

WMA HÉMA-QUÉBEC



Information Bulletin for HÉMA-QUÉBEC partners, volunteers and donors

Volume 5 No.1 - December 2002

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Throughout 2002, we have completed many projects and begun others as part of our action plan. This edition looks back at some of them. One of the largest projects in terms of impact on the organization was the move to our new facilities in Saint-Laurent.

On September 26, two days before our fourth anniversary, we officially inaugurated the new building, representing another step up in the efficiency of the organization.

With this new environment and cutting-edge equipment, Héma-Québec is in an excellent position to meet future needs in the production of blood components and specialized services for hospitals.

We continued our consolidation and development, and this year integrated the *Centre de conservation des tissus humains du Québec* (CCTHQ) [the Québec Centre for Human Tissue Conservation] with Héma-Québec. The CCTHQ will now be known by the easier-to-remember name HISTO-QUÉBEC. "Histo" is from the Greek root meaning "tissue," thus reflecting the nature of the division's activities.

HISTO-QUÉBEC has its own logo, which makes sense as its clientele is different from Héma-Québec's; however, the logo is very similar to ours and reflects the relationship between the two organizations.



As a better reflection of our mandate and of the new relationship with HISTO-QUÉBEC, we have updated our mission statement, which now reads: *Héma-Québec's mission is to efficiently provide adequate quantities of safe, top-quality blood components and substitutes to meet the needs of all Quebecers; provide and develop expertise and services, along with specialized and innovative products in the fields of transfusion medicine and human tissue transplantation.*

In conclusion, I should mention that the holiday season is a sensitive time for our blood drives. There is more demand for blood, but fewer donors. Therefore, from December 2, 2002, to January 4, 2003, in collaboration with our community partners, Héma-Québec is holding 248 blood drives in all the regions of Québec. The campaign's theme is *GET WRAPPED UP IN LIFE!* and the goal is 28,600 donors. I invite you to consult our Web site for the dates and locations of the drives.

The coming year will bring its share of projects and challenges, and we'll keep you informed on those. In the meantime, I would like to wish you season's greetings and a healthy, happy new year.

Francine Décarry, MD, PhD, MBA



INAUGURATION SPECIAL

Several hundred guests attended the public inauguration of Héma-Québec's new facilities last September 26. Spirits were high at the end of two years' preparation. **See the report and photos inside.**

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INFO-DRIVE

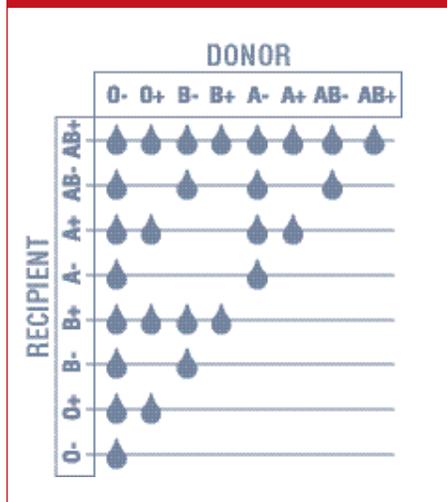
To find out where and when blood drives will take place:

- 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

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

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

BLOOD-TYPE COMPATIBILITY



If, for example, you are a donor whose blood group is type O-, you are considered a universal donor, since recipients from all blood groups can receive type O-blood.

However, as a recipient, you can only receive blood given by a type O- donor. Patients generally receive blood donated by persons of the same blood group.

INFORMATION FOR BLOOD DONORS CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease is a rare brain disease thought to be caused by minute particles of an infectious protein particle called a prion. The disease has two forms—classical (CJD) and variant (vCJD).

known cases of variant vCJD being spread through blood transfusion. However, the theoretical possibility of vCJD transmission through blood exists.

HOW IS IT SPREAD?

CLASSICAL CJD:

This is a very rare disease whose cause is unknown. It can run in families or be transmitted by dura mater (the outermost membrane covering the brain) grafts, or injections of hormones made from human pituitary extracts.

VARIANT CJD:

Transmission may occur through routes different from those of classical CJD.

