Society's Award of Merit in the *Issues/Crisis Management* category for Héma-Québec's West Nile Virus Integrated Action Plan. This award was presented during the closing ceremony of the Canadian Public Relations Conference, held in Québec City.

The WNV Integrated Action Plan was one of the rare initiatives to be nominated in both the national and provincial awards categories. In fact, Héma-Québec was also a finalist in the *Integrated Communications* category of the *Prix Équinoxes* of the Société des relationnistes du Québec.

INFO-DRIVE

To find out where and when blood drives will take place:

Montréal Area and Western Québec
(514) 832-0873 or 1-800-343-SANG (7264)

Québec City Area and Eastern Québec
(418) 650-7230 or 1-800-761-6610

Customer service (information for donors)
1-800-847-2525

Blood drive schedules and results are also posted on our Web site at: www.hema-quebec.qc.ca

AN INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENCY FOR DR. FRANCINE DÉCARY

Founded in 1935, the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) is a renowned association of some 1,400 scientists from more than 100 countries who are involved in blood transfusion and transfusion medicine. Dr. Francine Décary, Chief Executive Officer of Héma-Québec, is the first Quebecker to assume the prestigious position of president of this organization.

The mandate of president is for six years and follows a specific progression: *president elect* for a period of two years, *president* for the next two years and *past president* for the final two years. Elected to the ISBT presidency in August 2002, Dr. Décary's initial major responsibility was to recruit new members. She recently began the second phase of her mandate in July 2004, during the ISBT annual general meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The ISBT is an authoritative forum for exchange and communication in the blood and transfusion field. Its international mission is to disseminate, for the well-being of patients, all scientific information related to blood transfusion; promote research and development in transfusion medicine; and promote and maintain the highest ethical, medical and scientific standards in transfusion medicine.

In all, it is an honour worthy of Dr. Décary's expertise!

BLOOD TYPE COMPATIBILITY

		DONORS							
		O-	O+	B-	B+	A-	A+	AB-	AB+
RECIPIENTS	AB+	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	AB-	●		●		●		●	
	A+	●	●			●	●		
	A-	●				●			
	B+	●	●	●	●				
	B-	●		●					
	O+	●	●						
	O-	●							

For example, if you are a donor whose blood group is O-, you are a universal donor. All blood groups are compatible with your blood. However, as a recipient, you can only receive O- blood.

On December 17, 2003, five new directors officially joined the Héma-Québec Board, replacing members whose mandate had ended. The five new directors were appointed by order of the Government of Québec under the *Act respecting Héma-Québec and the hemovigilance committee*.

Furthermore, Dr. André Lebrun, past Vice-chair of Héma-Québec, was elected Chairman, and former Director, Dr. Yves St-Pierre, is now Vice-chair. Mr. Claude Pichette, Chairman of the Board of Directors since the organization's founding in 1998, continued to sit on the Board as a director from December 17, 2003, to March 26, 2004.



From left to right: Dr. Yves St-Pierre, Vice-chair of the Board, Dr. André Lebrun, Chairman of the Board, and Dr. Francine Décary, Secretary of the Board.

Board members:	
Field represented	Member
Transfusion Medicine	Chairman Dr. André Lebrun, Oncohematologist Hôpital du Sacré-Cœur de Montréal
Academic	Vice-chair Dr. Yves St-Pierre, Professor INRS-Institut Armand-Frappier
Héma-Québec	Secretary Dr. Francine Décary, Chief Executive Officer
Donors	Ms. Hélène Darby, President Association of Blood Donation Volunteers
Hospitals	Ms. Carole Deschambault, General Manager Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont
	Dr. Lucie Poitras, Director, Professional Services Hôpital Sainte-Justine
Transfusion Medicine	Dr. Jean-François Hardy, Anesthesiologist Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal
Academic	Dr. Serge Montplaisir, Professor Department of Microbiology, Université de Montréal
Business Community	Ms. Cheryl Campbell Steer, President Campbell Steer & Associés
Recipients	Mr. Christian Gendron, Director, Operations Johnson & Johnson Canada
Public Health	Dr. Marc Dionne, Scientific Director Institut national de santé publique du Québec
Hemovigilance Committee	Observer Mr. Jean-Guy Lorrain

