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**\$26
million
for
water
quality**



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**New affordable
housing project on
Curé-Labelle**



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Officials take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new housing project.
(Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

**More
funds
for
Dental
Plan**



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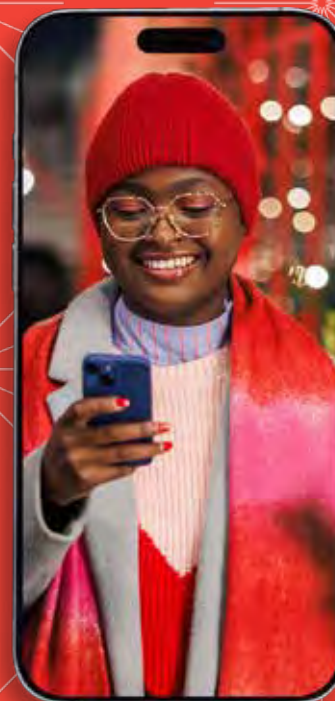
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Quebec allocates over \$26 million for water and sewer renewal in Laval

‘Water is an essential service for families,’ Guilbault says during announcement at City Hall

MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

Residents on residential streets in Laval’s Fabreville and Chomedey districts will be getting an upgrade in the quality of their drinking water, as well as the efficient flow of storm and wastewater flowing into their sewers, thanks to a more than \$26 million grant announced by the Quebec Municipal Affairs Ministry last week.

Minister of Municipal Affairs Geneviève Guilbault and Minister responsible for the Laval region Christopher Skeete, were in Laval on November 28 to announce that \$26,074,021 has been granted by the CAQ government to the city for the water infrastructure work.

Upgrading sewer and water pipes

A total of 13,520 metres of drinking water, stormwater and wastewater pipes will be replaced under dozens of streets in various neighbourhoods of Laval. The investment will allow for the replacement of aging pipes in several areas where outages and emergency interventions were becoming increasingly common.

In all, 13.5 kilometres of water and sewer infrastructure will be upgraded. The work will be conducted in Chomedey on a grid of streets lying between des Prairies and McNamara boulevards, as well as between Estelle St. and de Normandie Blvd. in Fabreville and Chomedey.

The work will improve the reliability of the drinking water system, its drainage capacity during heavy rainfall, and the quality of service for hundreds of families. It also aligns with the government’s efforts to support municipalities in maintaining their essential infrastructure.

Water ‘essential,’ said Guilbault

“Water is an essential service for families,” Guilbault said during the announcement at Laval’s interim city hall on Saint-Martin Blvd. “With over \$26 million in support, our government is keeping its promise, in Laval as throughout Quebec, by giving municipalities the means to provide reliable and efficient water systems.

“More than 13 kilometres of pipes will be replaced,” she added. “And this is exactly the kind of investment that prevents costly outages and improves the services that citizens depend on every day. It’s common sense, and I commend the city for its work on this project.”

“I am very pleased to see that the public will benefit from water systems that are less vulnerable to breaks and from better storm-water management during periods of heavy rainfall,” said Skeete. “This significant grant for our region is proof that we are here to support the City of Laval’s projects.”

“Modernizing our municipal infrastructure is a priority for my administration and will require sustained efforts over the coming years,” said Mayor Stéphane Boyer.

Reducing breaks and backups

“I am pleased to have Quebec’s financial assistance to support our sewer and water main modernization projects,” the mayor added. “These investments allow us to reduce breaks and prevent backups in our territory, which has a direct impact on the quality of life of Laval residents.”

The financial assistance comes from the provincial government’s 2023-2033 Municipal Water Infrastructure Program (PRIMEAU), part of the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI). The plan provides for investments of up to \$7 billion in the municipal infrastructure sector for the period 2025-2035, under the auspices of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAMH).

As the overseer of municipalities across Quebec, the provincial government provides support to towns and cities to improve the performance and management of their drinking water systems.

“Through the PRIMEAU 2023-2033 program, municipalities can benefit from increased funding when they commit to better understanding the condition of their infrastructure and planning its maintenance responsibly,” the municipal affairs ministry said in a statement.

Importance of infrastructure

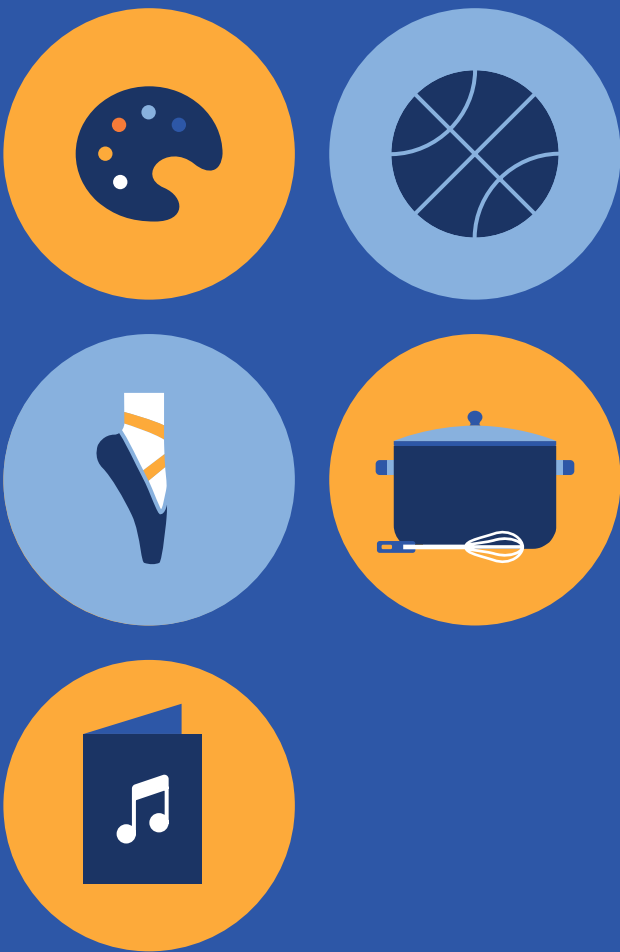
“Infrastructures are the foundation of everything in the proper and figurative sense,” Guilbault added. “So, when we talk about infrastructures, it’s of utmost importance, whether it’s our buildings, our roads, schools, etc. But even more essential and importantly, our water infrastructure is a constantly recurring topic with our municipalities, a topic that keeps coming up again and again.”

According to Guilbault, a lot of water and sewer infrastructure across the province dates back to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. As a result, most of these networks are reaching the end of their usefulness at around the same time.

“This leads to major inconveniences for our citizens,” she said. “We are all working above and beyond for the quality of life of our citizens, regardless of the level of government we are in.”

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Quebec Municipal Affairs Minister Geneviève Guilbault (fourth from left) is seen here with Mayor Stéphane Boyer, Sainte-Rose MNA Christopher Skeete and members of the city’s executive-committee and municipal council at city hall on November 28 following the \$26 million announcement. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)

Publishers:

George Bakoyannis
George S. Guzman

General Director:

George Bakoyannis

VP Sales & Marketing:

George S. Guzman
sales@newsfirst.ca

Graphic Design:

Lareine Zakhour
Elena Molter
Thomas Bakoyannis

Advertising:

George S. Guzman

Editorial Staff:

Martin C. Barry
Matthew Daldalian
Dimitris Ilias
Maria Diamantis
Renata Isopo
James Ryan

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OPINION & Editorial



Cutting red tape could help solve Canada's doctor crisis

Doctors spend more time on paperwork than on patients and that's fueling Canada's health care wait lists

Canada doesn't just lack doctors—it squanders the ones it has. Mountains of paperwork and pointless admin chew up tens of millions of physician hours every year, time that could erase the so-called shortage and slash wait lists if freed for patient care.

Recruiting more doctors helps, but the fastest cure for our sick system is cutting the bureaucracy that strangles the ones already here.

The Canadian Medical Association found that unnecessary non-patient work consumes millions of hours annually. That's the equivalent of 50.5 million patient visits, enough to give every Canadian at least one appointment and likely erase the physician shortage. Meanwhile, the Canadian Institute for Health Information estimates more than six million Canadians don't even have a family doctor. That's roughly one in six of us.

