



A Grand and Wonderful Adventure

Over the past 12 years, we have worked together to make Héma-Québec what it is today: an organization that 9 out of 10 Quebecers say they trust. And we have built it together!

Those who were there at the very beginning know what a long road we have had to travel. But the duration of the journey is what made the adventure so intense, and so enjoyable.

In 2011, Héma-Québec is very different from what it was on March 30, 1998, when it was created. Over the years, each major decision has led to developments, and developments have likewise meant changes. Every time there was a need to be filled, we filled it.

Throughout the time we have spent working together, I have been struck by the commitment and generosity of the women and men who have made our mission a success. You have been a constant source of inspiration.

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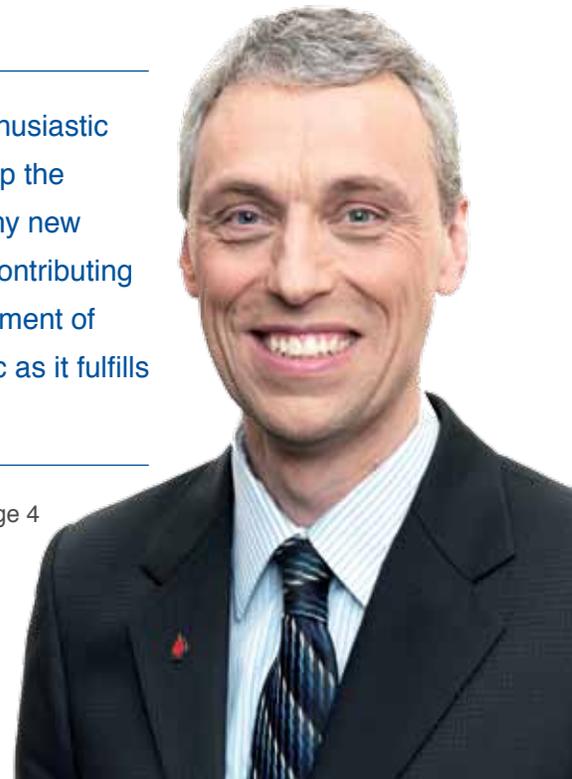
Dr. Jean De Serres Named President and CEO of Héma-Québec

The chairman of the board for Héma-Québec, Mr. Jean-Pierre Allaire FCA, is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Jean De Serres as president and CEO of Héma-Québec. As of April 1, Dr. De Serres has replaced Dr. Francine Décary, who is moving on to other professional challenges after serving three terms at the helm of the organization.

Dr. Jean De Serres stated, "Since its founding, Héma-Québec has been able to develop practices that place it at the forefront of the management of blood, human tissues and stem cells, and I am proud now to be a part of this organization, which Quebecers say they trust.

"I am very enthusiastic about taking up the challenge of my new position and contributing to the development of Héma-Québec as it fulfills its mission."

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Excellence in Her Blood

Last September, Dr. Francine Décary announced that she would step down as president and CEO of Héma-Québec on March 31, 2011. She first informed employees, and then volunteers who organize blood drives through regional public meetings last fall. This edition of Info Héma-Québec honours her.



Dr. Francine Décary.

“You have excellence in your blood.” So said the Premier of Québec, Jean Charest, to Dr. Francine Décary in June 2008, when he made her an Officer of the Ordre national du Québec. The appraisal is not exaggerated.

Francine Décary raised Héma-Québec to the status of excellence. In 1998, when the Red Cross announced that it was withdrawing from transfusion activities, she founded Héma-Québec and took the helm. Immediately upon assuming her position, Dr. Décary rallied Red Cross personnel and volunteers around the mission of the new organization.

She pursued transparency and instituted a unique approach to transfusion services, one much closer to the people, and with tremendous concern for risk management. It was with this frame of mind that she and her entire team worked tirelessly to re-establish Quebecers’ trust in the collective blood supply.

In a few short years, Dr. Décary made Héma-Québec one of the world’s safest and most reliable suppliers of blood products. Moreover, as a result of her motivation and direction, Héma-Québec became a successful supplier of human tissues and stem cells as well. These efforts were recognized in 2009 when the organization received a “Grande Mention” as part of the “Grands Prix québécois de la qualité”, presented by the Premier of Québec to the most successful private companies and public organizations in the province.

Dr. Francine Décary is a great scientist, a skilful manager and an exceptional individual. During the course of her career, she has received numerous acknowledgements, including: the Prix Médecin de cœur et d’action (1999); the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine Ortho Award (2002); the Medal of International Merit for Blood (2002); the Réseau des femmes d’affaires du Québec Award in the category “Executive or professional, public or

para-public organization” (2003); the YWCA Montréal Femmes de mérite Award (2004); the Prix Armand-Frappier (2005); the Ordre national du Québec (2008); the Thomas F. Zuck Lifetime Achievement Award (2010) from America’s Blood Centers; and the Ronald O. Gilcher, M.D. Award (2010) from the Association of Donor Recruitment Professionals (ADRP). 