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



First row	Yvan Charbonneau, Eng. Vice-President, Operations
	Suzanne Rémy, MSc, MBA Vice-President, Quality and Standards
	Francine Décary, MD, PhD, MBA Chief Executive Officer
	Smaranda Ghibu, BCL, LLB Vice-President, Legal Affairs
	Marc Germain, MD, PhD Vice-President, Histo-Québec
Second row	Roger Carpentier, CRIA Vice-President, Human Resources
	Guy Lafrenière, MBA, CMA Vice-President, Finance and Administration
	Simon Fournier, DEC Vice-President, Information Technology
	Gilles Delage, MD, MSc Vice-President, Medical Affairs
	Réal Lemieux, PhD Vice-President, Research and Development
André Roch, BCom Vice-President, Public Affairs	

UNDER A NEW ROOF IN QUÉBEC CITY

The transfer of Héma-Québec operations in the Québec City area to 1009 Route du Vallon in Sainte-Foy was recently completed. The new building houses staff from the Research and Development division and Histo-Québec, the organization's human tissue division, as well as the Québec City Operations division team responsible for the collection, processing and distribution of labile blood products.

The Merlin-Pomerleau consortium completed construction of the new building, located on the campus of Université Laval, which assigned the land under the terms of a 30-year emphyteutic lease.



This relocation to facilities better adapted to its needs will promote collaboration between Université Laval and Héma-Québec, and should contribute to major scientific advances in the coming years. In fact, researchers at Héma-Québec and Université Laval's Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology already work together. For example, Dr. Alain Garnier, of the Université Laval's Department of Chemical Engineering, received a Strategic Project Grant this year from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) for the development of platelet production processes, work in which Héma-Québec's Research and Development team participates, as it is directly related to the organization's cellular engineering program. One of the objectives of this program is the development of blood substitutes for platelets.

TO CONTACT US IN QUÉBEC CITY:

Telephone: (418) 780-HÉMA (4362) or 1 800 267-9711
1009 Route du Vallon, Sainte-Foy, Québec G1V 5C3

REGIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS 2004 TOUR

Héma-Québec held several regional public meetings as part of a province-wide tour that took its representatives to 13 cities around Québec between January and May 2004. Beginning September 1, they will continue the tour this fall. By the end of this initiative, a total of about 20 cities will have been visited.

Through these regional meetings with its partners, Héma-Québec endeavours to take stock of the importance of the role community stakeholders and blood drive organizing committees have.

During her presentations, Dr. Francine Décary, Chief Executive Officer and Secretary of the Board of Directors, reminded participants that, "Knowing that every 80 seconds someone is in need of blood, we all, individually and collectively, have a role to play in ensuring a sufficient supply of blood products for Quebeckers." She added that, "to fulfill its mission, Héma-Québec must be able to count on community partners such as you." Dr. Décary also took the opportunity to thank them for their continued efforts in maintaining the collective blood supply.

At these meetings, which each have been attended by an average of one hundred participants, the representatives present the organization through a summary of the activities it has undertaken and its major short-term projects. Also discussed are measures to take to increase awareness of blood donation and keys to a successful blood drive. A recipient from the area being visited is also present at every meeting to share his or her personal experience. The Association des bénévoles du don de sang is also represented, in particular by its president, Ms. Hélène Darby, to support the promotion of blood donation. Furthermore, given our ageing population, everyone agrees upon the necessity of preparing a new generation of both organizing committees and individual donors.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:				
City	Date	Location	Room	Time
Gatineau	Sept. 1, 2004	Four Points 35 Laurier Street	Notre-Dame A-B-C	5:30 p.m.
Bonaventure	Sept. 15, 2004	Château Blanc 98 Port Royal Ave	Pub/Acadienne	5:30 p.m.
Rimouski	Sept. 16, 2004	Centre des Congrès 225, René-Lepage E.	Langevin - Ouellet	5:30 p.m.
Montréal Ouest	Sept. 22, 2004	Holiday Inn 6700 Trans-Canada Rd.	Trianon	5:30 p.m.
Lévis	Oct. 13, 2004	Hôtel Rond-Point 53 Kennedy	Lévis - Lauzon	5:30 p.m.
Rouyn-Noranda	Oct. 28, 2004	Hôtel Gouverneur 41 6th Street	La Grande (No. 5)	5:30 p.m.