And it's not just patients who feel the shortage—doctors themselves are paying the price. Endless forms don't just waste time; they drive doctors out of the profession. Burned out and frustrated, many cut their hours or leave entirely. And the foreign doctors that health authorities are trying to recruit? They might think twice once they discover how much time Canadian physicians spend on paperwork that adds nothing to patient care.

But freeing doctors from forms isn't as simple as shredding them. Someone has to build systems that actually reduce, rather than add to, the workload. And that's where things get tricky. Trimming red tape usually means more Information Technology (IT), and big software projects have a well-earned reputation for spiralling in cost.

Bent Flyvbjerg, the global guru of project disasters, and his colleagues examined more than 5,000 IT projects in a 2022 study. They found outcomes didn't follow a neat bell curve but a "power-law" distribution, meaning costs don't just rise steadily, they explode in a fat tail of nasty surprises as variables multiply.

Oxford University and McKinsey offered equally bleak news. Their joint study concluded: "On average, large IT projects run 45 per cent over budget and seven per cent over time while delivering 56 per cent less value than predicted." If that sounds familiar, it should. Canada's Phoenix federal payroll fiasco—the payroll software introduced by Ottawa that left tens of thousands of federal workers underpaid or unpaid—is a cautionary tale etched into the national memory.

The lesson isn't to avoid technology, but to get it right. Canada can't sidestep the digital route. The question is whether we adapt what others have built or design our own. One option is borrowing from the U.S. or U.K., where electronic health record (EHR) systems (the digital patient files used by doctors and hospitals) are already in place. Both countries have had headaches with their systems, thanks to legal and regulatory differences. But there are signs of progress.

The U.K. is experimenting with artificial intelligence to lighten the administrative load, and a joint U.K.-U.S. study gives a glimpse of what's possible:

"... AI technologies such as Robotic Process Automation (RPA), predictive analytics, and Natural Language Processing (NLP) are transforming health care administration. RPA and

AI-driven software applications are revolutionizing health care administration by automating routine tasks such as appointment scheduling, billing, and documentation. By handling repetitive, rule-based tasks with speed and accuracy, these technologies minimize errors, reduce administrative burden, and enhance overall operational efficiency."

For patients, that could mean fewer missed referrals, faster follow-up calls and less time waiting for paperwork to clear before treatment. Still, even the best tools come with limits. Systems differ, and customization will drive up costs. But medicine is medicine, and AI tools can bridge more gaps than you might think.

Run the math. If each "freed" patient visit is worth just \$20—a conservative figure for the value of a basic appointment—the payoff could hit \$1 billion in a single year.

Updating costs would continue, but that's still cheap compared to the human and financial toll of endless wait lists. Cost-sharing between provinces, Ottawa, municipalities and even doctors themselves could spread the risk. Competitive bidding, with honest budgets and realistic timelines, is non-negotiable if we want to dodge another Phoenix-sized fiasco.

The alternative—clinging to our current dysfunctional patchwork of physician information systems—isn't really an option. It means more frustrated doctors walking away, fewer new ones coming in, and Canadians left to languish on wait lists that grow ever longer.

And that's not health care: it's managed decline.

Ian Madsen

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Laval maintains highest municipal rating in Quebec from S&P Global

For the fifth consecutive year, S&P Global Ratings has confirmed the City of Laval's AA+ credit rating, recognizing the strength of its economy and the rigor and prudence of its financial management, despite an economic context marked by widespread infrastructure cost increases and tariff uncertainty.

The rating, the highest awarded to a municipality in Quebec, "is further proof of Laval's best practices in governance and fiscal discipline," the city says in a statement issued last week.

Ensuring a balance

"The prudence and discipline that guide the City's financial decisions have ensured a balance between structural investments and debt control," said Mayor Stéphane Boyer.

"After delivering long-awaited sports, cultural, and community infrastructure projects to Laval residents, we are now focusing our efforts on upgrading our municipal assets," he added.

According to the mayor, the City of Laval faces numerous financial challenges in the coming years, "and we must make the necessary responsible decisions to ensure we continue to provide excellent service to the public while maintaining sound financial health," Boyer said.

The credit rating agency noted Laval's responsible use of municipal reserves and a controlled adjustment of debt financing to support development priorities.

A diversified economy

The city notes that Laval remains one of Quebec's most dynamic economies, distinguished by its robust and diversified econ-

omy, stable governance supported by clear financial policies, a predictable and favourable institutional framework and excellent access to financial markets.

While the city says it continues efforts to consolidate its financial position and ensure the sustainability of municipal finances without compromising the quality of services provided to the

public, it says it remains fully aware of the various scenarios presented by S&P Global Ratings for the coming years.

"With its rigorous planning, Laval intends to pursue proactive management of its liquidity and responsible optimization of its debt, in order to support the confidence of financial institutions and sustainable budgetary stability," says the city.



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Trump's disruptive ways animate talks at Laval économique conference

More than 300 experts gathered at Château Royal to discuss Laval's economic future

MARTIN C. BARRY

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

The spectre of U.S. president Donald Trump and his disruptive economic policies figured prominently in the words of several speakers during a one-day conference on the Laval region's economic prospects held on November 20 by Laval économique, the City of Laval's development arm.

For several hours at the Château Royal, Laval was an epicenter of discussions on international trade during the IMPACT Économique Grand conference. More than 300 expert experts, visionary entrepreneurs and economic and political decision-makers accepted the agency's invitation to gather for a day of strategic discussions.

On the agenda were growth prospects, innovative business strategies and concrete opportunities for companies with a base in Laval seeking to establish themselves in national and global value chains.

Experts and stakeholders

The event brought together stakeholders, such as Mayor Stéphane Boyer, Marc-Aurèle-Fortin MP Carlos Leitão who is Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, as well as high-level experts.

They included former Radio-Canada news correspondent Jean-François Lépine, senior Desjardins economist Benoit Durocher, vice-president for exports at Investissement Québec International Marie-Eve Jean, and Frédéric Legendre, director general of Trade Policy and External Relations at the Ministry of Economy, Innovation and Energy.

In opening remarks, Mayor Boyer outlined Laval's role as an economic hub and the importance of exports in regional development. Lidia Divry, executive-director of Laval Économique, suggested some concrete solutions to support Laval's businesses during these challenging economic times.

A 'wake up' from Trump

"If I'm here today with you, it's because I want Laval to prosper and grow," said Boyer, while adding that the well-being of Laval's nearly 450,000 residents depends largely on the capacity of the region's businesses and industries to excel.

He called the Trump administration's actions since the Republican president took office last January a "wake-up call for Canada," while noting that for the longest time, the U.S. was the country's most important trading partner.

Still, he suggested that changing world events and a shifting political landscape also hold the potential to create new economic opportunities, and that one of the reasons for the gathering was to see "what we can do" to maximize the potential benefits for the Laval region's industries and businesses.

A change in values

While noting the emergence of India as an economy poised to become the world's third largest, and the impact of the Covid pandemic which disrupted the global economic system, Jean-François Lépine said Trump's re-election a year ago led Canadians to discover that "our best

best friend had become a sort of enemy, a figure with whom we no longer share the same values."

Apart from the economic impact, Lépine said Trump's arrival may also have brought about the beginning of the end of the U.S.'s military global domination, which peaked after the late 1980s following the dissolution of the Soviet Union when the U.S. was perceived to have become "the world's policeman."

"You can see how American democracy has been evolving at great speed towards something we weren't expecting at all," Lépine continued. "The rules are being less and less respected. The conflicts are becoming more and more unpredictable with consequences that also are more and more unpredictable."

Contending with China

Lépine, who was for many years Radio-Canada's foreign correspondent in the People's Republic of China, contrasted the authoritarian communist nation's market-driven surge that leveraged 800 million people out of poverty, with western nations like the U.S. where government intervention often is constrained by political quarrels over democratic values.

As well, he noted the emergence of China's megacities, like Shanghai, populated by 25-35 million or more inhabitants in some cases, with matching mass transit systems to accommodate legions of workers. As he noted, the People's Republic of China's middle-class now includes 400 million citizens out of PRC's 1,408,280,000 population.