Dr. Francine Décary at the AABB conference in Montréal in 2009.



TESTIMONIALS

Remarkable and recognized!



On June 18, 2008, Francine Décary was named an Officer of the Ordre national du Québec by the Premier Jean Charest.

“Today, Québec has one of the best transfusion services organizations in the world, and this is the result of the leadership and innovation of Francine Décary, President and CEO of Héma-Québec.”

This strong statement began the presentation of the 2005 Prix Armand-Frappier of the Prix du Québec, the highest honour granted by the Government of Québec in the fields of culture and science.

Dr. Décary is no stranger to praise. Journalist Pierre Cayouette, who was given a mandate a few months ago to write an account of the early days of Héma-Québec¹, has summarized her wide-ranging acclaim rather well. He writes:

“Like many Quebecers, everything I knew about Francine Décary before I met her could be summed up in one sentence: a hematologist by training, this researcher and dynamic manager quickly raised Héma-Québec, Québec’s blood

organization, to the level of excellence. Reading the curriculum vitae of the founder, president and CEO of Héma-Québec convinced me that I was about to meet an exceptional woman. You don’t get included in *Magazine Québec*’s list of “40 Québec Movers and Shakers” just by chance. Nor did Jean Charest appoint her (on June 18, 2008) an Officer of the Ordre national du Québec, the province’s most prestigious honour, just to set tongues wagging at cocktail parties.”

Pierre Cayouette’s testimonial has been echoed among the various circles in which Dr. Décary has spent her career. Claude Pichette, first chairman of the board at Héma-Québec and former rector of UQAM, is similarly complimentary:

“She is the very soul of Héma-Québec. No one else could have managed to set up an organization such as this one and give it such momentum. She earned the reputation of a great leader by surrounding herself with extremely competent resources. She is an amazing consensus builder. She has an endless amount of energy.”

Guy Gélinau, former director of development and secretary general of the Institut Armand-Frappier, and past president of the Comité québécois sur l’approvisionnement, la gestion et la distribution du sang in Québec, highlights Décary’s competence, both as a manager and an exemplary individual:

“After working with Francine Décary for six months, as part of the Comité québécois sur l’approvisionnement,

la gestion et la distribution du sang, I was convinced of her qualities; she is an extremely sympathetic woman, extremely simple, yet endowed with competence of an international calibre. Very early on in the process, I told Minister Jean Rochon: *If ever there is a follow-up to our report, if the government decides to create a Québec blood-supply organization, we have to get Francine Décary at any price.*”

Industrial psychologist Jacques Charuest, who taught Dr. Décary in 1995 during her MBA studies at the Université de Sherbrooke, also shared several of Mr. Gélinau’s perceptions.

“She stood head and shoulders above the other students in terms of experience. When she told me that she was a doctor, what struck me was her humility. When you have published more than 70 scientific articles in prestigious revues throughout the world, when you reach the upper echelons of management, when you have a doctorate, you have to be extremely modest to say, *I want to become a manager and I’ve come to get the knowledge I need.*” 🔥



Dr. Décary was named “Personality of the week” by *La Presse* newspaper in January 1999.

¹ Pierre Cayouette’s article “*La création d’Héma-Québec : l’histoire d’un succès*”, may be consulted on the Héma-Québec’s Web site by following the *Publications* link.

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Today, Héma-Québec is recognized as a North American leader in its field. The “Grande Mention” we received at the 2009 “Grands Prix québécois de la qualité” was undeniable proof of the outstanding performance of the entire organization.

While I may have reached the normal retirement age, my colleagues know that work is a passion for me.

I now look forward to sharing my management experience; for example, by coaching young business managers and, hopefully, helping them to benefit from the practical knowledge I have gained over these years.

After 12 years of passion, determination and enthusiasm, the time has come for me to pass the torch. My mandate is ending. But while this chapter may be closing, it will always be a pleasure to cross paths with all of you in the future!



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With a solid background in both medicine and management, Dr. De Serres has worked in the field of public health, as well as with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

After starting his career in 1985 as a general practitioner, Dr. De Serres worked and taught actively in family medicine for 11 years. From 1995 to 1997, he served as president of the Québec section of the Canadian College of Family Physicians. At the same time, he also served as Director of Public Health for the Outaouais region from 1995 to 1999.