It is believed to have been spread to people who ate meat from cattle infected with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) agent, more commonly known as mad cow disease. The majority of cases of vCJD have been reported in the United Kingdom and France, and cases of BSE are increasing in number throughout Western Europe.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The first symptom is usually a personality change, followed by a rapidly progressive dementia (mental deterioration). Walking or balance problems and muscle spasms may also occur.

IS THERE A TEST FOR THIS DISEASE?

There is no test available that can detect either classical CJD or vCJD.

IS THERE A CURE?

There is no cure for either classical CJD or variant CJD. The disease progresses rapidly following the onset of symptoms.

CAN CJD AND VCJD BE SPREAD BY BLOOD?

The classical form of CJD is not transmitted by blood transfusion. There have been no

DOES THIS MEAN SOME PEOPLE CANNOT GIVE BLOOD?

CLASSICAL CJD:

Questions regarding the risk factors for acquiring CJD are asked on our blood donor file questionnaire. Those who have received a dura mater graft or human pituitary growth hormones, or those with a blood relative (parent, child or sibling) diagnosed with CJD are not eligible to donate blood.

VARIANT CJD:

Respondents to our questionnaire are asked if they have been in the United Kingdom, France or elsewhere in Western Europe since January 1, 1980.

THOSE WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO DONATE BLOOD INCLUDE:

- Anyone who has spent a cumulative total of one month or more in the United Kingdom since January 1, 1980;
- Anyone who has spent a cumulative total of three months or more in France since January 1, 1980;
- Anyone who has spent a cumulative total of six months or more in Western Europe since January 1, 1980. Western Europe consists of the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom;
- Anyone who has received a blood transfusion in the United Kingdom since January 1, 1980.



For more information, please call 1 800 847-2525 to reach HÉMA-QUÉBEC Donor Services.

THE “NEW STARS” OF THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR BLOOD DONATION

Since last summer, some new faces have been added to our awareness campaign: Jean, Debi, Audrey and Mark, all of them recipients who know exactly how great a difference a single donation can make.

The advertising concept of this campaign, which began in May 2001, shows men and women who, thanks to blood donation, succeeded in over-

coming tremendous difficulties. The campaign emphasizes just how invaluable donating blood is by demonstrating its contribution to saving lives.

It should also be noted that, throughout Québec, recipients are involved in promoting the donation of blood. Many of them, in fact, work closely with the blood drives by sharing their own experiences with donors. Their powerful testimonies prove yet once again that giving blood means giving life.

Jean



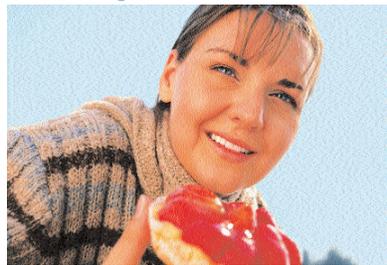
27 transfusions after a traffic accident

Debi



426 transfusions because of breast cancer

Audrey



3 transfusions following a traffic accident

Mark



14 transfusions after a heart transplant

STATISTICS

(from April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002)

MOBILE BLOOD DONOR CLINICS: 2,563

NUMBER OF DONORS

- Montréal: 192,704
- Québec: 94,249
- Total: 286,953

NUMBER OF UNITS DONATED: 238,532

NEW DONORS (WHOSE BLOOD WAS TAKEN): 25,579

PRODUCTS DELIVERED TO HOSPITALS

- Packed red blood cells: 211,901
- Platelets: 114,305
- Platelets from thrombapheresis: 1,920
- Plasma: 33,481
- Plasmapheresis: 6,989
- Cryoprecipitate: 12,102
- Cryoprecipitate supernatants: 6,714

HOSPITALS SERVED: 112

VOLUNTEERS: around 25,000

EMPLOYEES: 1,180

GIVE BLOOD. GIVE LIFE.

HONORARY DISTINCTIONS



Dr. Francine Décarry, Executive Director of Héma-Québec, recently received two international awards, the “International Blood Merit Medal,” given by the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations, and the “ORTHO Prize,” bestowed by the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine for her contribution to the Canadian

blood system. Dr. Décarry is President-Elect of the International Society of Blood Transfusion since August 2002.