However, as Lépine also pointed out, all is not well in China, where economic overreach has resulted in massive overdevelopment of housing, with potential blowback felt by non-Chinese investors. "If all of that were to collapse, there'd be the risk of China's economy being in a situation from which no one knows whether it would be able to get out," he said.



Laval mayor Stéphane Boyer was among several speakers who addressed members of the city's business community during the IMPACT Économique Grand conference at the Château Royal in Chomedey. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Laval News)



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Rush-hour crowds test REM's Sainte-Dorothée station as usage climbs



The glass-fronted Sainte-Dorothée REM station during weekday peak return hours. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

The REM's new Sainte-Dorothée station is quickly proving essential to Laval commuters, with packed park-and-ride lots and steady afternoon ridership suggesting the service has taken hold just weeks after launch.

Between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the station saw a continuous stream of returning students and workers. Nearly every parking space surrounding Avenue des Bois was filled, forcing late arrivals to circle for openings or park farther out on residential streets. For many riders, the convenience outweighs the growing congestion.

Luis Canon, an internet technician who

lives nearby, said the REM fits naturally into his routine. "It's amazing. It's convenient," he said. Canon takes the train roughly four times a week, often at peak hours. He said the new system is a welcome return after years of replacement buses. "I used to take [the old line], then they shut it down. Now it's okay."

The REM restored direct rail to the North Shore after the former exo Deux-Montagnes line closed for conversion in 2020. The new infrastructure promises faster travel and fewer bottlenecks, with trains running automatically every five to ten minutes during peak periods. Travel to downtown Montreal now averages under 30 minutes once aboard, cutting commute times in half for many west-end Laval



Luis Canon leaving the Sainte-Dorothée REM station after his afternoon commute. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

residents.

The accessibility has made Sainte-Dorothée a busy endpoint on the line. Parking lots at Sainte-Dorothée were near capacity during the afternoon peak, an early sign of strong demand. Similar patterns occurred when the South Shore REM opened in 2023, when ridership climbed steadily during its first months of operation.

For Dawson College student Ricardo Rodriguez, the REM is now non-negotiable. "I use the REM every day to go to school," he said. Rodriguez said the line significantly reduces his travel time into Montreal. "It's very fast. I like that. It's very quiet. It's way quieter than the Metro."

Sainte-Dorothée station's role is expected to grow further when future REM phases

connect west to Anse-à-l'Orme and south into Montreal-Trudeau airport by 2027. The station's strategic location has already shifted commuting habits in Sainte-Dorothée, where car-dependent neighbourhoods long relied on slow multi-transfer bus connections to metro stations.

The REM's off-peak schedule remains a limitation, particularly for late-night users. Service between Côte-de-Liesse and Deux-Montagnes currently ends at 9:30 p.m., with continuing evening travel handled by replacement bus service.

University student Yanni Athanasoulis takes the REM daily to reach Place-Bonaventure. The speed has changed his mornings. "It comes every five minutes. It goes to where I need to go," he said. He once spent over an hour in traffic. Now his travel time is cut by more than half. "This takes about 30 minutes when you're actually on the REM, so it's good."



Yanni Athanasoulis uses the REM daily to travel downtown for university. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

Like others, Athanasoulis planned for the change long before it arrived. "Ever since I heard it was opening, I've been planning to take it," he said. He drives to the station, then transfers to rail downtown.

By late afternoon, the Sainte-Dorothée lots were full up quickly.

A steady flow of passengers moved from the platforms toward the parking rows, many heading directly to their cars. Trains arriving between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. were busy, with most seats occupied and some passengers standing through portions of the route; not overcrowded, but consistently full.

The REM was built to shift more commuters away from car-dependent travel and toward electric rail service. Early usage at Sainte-Dorothée suggests the demand exists, but long-term performance will depend on how well the network accommodates rider growth, travel patterns and future branch openings.

So far, the station is being used. People are boarding, returning, parking, and adjusting their routines around the new service. The next test is endurance, whether the system can support this level of traffic as months pass and peak travel intensifies.



Ricardo Rodriguez stands outside Sainte-Dorothée station after returning from classes. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

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How to help



Ottawa's Dental Care Plan reaches new milestone, improving access, says Health Minister

But not everything is covered, Marjorie Michel admits after announcing additional funding

MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

While acknowledging that Ottawa's Canadian Dental Care Plan may be leaving some users with a relatively small sum to pay off whenever they go to the dentist, Health Minister Marjorie Michel says it's up to the dentists themselves to decide whether they're willing to shoulder that extra cost.

More funds for oral health

Michel, who is the Liberal MP for Papineau which includes Parc Extension, held a press conference in Villeray on November 24 to announce additional funding of more than \$35 million over three years for 30 projects under the Oral Health Access Fund (OHAF).

According to a press release issued by the federal health ministry, the projects will improve training for dental students by allowing them to obtain the hands-on experience they need to provide care to Canadians across the country while strengthening efforts to improve access to care.

According to the ministry, close to six million Canadians are now covered under the Canadian

Dental Care Plan (CDCP). "The CDCP is making life more affordable by saving eligible Canadians an average of \$800 per year on their oral health care services," says the ministry.

Most dentists are on board

The health ministry says that currently more than 27,000 dentists and other oral health providers are participating in the CDCP, offering a wide range of services that include cleanings, fillings and dentures, representing close to 100 per cent of active providers in Canada.

In Quebec alone, according to summary data posted online by the CDCP, 1,653,165 Quebecers have signed up for the program. The total number of approved applicants in Quebec who received care for benefit year 2025 to 2026 stands at 552,621 users.

According to the ministry, some CDCP program subscribers saw an oral health provider for the first time in decades after signing on. The ministry notes that without access to dental care, many people visit medical emergency rooms for dental issues that could be treated in a dentist's office. Hence, the CDCP is helping ease pressure on Canada's health care system, they claim.

"Thanks to the CDCP Canadians are now



Canadian Health Minister and Papineau Liberal MP Marjorie Michel (third from right) is seen here with Marc-Aurèle-Fortin Liberal MP Carlos Leitão (third from left) and representatives from various local community groups during Michel's announcement in Villeray on November 24. (Photo: Martin C. Barry, Newsfirst Multimedia)

receiving the preventive care they need, and this program is only possible because of the commitment and participation of almost all oral providers across the country," Michel said in a statement. "Our support to new training projects will not only empower the next generation of oral health professionals, but also contribute to lower costs for families."

Not everything is covered

As for the users' leftover billing fees, CBC News Ottawa reported in July that some dentistry patients were under the impression all their dental work was free. The reality is that the program reimburses dentists' rates as determined by provincial billing guidelines.

It might also be noted that Health Canada describes the Canadian Dental Care Plan as "helping make the cost of dental care more affordable," while making no claims about providing full and comprehensive coverage.

As a result, many dentists' offices charge the

difference between the price of the procedures and what CDCP pays them. For example, a recent bill for a total of \$257 issued for basic treatments by a practitioner at a west-end Montreal dentists' office left the patient on the hook for \$57.39 after CDCP paid \$199.61.

Answering journalists' questions, Michel maintained that the program was never conceived to cover 100 per cent of costs. She suggested that those enrolled in the CDCP should shop around for a dentist who is willing to waive or charge less for the stub.

How to apply for CDCP

All eligible Canadians can apply to the CDCP. To qualify, applicants must: Not have access to dental insurance; Have filed their individual 2024 tax return in Canada (and their spouse's or common-law partner's (if applicable)); Have an adjusted family net income of less than \$90,000; And be a Canadian resident for tax purposes.

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Task Force submits brief to National Assembly on Legault government's Bill 1

Proposed Quebec constitution law would prioritize French, secularism and collective rights

MARTIN C. BARRY

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
marty@newsfirst.ca

After reading and analyzing the Legault government's Bill 1, the Task Force on Linguistic Policy has concluded the proposed constitution legislation "is a threat to the 1.25 million English speaking Quebecers, a threat to Quebec's future in Canada, and "sends a clear message to all non-francophones: 'you do not exist.'"

Since its founding in 2021, the Task Force, led by Andrew Caddell, has organized public meetings and rallies, submitted legal briefs to courts, the National Assembly and Parliament, and held expert panel discussions to oppose both Bill 96 and the use of the Canadian constitution's controversial Notwithstanding Clause.