His career then led him into the pharmaceutical industry, where he worked for CSL Behring, a world leader in biotherapies based on plasma proteins. As medical director and director of CSL Behring's Canadian division from 1999 to 2005, he played an active role in implementing and developing this multinational pharmaceutical company's Canadian activities in immunology and hematology.

Before joining Héma-Québec, Dr. De Serres served as vice-president of research, regulatory affairs and in-licensing for Jubilant Draximage, a multinational company specializing in the development, production and sale of radiopharmaceuticals for nuclear medicine. Later, he served as vice-president of research for Jubilant HollisterStier, an allergy/immunology firm.

Still in the life sciences field, Dr. De Serres contributed to the founding of various biotechnology companies, including MedDiscovery SA (2006), a Swiss firm developing new medications against uro-genital cancers, and Biomilestones Inc. (2008), a biopharmaceutical consulting firm.

In addition to his training in medicine, Jean De Serres also has a master's degree in community health and an MBA in bio-industry management from UQAM. 🔥



Organizing a blood drive is another way of giving life

The Héma-Québec slogan “Give Blood. Give Life.” was Marie-Josée Antoine’s inspiration for organizing a blood drive. Marie-Josée is in charge of the Women’s Ministries at the Seventh-Day Adventist church in Longueuil. “I can’t give blood,” she explains, “so organizing a drive is my way of helping to give life.”

One step was especially critical in preparing for her blood drive: contacting Héma-Québec at least six weeks before the event so that the church organizing committee could be paired with the blood drive advisor affiliated with this particular sector.

Working closely with the organizing committee, the advisor reviews the logistics for the drive and ensures that all deadlines are met on time. Together, they determine the date and location of the drive, as well as how many tables and chairs to set up and the number of volunteers to recruit.

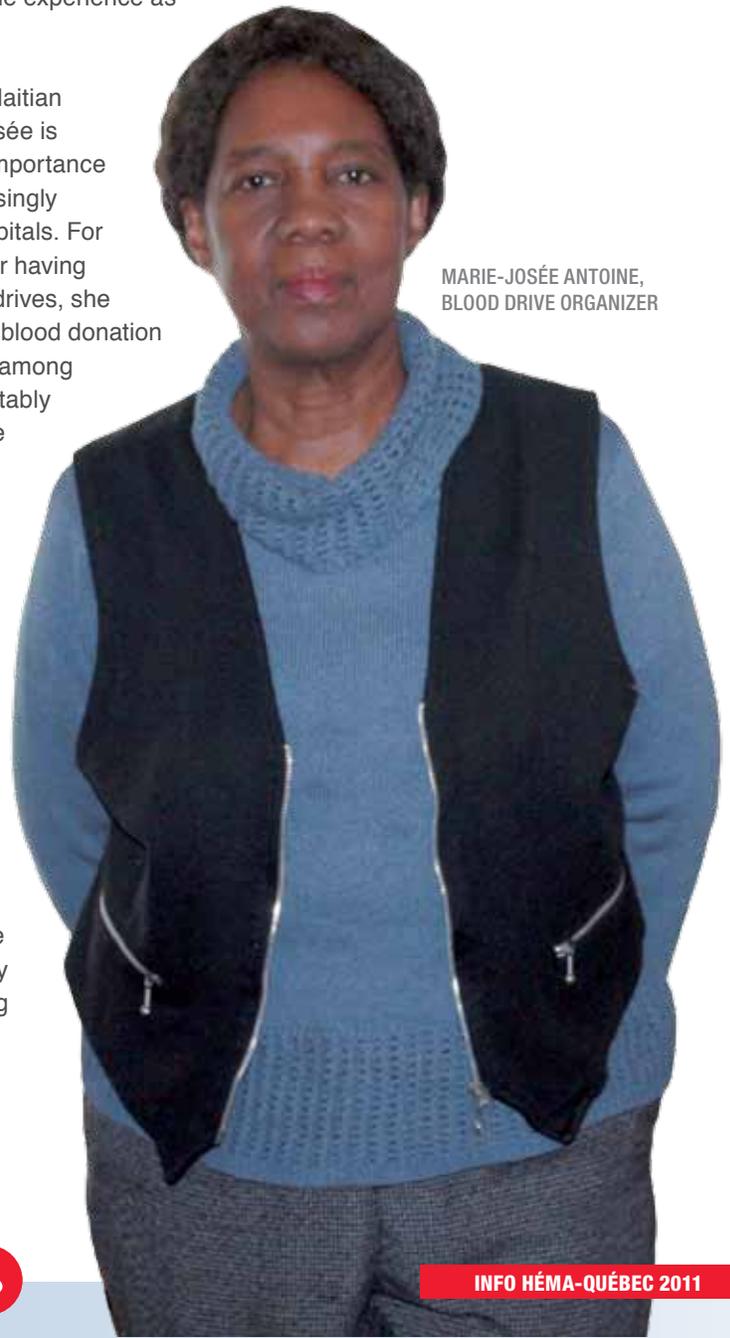
Once all these details have been worked out, it’s time to promote the event. One month before the drive, Héma-Québec delivers publicity material to the organizing committee. About two weeks in advance, the committee distributes flyers and puts up posters. Other means, such as Facebook, a Web site or the tried-and-true method of word of mouth, can also be used to publicize the event.