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE PUBLIC CORD BLOOD BANK

On June 17, 2004, Héma-Québec announced the official launch of Québec's Public Cord Blood Bank. This came following a trial period that ended on April 29, 2004, in partnership with the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine and St. Mary's Hospital Centre. The goal of the Bank is to make hematopoietic stem cells collected from cord blood a collective resource and to provide a high-quality supply to meet the needs of patients waiting for a stem cell transplant. The Public Cord Blood Bank, managed by Héma-Québec, will be the only bank of its kind in Québec and the second public cord blood bank in Canada. There are currently around 40 public cord blood banks worldwide.



Dr. Francine Décary, Chief Executive Officer of Héma-Québec, Dr. Bruce Brown, Manager of Professional Services at St. Mary's Hospital Centre and Dr. Martin Champagne, Hematologist and Director of the medullar transplant department at the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine.

The objectives of the trial period were to validate each of the steps in the procedure, from obtaining consent to collecting and freezing the cord blood, as well as identify the best materials and equipment to be used in order to meet Health Canada regulations. In addition, the doctors and nurses of the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine and St. Mary's Hospital Centre involved in this Québec-based program received training from Héma-Québec.

During this period, 562 cord blood donations were collected in the delivery rooms of the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine and St. Mary's Hospital Centre using a sterile, *in utero* collection method. The data collected made it possible to determine that the ideal time limit between collecting and processing the cord blood is a maximum of 36 hours. As for validating the method used for processing cord blood, it was shown that the technique chosen ensures a recovery rate of more than 80% from the buffy coat in which the hematopoietic stem cells are

found. Furthermore, the number of donations, the volume (85 mL) collected and the cell count per blood bag, as well as the conservation rate of the bags, are representative of the results observed at other public cord blood banks worldwide.

As this trial period has come to an end, pregnant women planning to give birth at St. Mary's Hospital Centre or the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine can now officially register for the Bank. Cord blood donations are being collected at these two partner health care facilities since July 20, 2004.

Note that cord blood is collected from the umbilical cord once it has been cut, after the birth of the child. This procedure, which is less invasive than bone marrow collection, poses no danger to either mother or child. If it is not collected, it is discarded as biomedical waste, as is the placenta.

The goal is essentially to establish a bank of 5,000 bags of cord blood within the next five years. For this to happen, approximately 4,000 umbilical cord donations must be collected annually. Depending on the Bank's needs and status, Héma-Québec could develop partnerships with other hospitals. The Bank will also eventually be linked to the international registry.

In reference to the commitment of its two current hospital partners, Dr. Francine Décary emphasized that they "lend the project crucial expertise in terms of number of births, as well as in multicultural recruiting, in the case of St. Mary's Hospital Centre, and in research and clinical expertise, in the case of the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine. Thanks to the specific nature of their services and patients, these two hospital centres allow us to better respond to the needs of the community and, in particular, to those of cultural groups."



Pregnant women giving birth at one of the two partner hospitals (St. Mary's Hospital Centre and CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine) can register for the Public Cord Blood Bank by calling (514) 832-5000, ext. 253, or sending an e-mail to: sangdecordon@hema-quebec.qc.ca.

Hematopoietic stem cells

Héma-Québec's Public Cord Blood Bank will provide access to a source of hematopoietic stem cells other than bone marrow. These cells, which are responsible for the production of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets, are necessary for treating patients with terminal illnesses such as leukemia.

Cord blood, which is rich in these cells, is an advantageous therapeutic option for individuals weighing less than 50 kg who need a bone marrow transplant. Compared to bone marrow, cord blood allows for rapid access to product, from identification to transplantation, since it has already been collected and processed. The Public Cord Blood Bank is, therefore, complementary to the Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry, also managed by Héma-Québec.

The cord blood collected at our partner hospitals, with the authorization of mothers, will be processed and tested at Héma-Québec, where its safety and quality will be checked. If the cord blood sample meets standards perfectly, it will be frozen in accordance with techniques that will enable its hematopoietic-reconstitution properties to be preserved. The cord blood will then become available to a candidate for a hematopoietic stem cell transplant. When frozen, cord blood has a lifespan of at least 10 years.

Samples that do not qualify for the Bank will be stored at the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine for research purposes, if the mothers involved give their consent. To this effect, the CHU mère-enfant Sainte-Justine research centre was recently awarded a major research grant to work with Quebec's Public Cord Blood Bank in studying the biological and immunological characteristics of transplanted cells. This research will give a better understanding of how the cord blood transplant technique actually works.