Their Bill 1 reaction brief submitted to elected officials at the Quebec National Assembly stated the concerns of the Task Force.

Fleeting mention of Anglos

Mentioned in the 11-page document is the draft legislation's fleeting mention of Anglophone institutions. "In doing so, it fails to recognize the enormous contributions of English-speaking Quebecers for three centuries and more," stated the Task Force.

"The bill places collective rights, secularism and the French language above human rights," they maintain. "This creates an inverted pyramid of rights where the collective supersedes the

individual."

The brief outlines Bill 1's objectives, the Task Force's objections, legal issues and recommended changes. Among other things, it notes that the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights does not recognize collective rights, stating rather that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

The brief refutes the CAQ government's claim of Quebec being self-determined, the ability to hold a referendum with a winning margin of 50 per cent plus one, and denounces Bill 1, saying "the contempt for our federal system runs throughout this legislation," as the proposed law refers to Canada as a "loose federation of autonomous states."

'Radical and unconstitutional'

The Task Force concludes that Bill 1 "is a radical and unconstitutional blueprint for provincial autonomy. It is a blueprint for a controlled demolition of the existing federal system."

The Task Force stated in its conclusion, "We recognize and encourage the flourishing of French as the majority language in Quebec. But we stand with those who do not speak French: the elderly, visible minorities, the rural poor, the indigenous people, the physically and mentally challenged.

"These are the people who require government services. Many were not educated in Canada, and therefore could be denied government services according to Bill 96 and would be permanently

discriminated against in Bill 1.

"That is unfair, egregious, immoral and unconstitutional. It is not the Quebec that we know, and it is not the Quebec we see evolving into the future. Quebec will be a pariah in the western world by adopting such a fundamental law. And we will join in the criticisms of it until it is withdrawn."

Narrow-minded laws

The Task Force maintains that Bill 1 "promises to 'define the Quebec nation,' but rather than describe a dynamic, multilingual society within a majority Francophone province, it entrenches its three most narrow-minded pieces of legislation – Bill 21 on secularism, Bill 84 on identity, and Bill 96 on language – outside challenges of the courts, so their privileged place in this 'Constitution' protects them from judicial appeal."

"This bill places collective rights, secularism and the French language above human rights," they continue. "It also prevents the use of taxpayers' dollars for court challenges, a fundamental undermining of democratic principles that any party should be able to challenge any unfair law."

The Task Force noted that in Quebec, "scholars and premiers, both indépendantiste and federalist, have advocated for a written Quebec Constitution to underline its autonomy and difference. However, the Liberals, Parti Québécois and Québec solidaire all voted against tabling the bill."

The Task Force noted that the Barreau du Québec has also criticized Bill 1. "It is time this legislation



The Task Force on Linguistic Policy's Andrew Caddell.

be shelved, amended enormously or thrown in the recycling bin, where it belongs," they said.

'Dangerous, unconstitutional'

Recommending changes, the Task Force said it "sees this bill as dangerous, unconstitutional and inconsistent with the Constitution of Canada and its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Any and all sections that are beyond the reach of the National Assembly should be withdrawn."

"The Task Force, as a representative of the 1.25 million English-speaking Quebecers, demands recognition of the non-francophone community as builders, leaders, scientists, doctors, and enormous contributors to the growth of Quebec for the last three centuries," they continued.

"A chapter of the law should be dedicated to this recognition. If not, this legislation creates a structure of a purely ethnocentric 'nation,' comparable to a 19th century nation-state, and not a dynamic, open society of the 21st century."



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Affordable housing units opened on Curé-Labelle

Federal, provincial and municipal partners inaugurate 101 affordable units

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

A new affordable housing development has officially opened in Laval, located at 605 boul. Curé-Labelle.

The newly-opened project brings 101 units to residents seeking lower-cost rental options under a long-term affordability framework backed by federal, provincial, municipal and financial partners.

On a windy Monday morning, the joint opening featured Quebec Minister of Housing Caroline Proulx, Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis, Laval Minister Christopher Skeete, Laval Mayor Stéphane Boyer, and representatives from the Fonds de solidarité FTQ alongside Société de Gestion Querbes (SGQ) and Regroupement des Organismes du Montréal Ethnique pour le Logement (ROMEL).

The building has already begun receiving tenants, with officials presenting the development as a model for social housing delivery in the region.

The total capital budget is \$45.5 million, including \$20 million from the Government of Canada and \$17.6 million from Quebec through its partnership with the Fonds de solidarité FTQ.

The City of Laval also invested \$7 million.

65 of the 101 units include rent-supplement eligibility through Programme de Supplément au Loyer Québec (PSL), allowing a limit of rent payments to 25 per cent of the tenants' annual income.

The remaining cost funds 90 per cent by the Société d'habitation du Québec and 10 per cent by the City of Laval.

"We're talking about 101 affordable rental units, with many already occupied," Proulx said. "The Government of Quebec is proud to have contributed nearly \$18 million."

The building operates under long-term afford-



Officials pose together after inaugurating the newest housing project in Laval (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

ability regulation. According to the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, affordability must be maintained for 35 years. Rental price thresholds are indexed annually based on provincial standards set below market median rates.

"All of the units are affordable because they receive subsidies from both the Quebec and federal governments," said Josée Lagacé, vice-president of communications and marketing for the Fonds immobilier de solidarité FTQ. She added that affordable rent is defined as "roughly 20 per cent below the median rent for a given area."

The regulatory model ensures the building cannot shift to market-rate rental and that price increases are capped to remain consistent with affordability frameworks over the long term. "We cannot raise the rent as if we are in the private sector," said project partner Mazen Houdeib, general manager for SGQ and ROMEL. "It has to remain affordable."

Local demand and development origins

The building stands on the former site of a large restaurant, acquired after negotiations with a private developer. The objective was to convert the lot into a non-profit housing complex rather than a market-priced residential project.

Houdeib said the purchase was driven by demand in the area and concerns that private development would fail to meet low-income needs.

"We convinced him to sell us the project," he said. "Because our clientele is the people who are in need."

Units are available in varying sizes, with officials expecting occupancy to continue over the coming months. Federal MP Annie Koutrakis said 15 households have already moved in, noting that the building supports diverse family structures, including singles, parents and multi-person households.

"Everybody needs to make sure that they have an affordable, safe place to call home," she said.

Municipal targets and regional strategy

The project contributes to Laval's broader housing strategy, which aims to expand social infrastructure to meet population-growth pressures.

Mayor Stéphane Boyer said the city recently reached a milestone of one thousand social units built this year and plans to double that target over the next four years.

"What we want to do in Laval is to facilitate the construction of housing," Boyer said. "We want to make sure that we have affordable options."

He noted that although the city did not select the site, it contributed through incentives, subsidies, and regulatory support. The property was purchased independently by the aforementioned non-profit developer, with government involvement focused on financing and approvals.

Minister Christopher Skeete spoke on the project's significance particularly for families in Chomedey and surrounding neighbourhoods.

"This neighbourhood has always needed affordable housing," he said, calling the complex "good news" for residents facing rising rent pressures.

Federally, the opening is part of a larger national housing mandate intended to increase below-market rental supply across Canada.

A growing stock

Affordability is said to be secured for 35 years — meaning units are expected to remain below market rate well into the 2050s under program terms. Lagacé also signalled additional projects in the pipeline.

"We currently have \$4 billion worth of real estate projects underway in Quebec," Lagacé said. "And in Laval, we have plenty more announcements coming soon."



Laval Mayor Stéphane Boyer speaks on the city's role and housing priorities during the opening ceremony. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)



Vimy MP Annie Koutrakis addresses attendees. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)



Christopher Skeete, minister responsible for the Laval region, speaks at the inauguration. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)



Josée Lagacé discusses the financial partnership behind the latest affordable housing project. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

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December 3, 2025 • The Laval News • 13

Screenwriter Kondilopoulos shifts from true-crime roots with new film *The Perfect Gamble*

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

North Shore screenwriter Kosta Kondilopoulos, a longtime Laval resident now based in Saint-Eustache is stepping into new creative territory with his latest feature, *The Perfect Gamble*, marking a deliberate shift away from the true-crime storytelling that defined his recent work.