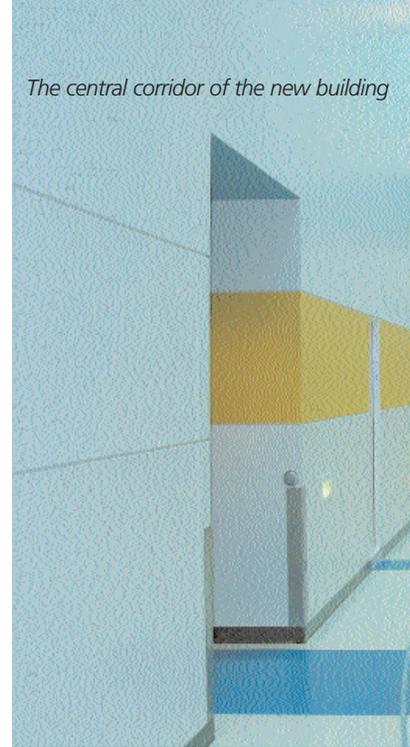
Dr. Décarry has a PhD in immunohematology from the University of Amsterdam and a Master’s in Business Administration from the University of Sherbrooke.

Dr. Décarry worked for twenty years in the transfusion services of the Red Cross and was responsible for founding Héma-Québec in September 1998.

The new building located at 4045 Côte-Vertu Boulevard in Montréal



The central corridor of the new building



INAUGURATION OF NEW FACILITIES “At Héma-Québec, it’s in our blood!”

Located in Montréal’s Saint-Laurent borough, close to three hundred employees work in Héma-Québec’s new building. A total of 7,900 square metres in size, the building includes areas for preparing blood drives, storage, the reception and processing of blood, qualification tests, labelling, customer service for hospitals, shipping of blood products and immunohematology departments.

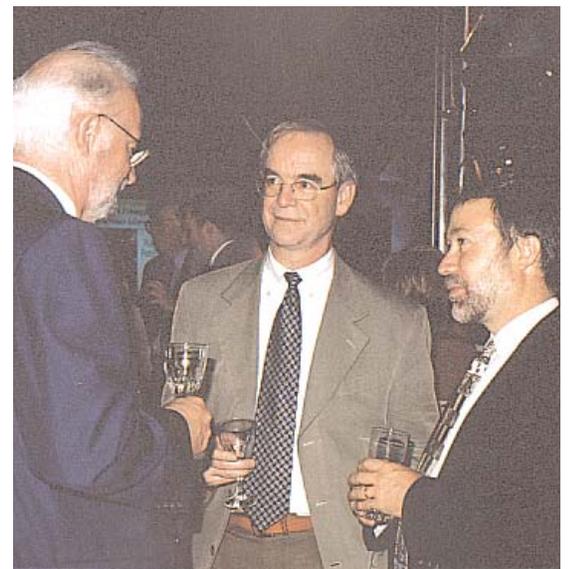
AN INVESTMENT OF \$16.1 MILLION

The building is not only earthquake-proof, it has two completely sep-

arate distribution systems for drinking water: one for the laboratories and another for bathrooms and other services. Thanks to a 600 V, 3,000 amp. electrical input, it is possible to supply the ten cold-storage rooms with a total cooling capacity of around 220,000 BTU/hour. Plus, a 220-ton system provides air conditioning for the entire building. The structure is also equipped with an outage-proof electrical power supply of 160 KVA and two 500 KVA generators to provide electricity during power failures. Finally, two 400 kW boilers produce enough hot water to heat the building.



Claude Pichette, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Héma-Québec. Alan DeSousa, President of the Borough of Saint-Laurent, City Councillor and member of the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal. Stéphane Dion, federal M.P. for Saint-Laurent, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and representative of the Minister for Health Canada. Dr. Francine Décar, Executive Director of Héma-Québec. André Roch, Assistant to the Executive Director, Public Affairs of Héma-Québec. Russell Williams, M.N.A. for Nelligan and opposition critic for social services.

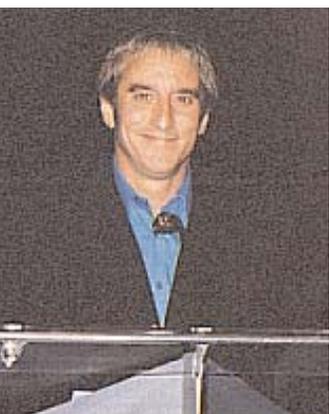


André Roch of Héma-Québec. Dr. Pierre Chartrand, Executive Director, Institut de recherche en immunovirologie et cancérologie (IRIC) at the Université de Montréal. Alan Orton, Groupe d’architectes NFOE, architect of the new building.