Finally, D-Day arrives. An hour and a half before the drive begins, Héma-

Québec and the volunteers arrive and begin setting up the equipment. All day long, from the time the donors arrive until they sit down for a snack—having gone through registration, the nurse’s interview and, naturally, giving blood—everyone works hard to provide a warm welcome and make the experience as pleasant as possible.

As a member of the Haitian community, Marie-Josée is keenly aware of the importance of meeting the increasingly specific needs of hospitals. For this reason, even after having organized two blood drives, she continues to promote blood donation and raise awareness among those close to her, notably her two sons, who are now regular donors. “It’s so important that Québec’s blood bank be well stocked with the various types of blood found in the population,” notes Marie-Josée.

This year, even if the Women’s Ministries doesn’t hold a drive, Marie-Josée still wants to be involved. After all, why should she stop giving life? 



MARIE-JOSÉE ANTOINE,
BLOOD DRIVE ORGANIZER



BLOOD DONATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Encouraging results in the cultural communities!

Since last year Héma-Québec has been intensifying its awareness-raising activities among cultural communities, especially Black communities. The goal is to recruit and retain more donors from this group. The efforts put forth have had a significant impact: in 2010 alone, more than 1,000 new donors from Black communities contributed to the public blood supply.

From a medical standpoint, the chances of finding a donor and recipient that are compatible are greater if they belong to the same racial group. This compatibility is essential for the successful treatment of hereditary blood disorders, such as sickle-cell anemia. It is even more crucial for treatments that require numerous transfusions at regular intervals. In these cases, compatibility in terms of ABO and Rh blood groups is no longer enough:

red blood cells must also be compatible with other blood groups that vary based on race. If not, in the long run patients may develop antibodies against the transfused blood and reject it.

THE PICTURE IS IMPROVING

The awareness campaign has also had a positive effect on the rate of response to the ethnicity question on the blood donor

questionnaire. While only 70% of donors were willing to answer this question before, today the number has risen to close to 90%. This identification is extremely important because it helps match a donor with a recipient.

Despite these encouraging results, cultural communities still barely represent 1% of all donors. Every Quebecer can do their part to correct this imbalance by giving blood regularly, helping to organize blood drives in their community or becoming blood donor ambassadors by spreading the word to their friends and family. These simple actions that everyone can do can make all the difference! 📌



Cultural communities represent only 1% of all donors. Every Quebecer can do their part to correct this imbalance and this is precisely what Sethea Lim has decided to do. He is seen here at his 17th blood donation on March 1st.

“Helping to save lives: we can all do it!”

- DENIS CLOUTIER, STEM CELL DONOR

In 2009, forty-six-year-old Denis Cloutier received a phone call from Héma-Québec. A patient with the same HLA characteristics (genetic tissue markers) needed a bone marrow transplant. Denis had enrolled in the Stem Cell Donor Registry almost eight years earlier, but he was more ready than ever to help: “I said to myself that if it works, I’ll be making someone’s life better!”

In 2010, 75 people in
Québec were helped by
an unrelated donor.

After verifying that he was still willing to make a donation, the nurse asked him some questions to see if he qualified as a donor for this patient. “When they asked me if I was going to give peripheral stem cells (a process in which the donor is injected with a substance that increases the number of stem cells circulating in the blood) or bone marrow (collected from the pelvic bones), I answered that I would give whatever was best for the recipient.” The nurse went on to explain that he would have to undergo screening tests for, among other things, potential incompatibility.

“My fear was that they would find something and that I wouldn’t be able to help the person in need but, to my great joy, I was totally compatible.”

This strong desire to donate stem cells was sparked some 10 years ago. In

2001, Denis learned that a friend with leukemia had been close to dying and that a bone marrow transplant from an unrelated donor had saved his life. “It was a revelation to me. I enrolled in the Registry on the spot and waited impatiently for a phone call, although I knew that it wasn’t automatic.”

To prepare for the donation, Denis spent a day at Enfant-Jésus hospital in Québec City, where he underwent a complete physical examination: a lung x-ray, an electrocardiogram and blood tests. The purpose of the tests was to confirm that he was in good health.