The film, now streaming in Canada on Apple TV and YouTube, follows two gamblers whose dream of running a casino quickly entangles them with the Russian mob. Unlike *Mob Cops*, his 2025 film based on the real story of two NYPD detectives caught working for organized crime, this script was built from fiction rather than headlines.

"This one was a lot more freeing to not be confined to true events," Kondilopoulos said in an interview. The project began when director Danny A. Abeckaser approached him with a premise: two ex-convicts open an underground casino, only to find themselves outmatched by the criminal world around them.

Kondilopoulos took the concept and wrote a script designed to move fast and entertain.

A new creative stretch

After several movies rooted in real cases, Kondilopoulos said the switch to fiction demanded a different writing process.

It wasn't easy, but unrestrained. Without historic timelines or documented characters to follow, he focused instead on structure, rhythm and escalation.

He said the only real constraint was budget and schedule, with filming completed over just 10 days across two separate locations. "They did a great job... I was shocked when I found out it was 10 days," Kondilopoulos said.

The film's tone draws lightly from Scorsese's *Casino*, a reference point the director encouraged during development, but Kondilopoulos stresses that *The Perfect Gamble* is not a homage picture. Instead, he aimed for something more playful, a crime story driven less by message and more by movement.

"It's very gritty, quick, funny — not like the movies that are out today," he said.

Rather than a morality tale, he describes the movie as "two guys getting into trouble and having fun."

Screenwriting instinct

After years of writing crime-based scripts, Kondilopoulos said structure comes naturally. He followed a discipline familiar to most screenwriters: a change every few pages, a protagonist pushed forward by conflict.

Kondilopoulos cited *Save The Cat*, a widely used screenwriting blueprint for story structure, but said instinct matters more than math. "As a storyteller, you just know you've got to get the

audience back every five pages," he said.

The film's release adds another entry to the screenwriter's expanding portfolio, which now includes both factual and fictional crime narratives.

His work with Abeckaser continues to shape his direction, but he said he wants future projects to push further beyond the constraints of reality-based stories.

What's next

Kondilopoulos is already at work on another script, one he says lets him mix real history with imagination in a way he hasn't before. He called it faster, looser and more playful than his past crime projects, a chance to try something new.

He also has two completed films approaching release: *12 Hours in October*, a dramatization of the October 7 attacks, and *The Pager*, expected next summer.

Despite growing recognition, including screenings in Los Angeles and continued collaborations with established actors, Kondilopoulos framed success in simple terms: keep the story moving, keep audiences engaged, and never let a script feel slow.

Kondilopoulos will host a local screening of *The Perfect Gamble* at Cinéma St-Eustache on



Screenwriter Kosta Kondilopoulos sits during an interview at a Tim Hortons in Saint-Eustache, reflecting on the writing process behind *The Perfect Gamble* and his upcoming projects. (Photo: Matthew Daldalian, The Laval News)

Dec. 7, an event he says is for "friends and family and anyone who just wants a good time."

The crime may be fictional this time, but for Laval's homegrown screenwriter, the gamble appears real and deliberate.



PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL

Emmanuel Aliatas, MA, Psychologist emmanuelaliatas@gmail.com

Holiday Stress/Anxiety

It's time for "Holiday Anxiety" to start. We have entered the holiday season, and one must think of what is ahead regarding the gatherings of family and friends. Most people have learned the best way to eliminate anxiety during the holiday is just to go away. I think that is a great idea. When travel is not an option, I will try to take you into the holiday season with a smooth landing.

One of the major causes of holiday anxiety has to be social pressure. Having family and friends over to celebrate can get thorny at times especially if topics like religion or politics are brought up. Furthermore, these are the two topics that I would advise people to avoid during their get togethers.

Another cause is the financial aspect of gift giving and hosting. This financial aspect can add up quickly. We all know the cliché of people paying off their holiday credit cards by spring. Given our economy and credit card interest rates, this can be a scary thought.

There is also the grief and loneliness aspect of the holidays. People should be aware of this and make sure they are not alone and isolating. Better to be with people than to be alone. Exercise may help elevate your mood and help stabilize your sleeping patterns if you are having difficulty with sleep.

There are many more anxieties one may face during the holidays; however, I will not go over an exhaustive list. I am sure everybody knows what I am talking about. I am quite certain many people have endured holiday anxiety, and it is not pleasant.

One way to overcome this is to be well prepared and not to seek perfection. Nobody

expects it from you. I have witnessed many times in my family people ask; How is the turkey? Is the meat tough? Is it dry? Are the cookies good or did they need more sugar? How is the cake? Does it have enough syrup? Things that are not as important as the gathering itself.

This above, is the most anxiety provoking event during the holidays. The expectation that everything will be perfect is unrealistic. Please get that out of your minds and set realistic expectations. Most of us expect to see people they do not see every day and just catch up. That's how it is in our society right now. They will most likely be discussing the state of the economy more than anything else. The price of groceries and gas as well as the price of putting their kids into activities afterschool. The actual cost of raising children and getting them through school has become difficult for most in our economic times.

I really can not end this article without mentioning the state of our economy at this time. Given the anxiety caused by an unstable and uncertain economy one must set realistic goals. For example, do not overspend on your credit cards, prioritize your shopping in a manageable way and make sure you can keep your expenses at a comfortable level for yourself. Do not compare yourself to others.

Finally, I would advise people to practice grounding and mindfulness. Your mental health depends on it. Do not forget to hydrate, get enough exercise and good quality sleep. I hope I have been helpful and that you may benefit from reading this article. I wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

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Carrefour Laval commits to extended weekend hours for pilot project

MATTHEW DALDALIAN
matt.newsfirst@gmail.com

Nearly two months into Quebec's pilot project allowing stores in Laval, Gatineau and Saint-Georges to remain open until 8 p.m. on weekends, most retailers are still closing at 5 p.m. — but Carrefour Laval is preparing to break from the pack.

Beginning Nov. 29, the day after Black Friday, all retailers inside CF Carrefour Laval will be required to stay open until 7 p.m. on Saturdays and 6 p.m. on Sundays, according to Cadillac Fairview's vice-president of operations.

It marks the first large-scale adoption of the extended-hours pilot in Laval.

The provincial project, which began on Oct. 2 and runs for one year, lets non-food retailers voluntarily stay open later on weekends.

But uptake has been limited, with hesitation high among store owners and managers who fear low foot traffic and higher payroll costs.

Retailers said they were reluctant to act alone.

As Andréanne Marquis of Womance put it, "If everyone follows suit and there's a party, we'll join the party... On our own, we won't be able to generate enough traffic."

Her comments reflect a wider sentiment that shoppers aren't yet expecting later hours and may not show up if only a few stores participate.

Other chains tested the late-closing hours with

little success. Club Chaussures and Chaussures Panda said their trial runs in Gatineau and Laval did not produce enough evening traffic to justify staying open.

Many store owners said consumer habits haven't shifted enough to make later hours profitable.

Despite the mixed results, Quebec's Minister Delegate for the Economy, Samuel Poulin, maintains confidence in the pilot. He's announced he's open to letting more cities participate.

Poulin said the project launched during a traditionally slow period and that results may change during the busier retail months of November and December.

Carrefour Laval's decision is the first major sign of coordinated participation from a large shopping centre.

For many businesses, knowing all neighbouring stores are open is the deciding factor in whether later hours make sense.

The move also reflects the scale and appeal of Carrefour Laval, one of Quebec's highest-traffic malls. Retailers there may see more reliable evening traffic compared to standalone stores or in quieter residential pockets.

Still, some business groups argue that extended weekend hours aren't a universal solution. They note that regions differ widely in shopping patterns, and that weekday evenings already underperform.

Economic pressure is also a concern. Longer



hours mean higher staffing needs but not necessarily higher revenue.

Managers interviewed in earlier reporting have warned that spreading the same number of customers over more hours could dilute sales peaks without generating new ones.

If the pilot eventually expands beyond the three test cities, it could reshape how Quebec regulates retail hours; it's a system shaped decades ago by "blue laws" that once required Sunday closures.

Although those rules loosened over time, Quebec still relatively maintains one of the strictest weekend closing policies in Canada.