HÉMA-QUÉBEC'S STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGIES

In order to provide better monitoring of qualification tests, nucleic acid testing (NAT) became part of the Qualification Department's activities last November 4. This test screens for both the human immunodeficiency (HIV) and hepatitis C viruses, and reduces the window period, i.e. the time between the onset of the infection and when the virus can be detected. Such tests were previously carried out by an external laboratory in Québec City. Héma-Québec's new laboratories were especially designed to meet the needs of this technology.



Pierre Therrien, well-known TV personality and the evening's master of ceremonies



Nicole Léger, Minister for the Elimination of Poverty and Exclusion



Patrick Bérard, recipient



Jean Furois, recipient



Furthermore, since May 2002, Héma-Québec has been using the automated PRISM machine, developed by Abbott Laboratories specifically to process a high volume of samples for viral markers. This high-precision technology affords several advantages: standardization of tests, closer adherence to good manufacturing practices and an excellent documentation system for interventions carried out with the device. Héma-Québec is the first North American blood products supplier to use this technology.



Photos: Héma-Québec and Steve Leroux

Life-long donors

A PART OF YOU

Réal Gignac certainly deserves his nickname of “Super Donor”: Anything goes—whole blood, platelets, plasma or granulocytes.

“I started donating when there was a blood drive at work, when I was 24,” he recalls. “It seemed perfectly normal to go on donating.”

Mr. Gignac worked for 36 years at the National Bank of Canada and retired three years ago. He is always on the go, and his days are filled with such activities as bodybuilding contests, singing, studying theology and volunteering at Tel-Écoute.

“I like helping people, especially children. I feel that donating blood is a way of sharing my energy and enjoyment of life. I’m a firm believer in it.”

For about fifteen years now, Réal Gignac has been making special donations, rather than giving whole blood. He gives platelets and granulocytes when called upon, sometimes several times a month, at the new Globule centre designed for special donations. It is located at 4045 Côte-Vertu Boulevard, in the Montréal borough of Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gignac’s trademarks are his availability and his contagious smile. Actually, if his face seems familiar, that’s because you’ve probably seen his photo in the most recent version of the information pamphlet on platelet donation.

With over 250 donations to his credit, this father of two and grandfather of five admits he can’t stand the sight of blood: he looks somewhere else when the nurse puts the needle in! However, his generosity outweighs his squeamishness. “It’s not my intention to be a dead millionaire. I want to share what I have now.”

To find out more about special donations, call 1 877 359-2886 (Montréal and Western Quebec) or 1 800 267-9711, extension 240 (Québec City and Eastern Quebec).



THE GIFT OF LIFE . . . 683 TIMES!

Captain Raymonde Gaumont made her first blood donation at the age of 18, when she enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces. Now 60 years old, she relates that, at the time, the blood donor centre was right next to her military base. Thus, as this life-long donor notes, the military life and the blood donation system are united by a strong historical connection.

Captain Gaumont continued to give blood regularly, except when on a mission. “Health is a privilege and, as human beings, we have a responsibility to share it,” she declares. Each week, Raymonde Gaumont travels hundreds of kilometres from her home to the plasma donor centre in Québec City. At time of going to press, the regularity of her generosity has brought her total to 683 donations.

And how has this likeable grandmother achieved such a remarkable number of donations? “You simply have to mark it on your calendar and make it your personal commitment. I always keep in mind the wonderful smiles on the faces of the recipients who have a new lease on life.”

Captain Gaumont speaks enthusiastically about the importance of making this life-giving gesture, and explains with a certain amount of pride that she persuaded one of her colleagues, Colonel St-Arnaud, to give blood for the first time, by providing him with all the available documentation on donating plasma, platelets and bone marrow.

So Captain Raymonde Gaumont is certainly the ambassador emeritus for donating blood—and an example we should all follow.