“There was no restriction or constraints prior to donating. The only thing they asked me to do was to let them know if I got sick in the days leading up to the scheduled bone marrow transplant. As for the operation itself, which was performed at Saint-Sacrement hospital in Québec City, I was asleep through it all. They removed about one litre of bone marrow, about 3–5% of the volume in my body. When I woke up, I felt a slight pain in my back, as if I’d been hit at the spot where they removed the stem cells, but that’s all. It was nothing compared to what the recipient had to undergo,” he says humbly, adding: “If I had to do it over again, I’d be ready tomorrow morning.” 🔥

DENIS CLOUTIER,
STEM CELL DONOR



“An angel saved my life”

– CATHERINE ROUSSEAU, STEM CELL TRANSPLANTEE

CATHERINE ROUSSEAU,
STEM CELL TRANSPLANTEE



Two years after receiving a stem cell transplant, Catherine Rousseau has recovered about 85% of her strength and has nothing but praise for her donor: “Words cannot express my appreciation. Without his donation, I wouldn’t be here today. In my eyes, he is an angel!”

When she was 21, Catherine enjoyed good health and a full life. She had no idea that leukemia was about to change everything. A gifted athlete and artist, she had many plans for the future when her whole world came crashing down.

The symptoms caught her by surprise. In just one month, her endurance dropped alarmingly. Previously able to run for 45 minutes without tiring, she now became exhausted just from walking.

The unexpected diagnosis came at Hôpital Pierre-Boucher in Longueuil one evening in December 2008. “When they told me I had blood cancer, I said to myself: ‘That’s it, I’m going to die!’” she remembers choked with emotion.

Cancer cells had developed in her cerebrospinal fluid (the liquid surrounding the spinal cord) and spread to her nervous system. She not only had to undergo chemotherapy, but also radiation treatments of the brain and a stem cell transplant if she were to have any chance of surviving.

From that moment, Catherine had only one thought: find a donor. When her parents and two sisters proved to be incompatible, a donor had to be found through the *Stem Cell Donor Registry*.

The chances of a family member being a compatible donor are one in four. The probability of finding a suitable unrelated donor is somewhere between 1 in 450 and 1 in 750,000.

“Try to imagine the stress of wondering whether a donor would be found in time! The wait was excruciating,” she admits.

Gathering her courage, she began chemotherapy, but after only three weeks, her liver was in such poor condition that the treatments had to be stopped. Just when things looked bleakest, though, she miraculously beat the odds: a donor was found!

Catherine received her transplant on April 29, 2009. Over four hours, two large bags of stem cells were transfused into her body. “That’s when I truly realized that someone motivated only by generosity was offering me a second chance at life. The feeling was indescribable!” she exclaims.

On June 15, 2009, Catherine was released from hospital. “Those two years were like an obstacle course. You can be sure that I’ve savoured every moment spent with family and friends since then,” she confides.

For five years following the transplant, her medical condition will be closely monitored for any reoccurrence of the cancer. She also has certain dietary restrictions until April 2011 and will have to take medications morning and evening for the rest of her life. To Catherine, however, these are just minor inconveniences compared to having her life back. “Often people say that they would like to achieve something important during their lifetime. I think that giving life is the most important thing anyone can do!” she declares. 🔥



Stem Cell Donation

The meeting



Denis Cloutier and Catherine Rousseau during the stem cell donors' recognition evening in October 2010.

After the donation, Denis wanted to know just one thing: was the donation a success?

In fall 2010, he was told that the recipient wanted to meet him. "What a tremendous joy! I had just confirmed that I'd be attending the recognition evening that Héma-Québec organizes for stem cell donors when Catherine Rousseau wrote me for the first time." He learned that the young woman lived less than 40 kilometres from him. "I couldn't get over it!" He was in for an even bigger surprise when she told him that she too would be attending the donor recognition evening. "The emotions just came flooding in. I was overwhelmed. Not only did I learn who she was and that she was doing well but also that I'd be meeting her."

"I wondered what our reactions would be: was she going to cry or maybe even yell. When I saw her, I stood there amazed. I expected someone who looked sick but she was radiant and had a mystifying calm about her."

Since their meeting, Denis and Catherine have discovered that they share a lot in common. Today they are more than a donor and a recipient to one another. It's almost as if they were part of the same family. "I believed in fate before, but now I believe in it even more," Denis says.

When asked what has changed from before and after the donation, he replies: "I realized just how easy it is to do something good for someone. We need to encourage people all over the world to rally and help save the lives of those who need a bone marrow transplant. A lot of people think that you have to be a doctor to regularly save lives. But we can all do it! Whether it's donating blood, stem cells, human tissues or participating in research projects, we can all do our part."

In 2010, 75 people in Québec were helped by an unrelated donor. 