The government said at the time that the pilot will help answer a broader question: whether traditional regulated hours still make sense in a province where online shopping is available

around the clock.

Some Laval retailers have already experienced this debate firsthand.

Several shop managers told *The Laval News* that extended hours might simply scatter existing foot traffic rather than generate new customers. Others said they welcomed the flexibility, arguing it better reflects the schedules of modern shoppers.

But all eyes are now on Carrefour Laval as the first major test of the pilot in a high-traffic retail hub.

Its results may offer the clearest indicator of whether Quebec consumers are truly ready for evening weekend shopping — or whether the old 5 p.m. closing time still holds its grip.

The province expects the pilot project to run until fall 2026.

Tax Fraud: Laval man sentenced to eight months in jail and fined \$114,500 for identity theft scheme

NEWSFIRST MULTIMEDIA
info@newsfirst.ca

Revenu Québec has announced that Manuel Georges Vuillaume, a 38-year-old Laval resident, has been sentenced to eight months in prison and ordered to pay fines totaling \$114,500 for committing tax-related offenses. The sentence was handed down on November 21 at the Montreal courthouse.

Vuillaume, the sole administrator of Sadko Inc., pleaded guilty to one count under the Tax Administration Act. He admitted to fraudulently obtaining or attempting to obtain tax refunds and credits to which he was not entitled, amounting to \$90,000 for the 2017 tax year.

The investigation revealed that Vuillaume stole the identities of 28 Canadian taxpayers who were non-residents of Quebec. Using these identities, he fraudulently claimed tax refunds, including credits for childcare expenses and solidarity payments. To carry out the scheme, Vuillaume opened a bank account under Sadko Inc.'s name and deposited Revenu Québec checks totaling \$232,408.95, issued to the 28 victims.

Evidence shows that Vuillaume cashed these fraudulent refunds and deposited them into his company's account, benefiting from at least \$90,000 in false refunds and credits between October 4, 2018, and April 4, 2019.

Revenu Québec emphasized its commitment to fighting economic crime and tax fraud, noting that recovering tax revenues owed to Quebec is a matter of fairness for individuals and businesses that pay their share.

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POLICE

"I'm afraid I'm going to fail my exam!"



Even the most gifted students can fear failure. Do you have an important exam coming up that you want to do well in? Read this guide to help you prepare and increase your chances of success.

Firstly, you must start studying several days in advance. Waiting until the last minute can overload your brain, causing you to forget important information. Set a simple goal, like studying for 20 minutes every evening before supper. You'll see it's much less daunting than cramming for several hours at once. It's also important to find a quiet

place to study without any screens. This will help you concentrate better. Use different techniques to help you remember the material. You can draw symbols or diagrams, highlight your notes in different shades, make a slideshow, read your notes aloud or even write a song.

Also, remember your brain needs rest to perform at its best. The night before your exam, go to bed at your usual time, or even a little earlier if you can. In the morning, eat a healthy breakfast that includes fruits, nuts and whole grains. Once you have your exam paper in front of you, take a deep breath. Be confident and do your best!

If you don't succeed this time, don't worry; it's not the end of the world. To help you prepare better for next time, ask your teacher or parents for help.

2 fun games for your Christmas parties

Are you looking forward to Christmas, eating lots of good food and receiving presents? Are you unsure how to pass the time between meals and discovering what's under the tree? Try one of these fun games with your brothers, sisters or cousins.



1. THE CHRISTMAS ALPHABET

In turn, each person must find a word related to Christmas by following the order of the letters of the alphabet. For example:

- A = advent
- B = baking
- C = carols

If the answers are a bit odd, it makes the game even more fun!

2. THE MISSING CHRISTMAS OBJECT

Place several objects reminiscent of Christmas on a table or the floor.

It could be a Christmas stocking, greeting card, ornament for the tree, garland, or candy cane.

Tell the children to look at all the objects for a minute. Then ask them to turn around and close their eyes.

During this time, remove one object and hide it. Then, tell the children to look at the objects again and try to find which one has disappeared. You can repeat this several times and give little surprises to the winners.

Merry Christmas!

Open your heart: spread kindness during the Christmas holidays!

Giving your time to help others is a truly generous gesture. But did you know that helping others can also be good for you? Doing good deeds makes you feel happy. Plus, your actions can inspire those around you to do the same.

Here are some simple activities you can do during the holidays (or any time!) to spread kindness:

- Shovel the walkway or clear the car of a senior citizen in your area
- Sort through your toys or books and donate the ones you no longer use to charity
- Do chores around the house,

like emptying the dishwasher or sweeping the floor, without

waiting for your parents to ask

- Hand out snacks to people



experiencing homelessness

- Pick up litter in the street or park and throw it away
- Hold the door open for others entering a store
- Help distribute Christmas hampers in your community
- Write greeting cards for people who need some cheer, like those spending Christmas in the hospital

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Wishing you a Merry Christmas and hoping you spread some holiday cheer.

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Canadian physicians say Bill 26 and Bill 2 are undermining healthcare in Canada

OKSANA KISHCHUK

The results below are from Physician Pulse, a joint initiative of Abacus Data and the Canadian Medical Association surveying physicians across the country. The survey was completed by 447 physicians between November 11th-17th 2025.

Physicians are watching closely

Physicians across Canada are paying very close attention to the recent political developments shaping their work. According to our first wave of Physician Pulse, 84% of physicians say they are following government actions that affect the profession such as Alberta's Bill 26 and Quebec's Bill 2 either very or somewhat closely. In provinces at the centre of these debates, attention is nearly universal: 87% of physicians in Alberta and 98% in Quebec report they are following the issue.

This level of attentiveness is striking but not surprising. Physicians sit at the intersection of clinical care and public policy; when govern-

ments shift the rules governing their work, they feel the consequences first. The data makes clear that physicians understand the stakes and they're watching because what happens next will shape how they practice and how Canadians receive care.

They are experiencing, and predict, serious consequences

Beneath this heightened attention lies deep concern. The first wave of Physician Pulse reveals a profession that feels increasingly strained, undervalued, and anxious about what new policies will mean for themselves and their patients.

Almost half of physicians (43%) say they do not feel trusted or respected by their provincial government. For a workforce already dealing with system-level pressures, this trust gap has meaningful consequences for morale, retention, and long-term system sustainability. The picture worsens in the provinces directly affected by the legislation: 76% of Alberta physicians and

84% of Quebec physicians say they do not feel trusted or respected. Among physicians in Quebec- 70% do not feel trusted by governments at all.

Physicians also foresee ripple effects that extend well beyond their own experience. Eight in ten (80%) believe that growing government oversight of medical practice will make it harder to recruit and retain physicians in their province. Recruitment and retention are foundational to access. If the workforce becomes harder to maintain, there are serious reasons to believe patients will feel it too.