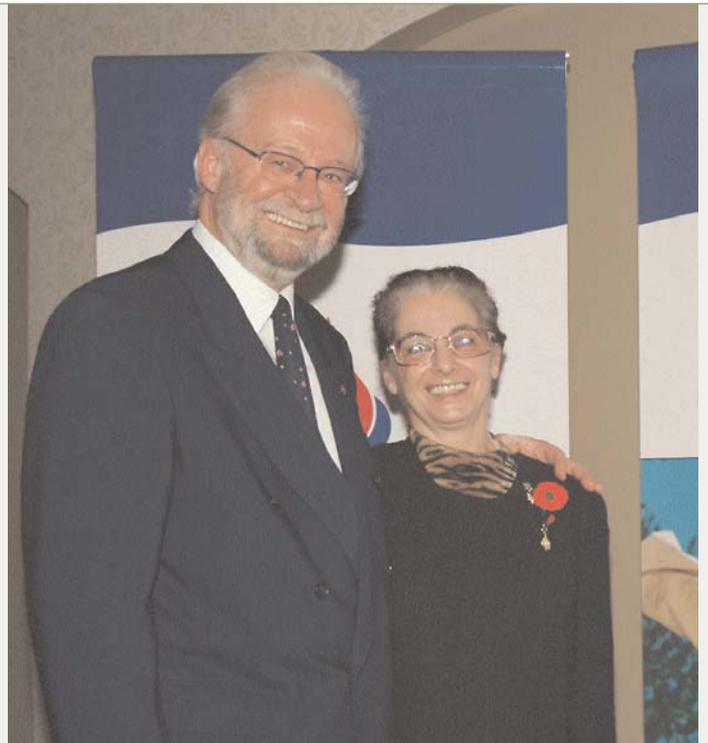
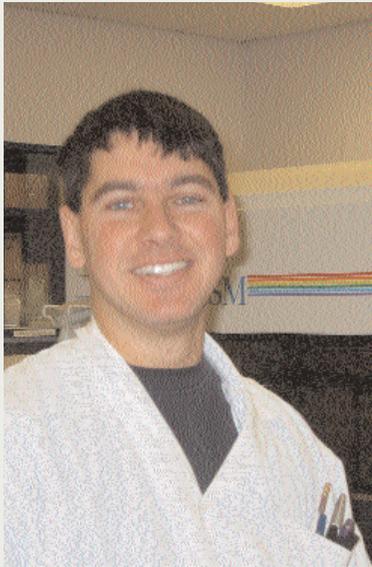


Photo: Captain Raymonde Gaumont, accompanied by André Roch, Assistant to the Executive Director, Public Affairs, Héma-Québec, at the blood donor appreciation evening that took place in Longueuil on October 31.



A RARE GIFT

On September 20, Gilles Larouche, a Montreal lab technician and veteran blood donor, made his first bone marrow donation. What motivated him? Quite simply, altruism, answered the thirty-two-year-old. "I'm lucky enough to be in good health, and it doesn't really cost me anything to do this. So, if it can help someone, I'd have no hesitation," he humbly confided.

Mr. Larouche's name has been on the registry for about eight years, but he was only approached for this donation last July. Why the long wait? It's very difficult to find compatible bone marrow. In fact, the odds of finding a non-related donor compatible with a recipient are from 1 in 450 to 1 in 750,000. Hence the worldwide search for compatible donors. Some 36,000 Quebecers, 220,000 other Canadians and 8,000,000 people around the world are currently registered.

To find out more about this type of donation, you can call the Registry of Non-related Bone Marrow Donors at 1 800 565-6635, extension 279 or 280.

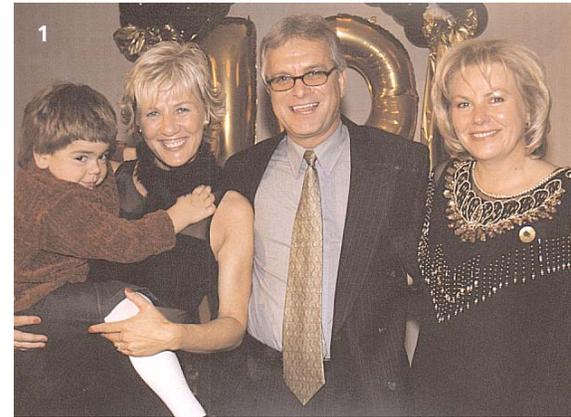
TEN YEARS OF LIFE-SAVING WITH THE BONE MARROW REGISTRY

Last September 28, the registry of non-related bone marrow donors celebrated its tenth anniversary. To mark the occasion, a third celebration was organized by Héma-Québec's bone marrow team, in order to express their gratitude to all such donors.