Creation of a consent registry for organ and tissue donations



LOUISE GODIN,
CORNEA TRANSPLANT
RECIPIENT

As of February 28, every Québec citizen has a new tool to indicate the intention to donate organs and tissues following death. It's now as simple as filling out the *Consent for organ and tissue donations* form that you receive from the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) when you renew your health card or apply for one for the first time.

Consents received are entered into the *Consent registry for organ and tissue donations*, a central repository created following the adoption of Bill 125 in December and managed by the Régie. All information provided is kept strictly confidential. When the time comes, Québec-Transplant and Héma-Québec can quickly check the registry, at the request of a physician or authorized person, to see if the consent is registered.

Each year, several organ and tissue donations are needed to save lives and improve patients' quality of life. The wait is often long, sometimes too long. Thanks to the central registry, the government hopes to encourage organ and tissue donations and reduce wait times. On a final note, you can cancel your consent at any time.

YOUR DECISION REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By donating organs and tissues following death, you can save up to eight lives and improve the health of 15 other people.

Nothing replaces a loved one, but many families of donors report that organ and tissue donations allow them to give meaning to the death of their loved one through this legacy of life. This unique gift restores hope and health to persons who are seriously ill.

Every consent counts. It's important to indicate your consent for organ and tissue donation and, especially, to inform your loved ones about your decision. 🍷



FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO:

www.signezdon.gouv.qc.ca

Reinstatement of certain donors

HEALTH CANADA SAYS YES

In 2010, Health Canada approved the process proposed by Héma-Québec to reinstate certain donors. A portion of those excluded from donating blood may now be reinstated on the donor list. It pertains to those of which obtained a first “false positive” result during a screening test.

A “false positive” result is produced when the initial screening test reacts to certain markers, such as HIV, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B or syphilis, but a confirmation test invalidates this with a negative or undetermined result. Because our tests are highly sensitive, elements in the blood, such as proteins and chemical agents, can trigger “false positive” results in a healthy donor.

Donors targeted by the reinstatement process will receive a letter inviting them to undergo a second screening test. If the result is negative, they will then be eligible to start donating blood again.

Héma-Québec began reinstating eligible donors at the end of May 2010. Already, by mid-January of this year, 172 of the almost 923 donors informed of this new practice had been reinstated. If this trend continues, Héma-Québec expects to be able to invite up to 1,500 donors a year to undergo the screening test again. 



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Not all donors who have received a “false positive” result are eligible to undergo a new screening test. In the case of certain markers, in particular HTLV, anti-HBc and Chagas disease, donors cannot be reinstated.
- A donor who is excluded due to a qualification criterion is not eligible for a new test.
- To ensure the validity of the test results, a period of 3 to 6 months is required between the time of your last donation and the time your blood is drawn again.
- The blood must be drawn and analyzed by Héma-Québec. Blood drawn and analyzed by hospitals or other laboratories is not admissible because of specific issues related to transporting the samples.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE REINSTATEMENT OF ELIGIBLE DONORS, CALL:

514-832-5000, extension 477 or toll-free,
1-888-666-HEMA (4362), extension 477.

Héma-Québec Foundation

The *Celebration of Life* on hiatus

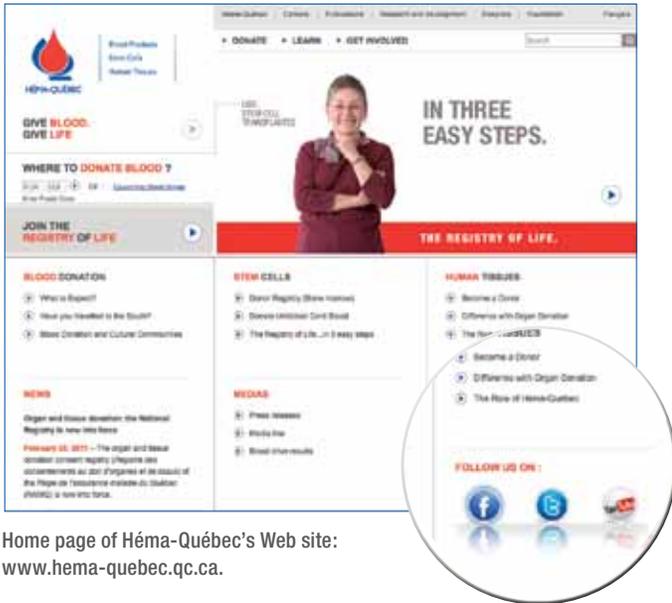
Due to internal reorganization, the Héma-Québec Foundation's traditional benefit evening will not be held this spring. But even though the *Celebration of Life* is on hiatus, the needs are no less important; in fact, the opposite is true ...