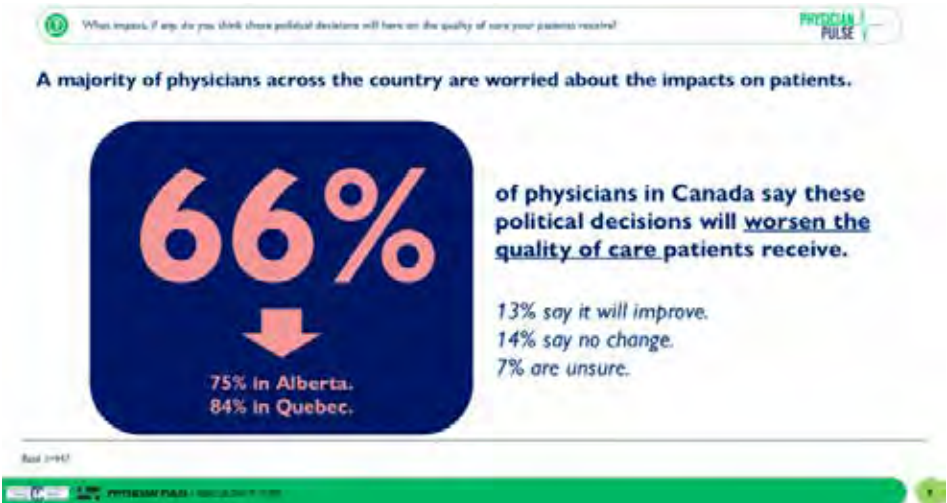
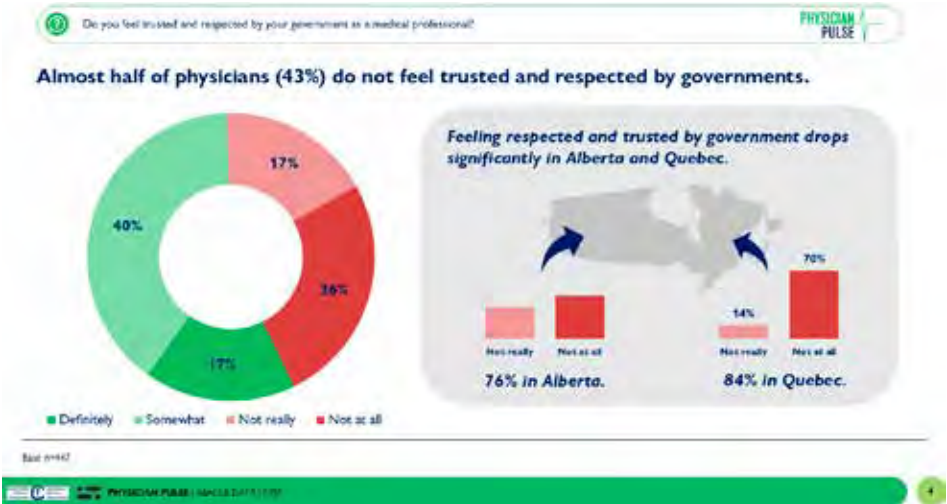
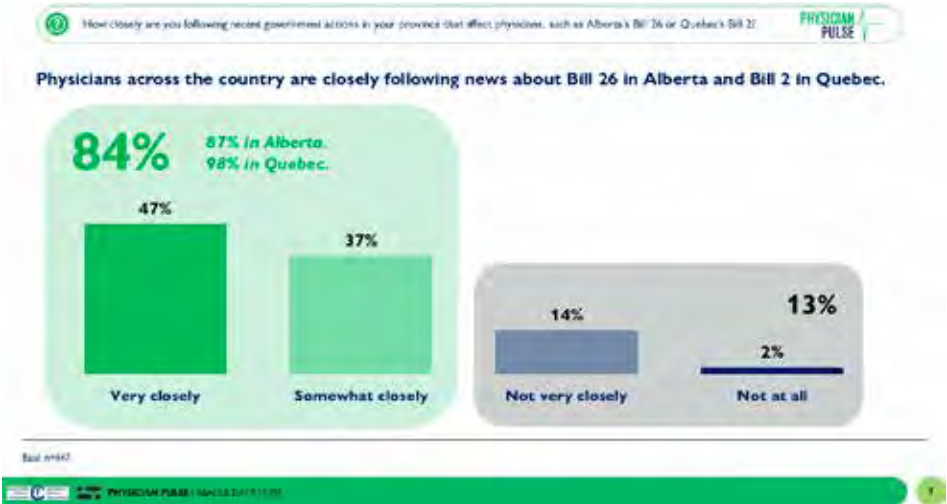
When asked about the direct consequences for care, physicians once again express serious worry. Two-thirds (66%) say these political decisions will worsen the quality-of-care patients receive. Only 13% believe such decisions will improve care. The message is clear: physicians see these changes not as incremental adjustments, but as decisions that could reshape how care is delivered in ways that leave patients worse off.

The issue is especially pressing in provinces directly impacted

While physicians across Canada express concern, the intensity of these views is much stronger in Alberta and Quebec where government decisions are prompting direct and immediate changes to the practice environment.

Physicians in these provinces are more likely to feel disrespected by government, more convinced that recruitment and retention will suffer, and more worried about the future quality of patient care. In both provinces, the numbers consistently show a sharper sense of risk and a deeper urgency for action.

These findings underline a national story with provincial hotspots: physicians everywhere are uneasy, but those working under new developments are signaling alarm. For policymakers, health-system leaders, and the public, these early results from Physician Pulse offer a clear takeaway; what happens in Alberta and Quebec could foreshadow broader challenges elsewhere if the underlying issues aren't addressed.



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Things to do



UPCOMING

Looking for something to do? Here are some upcoming events happening in the Laval area.

<div>SIMON GOUACHE <i>Comedy</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 5 8:00 PM</p><p>Théâtre Marcellin-Champagnat 475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9</p><p>Simon Gouache explores the ideas and themes on his mind in his 4th show.</p><p><i>Regular ticket: \$42.50</i></p></div>	<div>CHRISTMAS MARKET <i>Christmas activities</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 5-7 & 12-14</p><p>Centre de la nature 901 avenue du Parc, H7E 2T7</p><p>Experience the magic of Christmas with more than 50 local artisans offering quality crafts, jewelry, clothing, beauty products, decorations and gourmet treats in the Village des Arts.</p><p><i>Free</i></p></div>	<div>MÉGAN BROUILLARD <i>Comedy</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 13 8:00 PM</p><p>Salle André-Mathieu 475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9</p><p>A show full of self-mockery and hard-hitting observations on everyday life. A refreshingly authentic comedy event not to be missed.</p><p><i>Regular ticket: \$43</i></p></div>	<div>COOKIE DECORATING <i>Christmas activities</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 14 1:30 - 2:30 PM</p><p>Maison André-Benjamin-Papineau 5475 boul. Saint-Martin Ouest, H7T 2X7</p><p>Learn how to create delicious sweets with royal icing, and enjoy a convivial moment to let your creativity run wild with family and friends.</p><p><i>\$10</i></p></div>
<div>DISNEY ON ICE <i>Show</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 18-21 11 AM / 3 PM / 7 PM</p><p>Place Bell 1950 rue Claude-Gagné, H7N 5H9</p><p>Celebrate with hosts Mickey and Minnie as they take the audience on an expedition in Road Trip Adventures.</p><p><i>Visit Ticketmaster for tickets</i></p></div>	<div>NICOLAS NOËL'S MEMORIES <i>Christmas activities</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 19 6:30 PM</p><p>Théâtre Marcellin-Champagnat 475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9</p><p>A family show for the holiday season!</p><p><i>Regular ticket: \$25.10</i></p></div>	<div>CHRISTMAS AT ESPACE MONTMORENCY <i>Christmas activities</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>Until December 21</p><p>Espace Montmorency 600 rue Lucien-Paieement, H7N 0H7</p><p>The magic of the holidays comes to life in the Espace Montmorency courtyard. The perfect opportunity to get into the holiday spirit!</p><p><i>Free</i></p></div>	<div>NOËL, UNE TRADITION EN CHANSON <i>Christmas activities</i></div> <div></div> <div><p>December 22 7:30 PM</p><p>Salle André-Mathieu 475 boul. de l'Avenir, H7N 5H9</p><p>Seven warm voices for the 7th edition to celebrate the festive season in music.</p><p><i>Regular ticket: \$63.50</i></p></div>



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By Martin C. Barry

Police raids in Laval and Montreal seize \$230,000 worth of drugs

A major anti-drug operation carried out by law enforcement in Laval and Montreal has led to significant seizures and arrests, underscoring ongoing efforts to combat narcotics trafficking in the Greater Montreal area.

On November 19, coordinated searches were executed in Laval and in Montreal's Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension borough. The raids resulted in the confiscation of a substantial quantity of illegal substances, with an estimated

street value of nearly \$230,000. Authorities also recovered approximately \$144,500 in Canadian currency, believed to be proceeds from drug sales.

Among the narcotics seized were:

- 6 kilograms of cocaine
- 6,695 grams of crystal methamphetamine
- 25,000 speed pills
- 360 grams of MDMA (ecstasy)

The operation led to the arrest of Karim

Chawki, a 33-year-old suspect apprehended in Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension. Chawki appeared in court the same day and remains in custody facing charges of possession and trafficking of narcotics. A second individual was detained but later released without charges.

The investigation was spearheaded by the Montreal Police Department's Narcotics Project East Investigations Unit, working in close collaboration with several specialized

units of the SPVM (Service de police de la Ville de Montréal) and the Laval police. Police officials emphasized that these raids are part of a broader strategy to dismantle organized drug networks operating in the region.