It is important to emphasize the unique nature of the Bank. First, it will include diversified samples reflecting Québec's ethnic multiplicity, which will make it easier to find the cells required for patients who belong to a cultural community. Moreover, the cord blood samples will be taken *in utero*, which will facilitate the procedure. Finally, a state-of-the-art technology will be used to enable the separation of the hematopoietic stem cells from the other cord blood components in a single operation.

Since 1996, some 60 transplants of cord blood from the international registry have been performed in Québec. To date, approximately 4,000 cord blood transplants have been performed around the world.

Through the establishment of this bank, the organization hopes to contribute increasingly to offering services that take into consideration the needs of cultural communities in Québec, in addition to providing improved international access to a greater range of products.

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS DAY

This event intended for the general public brought together some twenty organizations, at Complexe Desjardins, on April 19th, 2004.

An Héma-Québec team presented the human tissue-related activities of the organization's Histo-Québec division as well as Héma-Québec's bone marrow activities. It also promoted blood donation to the public. Moreover, the Montreal Alouettes held their annual blood drive during this awareness day. Several players participated, including Bruno Heppel who invited Quebecers to sign the organ and tissue donation card.



Gilles Beaupré, Histo-Québec, adviser; Dr Marc Germain, Vice-president, Histo-Québec; and Gaétane Pelletier, bone marrow adviser, with Montreal Alouettes players and cheerleaders.

PARENTS AND KIDS FAIR

An Héma-Québec team took part in the Parents and Kids Fair, during the month of April at Place Bonaventure, to inform visitors about blood donation, particularly cord blood donation.



Numerous individuals visited the Héma-Québec information booth.

HÉMA-QUÉBEC CONTINUES ITS ACTION PLAN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE BLOOD SUPPLY



Héma-Québec will continue with the implementation of the action plan it developed last year to counter the effects of the West Nile virus (WNV) on Québec's blood supply. In Summer 2003, the organization introduced a test to detect the presence of the virus in all donated blood. Since June 25, 2003, all blood components are tested for the presence of WNV.

Since June 25, 2003, all blood components produced by Héma-Québec are tested for the presence of WNV.

In addition to continuing to test all blood donations, a supplementary measure has been taken for Summer 2004 in order to further ensure the safety of the blood supply. Héma-Québec individually analyses each blood sample collected in the regions that, according to regional public health

directorates or the prevalence of donors infected by WNV, are most affected by WNV. Consequently, all blood donations are individually analysed in regions with prevalence of WNV.

Also, the screening procedure generally used on sample pools in North America will be maintained in regions where few or no cases of human infection have been signalled. This procedure consists of combining the samples of six donors and carrying out a screening test on the sample pool. Enough blood can be quickly and efficiently analysed using this procedure to meet the demand for blood products. Should a blood donation be found to be infected by the WNV, the corresponding donor will be informed of the results and the infection will be reported to public health authorities. The infected blood will then be destroyed.

Héma-Québec works closely with hospital centres and regional public health directorates, which inform Héma-Québec if a patient infected by the WNV donated or received blood shortly before the onset of symptoms. In the case where the blood components at issue have not yet been transfused, the organization will take the necessary steps to have them withdrawn from circulation.

Furthermore, since January 2004, Héma-Québec has built up its inventory of frozen plasma products. These products, used as of July, were collected at a time when the virus was not in circulation.

Following the example of other North American blood suppliers, as of July 19, 2004 Héma-Québec nurses ask all those donating blood an additional question to find out whether they have experienced a combination of fever and headache in the seven days prior to donating blood. In the event of a positive response, the donors will be excluded for a period of 55 days. Donors are also asked to report any illness or particular WNV symptom they may develop in the weeks following their donation, in which case their blood will be withdrawn from the inventory.

Héma-Québec monitors the situation on a continual basis and works with Québec and Canadian public health organizations, as well as with Canadian Blood Services. It should be noted that last year, the first cases of WNV transmission to humans (by mosquitoes) did not appear in Québec before August 2003. It should also be noted that donors cannot contract WNV by giving blood.

For more information on the effect of the WNV on blood, call 1 877 VNO-HÉMA (1 877 866-4362).

Info Héma-Québec

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