The Foundation must continue to fulfill its mission to financially support the creation and development of innovative projects aimed at keeping Héma-Québec at the cutting edge of knowledge and services related to the supply of blood, stem cells and human tissues.

Why not take advantage of this brief interlude to make a donation or learn more about the Foundation's activities by visiting its Web site at <http://fondation.hema-quebec.qc.ca/index.en.html>? With the help of the Foundation and all its supporters, Héma-Québec will be able to **DO MORE, DO IT BETTER and DO IT FASTER.** 



Follow us on social media



Home page of Héma-Québec's Web site:
www.hema-quebec.qc.ca.

The lightning speed of technological change is transforming how people consume media and contributing to the erosion of traditional marketing campaigns. In order to stay in the race, Héma-Québec is optimizing its presence on the Web. In June 2010, in response to growing public enthusiasm for social media, Héma-Québec put pages up on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Then, last fall, we launched our first advertising campaign on the Web through a Facebook application. Thanks to the campaign, entitled “Come save the world,” Héma-Québec’s Facebook community increased almost fivefold in just three months: going from 725 fans in October 2010 to close to 3,500 in January 2011. That’s almost 2,775 new members!

The goal of the campaign was to make the 18–29 age group aware of the importance of giving blood and to develop the loyalty of active donors. To achieve this, Héma-Québec had to reach out to the target group where they congregate, i.e. on the Web and, more specifically, on social media. “Come save the world” was promoted on the most popular social media sites favoured by this age group.

The campaign puts a familiar face to blood donation. Pictures of social media friends appear with these messages: “Here are a few of your friends. Which one will you be thinking of when you give blood?” Visitors to the site are then told that “more than 50% of the people you know will need blood at least once in their lifetime.” Because a picture is worth a thousand words, the message is brought home as half the photos of friends turn to red. The viewer is then invited to give blood, find other ways to give or visit Héma-Québec’s Facebook page. 



An overview of the Web campaign launched via Facebook.



A FEW STATISTICS...

-  Out of the 243,933 donors who gave blood in 2009–2010, 24% were between the ages of 18 and 29. In 2005, the same age group represented only 17% of blood donors.
-  39% of donors between the ages of 18 and 29 come back to give blood within two to 12 months after their first donation.

Héma-Québec gets a second mobile unit



Here is a side view of what the mobile unit will look like. The final design could be slightly different.

Thanks to the generosity of the Héma-Québec Foundation and a major contribution from Couche-Tard and RBC Royal Bank, Héma-Québec will soon be acquiring a second mobile blood collection unit. The vehicle, fully equipped to welcome blood donors, will go into service between now and spring 2011 to meet the growing demand of Québec hospitals for blood products.

The new mobile unit is an improved version of the original one, which was also a gift from the Foundation in 2005.

The main difference is the interior layout. The new unit has movable side walls that add almost a metre of space on either side when opened. In addition to increasing the width of the centre aisle, the extra space provides room for another donation bed and cubicle, bringing the total to six beds and three cubicles. The new unit can accommodate 75 donors a day instead of the usual 40 in a comfortable setting.

In all other respects, the units are the same. In addition to the two generators, the interior equipment includes a

registration desk, worktable, temperature-controlled refrigerator, and donor snack area with a refrigerator.

The mobile collection unit is mainly used to reach donors in industrial parks, shopping centres and superstores that lack sufficient room to hold a traditional blood drive.

From 2005 to 2010, the first mobile unit recorded an average of 6,000 blood donations each year from almost 170 blood drives. Héma-Québec estimates that this number could triple when the second unit hits the road. 

The vehicle fleet of Héma-Québec rejuvenates

Héma-Québec recently revamped the visual signature of its vehicle fleet. The first vehicles to sport the new look hit the road in February, and the transformation will continue as older vehicles are replaced.

In all, 18 new vehicles will be introduced into the vehicle fleet this year. In an environmentally friendly move, Héma-Québec has opted for hybrid models, including a Ford Fusion and three Toyota Highlander minivans. Also joining the fleet will be nine buses, two International Transtar 8600 trucks and three semi-trailers. 



What happens to Blood donations?

STEPS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF BLOOD

1. THE DONATION

- Donors are greeted and registered.
- Donors are invited to answer a qualification questionnaire.
- Their blood pressure, temperature and iron level are then checked.
- If everything is fine, 450 ml of blood is collected.
- Each blood bag and corresponding sample tubes are labelled with a unique bar code that ensures that the donation can be reliably traced.
- The bags of collected blood are packaged in temperature-controlled containers.
- The blood is then transported to one of the two Héma-Québec laboratories, in Montréal and Québec City.