At this "Nuit d'or gala", Héma-Québec paid tribute to all the donors of the last decade. Moreover, Tammy Brûlé, who received a bone marrow transplant in February 2002, presented ten people who made this laudable gesture during the past year with plaques honouring their remarkable contributions.

Over the course of the evening, bone marrow donors and recipients alike shared their unique experience with moving accounts of their individual stories.

All in all, it was a very memorable—and emotional—occasion!



1. Left to right: Four-year-old Frédérique Leblanc, a bone marrow recipient, Gaétane Pelletier, a counsellor at Héma-Québec's Bone Marrow Registry, Marc Bruneau, Frédérique's donor, and Diane Roy, Director of the Bone Marrow Registry.

2. Josée Michaud, a Héma-Québec employee who has donated bone marrow on two occasions.

3. Dr. Francine Décary, Executive Director of Héma-Québec with bone marrow donors from the last ten years, Tammy Brûlé, who received a transplant in February 2002, and Diane Roy, Director of the Bone Marrow Registry.



In brief

“Operation TRANS/FUSION”

Last October 18, the Salon for Best Business Practices, organized by Mouvement Qualité Québec, took place. Héma-Québec took advantage of this event to present its “Operation TRANS/FUSION” project, which involved the transfer of its human and physical resources from both 3131 Sherbrooke Street East and 1619 Trans-Canada Highway to its head office at 4045 Côte-Vertu, as well as the optimization of this fusion or merger.

Given the uniqueness of Héma-Québec’s service and the highly regulated environment of the blood products sector, this move represented a considerable challenge. However, thanks to the work of the entire team, plus very careful planning, this challenge was successfully met, particularly in terms of ensuring service continuity.

The Salon also provided a platform for promoting the technical skill and expertise of Héma-Québec.



Yvan Charbonneau, P.Eng, Senior Director of Operations at the Salon for Best Business Practices.

Héma-Québec staff get a break— and some fresh new ideas



PHOTO: NORMAND RAJOTTE

Training workshop on the organization's four guiding principles

Héma-Québec recently gathered all its personnel in Drummondville for the second edition of its “Journées Halte-ressources.” The goal of these training and information sessions is to enable employees to become better acquainted with the organization for which they work and to stress the importance of each person’s individual role in the entire blood supply process.

Summer campaign results

Héma-Québec achieved 90% of the donor goal it set for the summer campaign, which took place over the 13 weeks from June 10 to September 10, 2002. During that time, nearly 77,000 people made a donation at the 475 mobile blood donor clinics organized across Québec. It should be noted that, for 5,402 of these people, it was the very first time they had given blood.

So, we’d like to extend our most sincere thanks to everyone who responded to Héma-Québec’s invitation to “Save a life this summer.”

Québec City establishment to move

As the lease on Héma-Québec’s Québec City facilities will end on March 31, 2004, we will have to find a location or locations for our activities by then. Last August, Héma-Québec made an agreement in principle with Université Laval, which gave it the right to a lot for the purposes of constructing new facilities—a first step on the way to a new location.

Héma-Québec has 372 employees in Québec City.

Public meeting

On September 18, 2002, Héma-Québec invited the public and the media to attend our fourth public Board of Directors’ meeting, where a review of the highlights of the 2001–2002 year was given. The meeting took place at the Montréal Science Centre.

Héma-Québec’s advisory committees, that is, the Safety Advisory Committee, the Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee and the Liaison Committee, presented some of their recommendations to the assembly. Moreover, three organizations reported on their activities in connection with the Liaison Committee: the Association des grands brûlés (FLAM), the Canadian Sickle Cell Society and the Canadian Hemophilia Society—Québec chapter.



PHOTO: STEVE LEROUX

Claude Pichette, Chairman of the Héma-Québec Board of Directors



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