2. PROCESSING

- Upon arrival at Héma-Québec, the blood bags are inspected, weighed and entered into a computer database.
- The white blood cells are filtered out to reduce the risk of a transfusion reaction.
- The blood is divided into three components: red blood cells, plasma and leuko-platelet layers used to produce platelet mixtures.
- Cryoprecipitate is also created by freezing and thawing the plasma.
- The sample tubes are sent for testing.

3. ANALYSES

- Steps 2 and 3 are carried out concurrently.
- The Héma-Québec laboratories receive the sample tubes.
- The donated blood is then tested to determine blood type and identify any blood-borne diseases.
- Test results are obtained within 24 hours of the donation.
- If a positive result is obtained, the donation is destroyed and the donor is advised.

4. STORAGE

- After transformation, testing and labelling, the components are placed in inventory and are ready to be shipped to Québec hospitals.
- Red blood cells are kept in refrigerators at 4 °C for 42 days.
- Platelets are kept at room temperature in agitators for a maximum of five days.
- Plasma and cryoprecipitate are frozen at < - 20 °C and kept for up to a year.

5. DISTRIBUTION

- Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, our Hospital Services Department and Shipping Department receive orders from hospitals and prepare blood products for delivery.

SIMPLIFIED PROCESSING OF BLOOD

When patients are transfused, they do not receive “whole” blood but rather one or more components derived from the separation process: red blood cells, plasma, leuko-platelet layers used to make platelet mixtures, and/or cryoprecipitate.

In fall 2010, the entire transformation process was thoroughly reviewed. Héma-Québec completely automated its separation and production processes. These operations are now carried out using the Atreus and Orbisac systems.



THE BENEFITS

This technology, coupled with the rapid cooling process, has extended the maximum processing time of a unit of whole blood from eight hours to 24 hours and made it possible to travel further afield to collect blood and reach more donors. This is a major advantage at a time when demand for blood has risen significantly.

The use of machines notably makes it possible to:

- simplify the staff's tasks by reducing manual operations
- produce platelet mixtures
- reduce the chance of errors...

There are many benefits to this technology but, in the end, the true beneficiaries are the patients who require blood components to be healthy again.

Volunteering is at the heart of Héma-Québec's activities



Here are a few members of the regional council of Montréal accompanied by the president of the ABDV, Miville Mercier (far left, second row) and the vice-president of the ABDV, Germain Bonneau (far right, second row).

Each year, a strong volunteer commitment to Héma-Québec translates into the organization of 3,000 blood drives, more than 1.2 million calls to donors and the greeting of close to 300,000 blood donors at collection sites.

To achieve all this, Héma-Québec counts on the support of 16,000 volunteers, several hundred of whom are members of the Association of Blood Donation Volunteers (ABDV). This umbrella group represents all blood donors and volunteers in the province. Its mission is to promote blood donation, and it accomplishes this mainly by reaching out to youth in Cégeps and universities.

AN INDISPENSABLE FUTURE GENERATION

As the need for blood in hospitals increases, recruiting new volunteers is becoming a major challenge. ABDV must therefore work twice as hard to ensure the next generation is there to help.

Through its determination to conduct successful blood drives and contribute to saving lives, the Association managed to recruit enough new members last year to create a new regional council in Montréal. Meanwhile the Québec City council was divided in two to ensure greater representation across the territory. The Québec City region and its North Shore were grouped together under the name "Capitale nationale," while Québec City's

South Shore and the Beauce retained the title "Chaudière-Appalaches."

This improvement brings the number of councils that are recruiting and training blood donation volunteers throughout the province to 13. The Association is therefore improving its position but is always looking for volunteers.

JOIN THE RANKS OF THE ABDV

Do you want to help save lives? Become an ABDV member and get involved in your community by helping those who need life-saving blood. To join, complete the membership form online at www.dondesang.qc.ca/ficheadhesion.php 

Joining the *Registry of Life* has never been easier!

Since February 2011, Héma-Québec has been making it easier to join the *Stem Cell Donor Registry* thanks to a new technique for collecting DNA samples: the mouth swab. Needles are a thing of the past—cotton swabs are the way to go!

A DNA kit is now sent by mail to every potential donor who expresses interest in the Registry. In the comfort of home, the donor collects a small sample of cells by rubbing the inside of his or her cheeks with four cotton swabs. Using the envelope provided, the donor then sends the samples to the Héma-Québec laboratory, where they are tested for HLA type to determine the donor's genetic profile and compatibility with a recipient.

Simple and quick, the mouth-swab technique is painless and provides results that are just as accurate as those from a blood sample.



TO RECEIVE A REGISTRATION KIT:

Call 1-800-565-6635, extension 279, or visit the Héma-Québec website at www.hema-quebec.qc.ca.



Blood Products
Stem Cells
Human Tissues

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