Authorities are urging anyone with information that could assist in ongoing investigations to contact their local police station or call 911. Community cooperation remains a critical component in curbing drug-related crime.

Metal found in Halloween candy from Champfleury

The Laval Police Dept. recently launched an investigation following the discovery of a metal object inside a Halloween candy given to children on October 31.

On November 25, a resident of Laval's Sainte-Rose neighbourhood contacted 9-1-1 after his daughter found a metal rod inside a gummy candy she had collected while out trick-or-treating nearly a month earlier.

The candy, a red and green strawberry jelly,

was in a partially opened clear wrapper. Part of the candy also appeared to be missing.

According to information provided to the Laval Police, the candy in question can possibly be traced to trick-or-treating which took place in the Champfleury sector, specifically on the following streets: De Chardonneret, Bouvreuril, De la Volière, Des Huards, Des Bécasseaux and Du Passerin.

The Laval Police would like to remind residents

of the importance of carefully inspecting any candy collected on Halloween. They urge anyone who has witnessed or been the victim of a similar incident to call 9-1-1 immediately for a rapid response and investigation.

Anyone with information regarding this type of event is asked to contact the LPD on their Information Line at 450-662-INFO (4636) or by calling 911.

The file number is LVL-251125-049.



Car parts recycler goes up in smoke in Saint-François

A fire broke out last Saturday evening in Laval at a car parts recycling center in Saint-François, destroying the facility's main building. By Sunday morning, the cause of the blaze was still unknown.

A 9-1-1 call was made around 11:47 p.m. on Saturday regarding the fire at Recyclage d'Autos Mondiale, an auto parts outlet on Montée Masson.

A caller explained to 9-1-1 that they saw cars burning, as well as flames, and heard explosions, according to a spokesman for the Laval Fire Dept.

Upon arriving on the scene, firefighters determined there was an imminent risk of the



building's collapse, so they called for backup, triggering a fourth alarm.

Due to burning tires, a massive plume of black smoke was rising from the blaze. The Quebec Ministry of the Environment was called in to ensure that runoff didn't flow into waterways.

Around 6 a.m. Sunday, the plume of smoke was still visible for several kilometers, according to the Laval Firefighters Association.

It wasn't until around 9 a.m. that the fire was considered to be under control. However, several firefighters remained on site to ensure it was completely extinguished.

The building is a total loss, the LFD said, although there were no reported injuries. Fire investigators were scheduled to be on the scene to determine whether the source of the blaze was arson.





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DIRECT ANSWERS

FROM WAYNE & TAMARA

LET HIM LEAD

Q I ended my marriage after 15 years. I've been separated for five years and haven't dated anyone. I really had no interest in dating. In July I met the father of my son's friend. He, too, is separated and has been for four years. In his case his wife ended the marriage. He was devastated. He indicated at one time he could never go through that again. His son lives with him, and since the boys are together all the time, we talk often. We've become good friends and enjoy talking to each other. I'm becoming attracted to him. He has all the qualities I look for. He has a wonderful personality, a sense of humor, and a closeness to his family. He is interesting and kind. I find it hard to decide if he is attracted to me but afraid of getting involved with anyone, or not attracted to me at all. We have not yet gone on a date. He did invite my two boys and me to his camp this summer for the day, and had the boys and I to his camp for Thanksgiving dinner with some of his family. While talking to him the next day, I told him the boys had a great time, and he asked if I had as well. I've invited him to my office Christmas party, which he accepted. It is a large event with dinner and dancing. This will be the first time we will be

out alone. What should I look for to determine his feelings toward me?

Elaine

A Elaine, don't make a problem which doesn't exist. A relationship between the two of you has been slowly building. You understand his fears and concerns. So how do you address that? By letting him lead. If you force the relationship, he will feel threatened. When he senses this is a relationship he wants, he will move forward on his own unless he sees you only as a friend and the parent of his son's friend. Since there is no problem here—you are not dating him—act like a single, available woman. Imagine you are a fisherman. There is a big trout in the water and you'd love to land him, but all you can do is throw your lure out there. You can't make the fish bite, but there are other fish in the stream. Making yourself available will make you less disheartened and desperate about this one fish. The more you try to force your lure on a fish, the greater the chance you will scare it off. Be relaxed, patient, and open to all possible relationships. Not only does that give you the greatest chance for success, it creates a desirable aura around you—the kind of aura which will attract others, including this man, to you.

Wayne & Tamara

APPROACHING STORM

Q After 10 years of marriage is it settling to be with someone who says they love you but aren't in love with you? What if that person thinks being "in love" is a childish fantasy and grownups don't need to be "in love" to have a happy marriage? Is being "in love" really that important?

Kim

A Kim, let us assume the person who says this is your husband. Then the question for him is, how do you keep sailing once you've thrown out the star which guides

you? What is the foundation of your captaincy? Financial security? Personal advantage? Convenience? Circumstances change. Sickness, a business failure, or an ill wind can alter any of the reasons for being together. So can unexpected success. But love holds people together both on calm seas and when things get rough. Without love you have to keep changing why your contract should still be valid. A marriage without love is like sailing in the Bermuda Triangle. At any time one of you might disappear forever.

Wayne & Tamara

WAYNE & TAMARA MITCHELL are the authors of YOUR OTHER HALF (www.yourotherhalf.com)

Send letters to: Direct Answers, PO 964 Springfield, MO 65801-0964

or email: GetInTouch@WayneAndTamara.com

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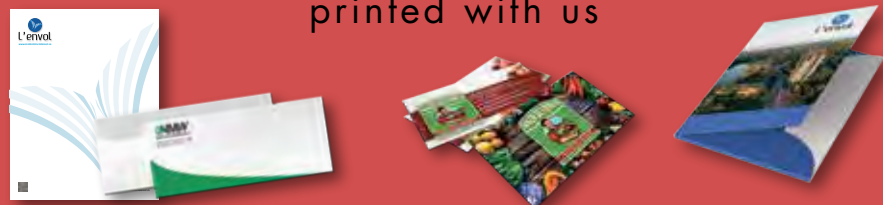
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HOROSCOPE

Week of December 7 to 13, 2025

The luckiest signs this week:
VIRGO, LIBRA AND SCORPIO



ARIES

When your boss goes on holiday, you'll have the chance to step up and replace them. This opportunity will mark a positive turning point in your career. If you feel like you're lacking affection in your relationship, be mindful that love can fade over time.



TAURUS

You may find yourself in the spotlight this week for one reason or another. You'll also have a chance to lend a sympathetic ear to someone in need, which will earn you their heartfelt gratitude.



GEMINI

You'll spend freely to spoil your loved ones, and this generosity will make you feel like a good person. However, you'll need to think carefully before making a decision about a family project.



CANCER

Despite being busy at work, making time for yourself is essential. Don't shy away from moments of relaxation and fun with your loved ones. Accept their invitations to go out and try new things.



LEO

You'll receive a sum of money that will allow you to treat yourself. Whether you want to buy real estate or start a business, you'll finally be able to finance your project.



VIRGO

This week, you'll start sending out invitations for holiday parties. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the many positive responses you receive. If you're an artist, inspiration will strike, allowing you to create something truly unique.



LIBRA

Your artistic potential will blossom. Be sure to jot down your ideas so you don't forget them. This way, you can bring them to life one day instead of letting them fall by the wayside.



SCORPIO

You'll receive numerous invitations to go out, which you'll gladly accept. Although this may sometimes feel overwhelming, remember to take breaks and recharge when you feel the need.



SAGITTARIUS

If you want to celebrate the holidays in a special way, planning ahead is important. Time is running out, but the results will exceed your expectations. In your love life, remember that small acts of kindness can really help your relationship grow strong and go the distance.



CAPRICORN

It's time to step out of your comfort zone and embrace new adventures. The new year will bring opportunities for you to explore fresh perspectives. By signing up for a training course, you will open the door to rewarding opportunities.



AQUARIUS

A particular person or situation will deeply move you this week. The changes you make at work will yield positive outcomes. If you're single, love may unexpectedly come your way, taking you by surprise.



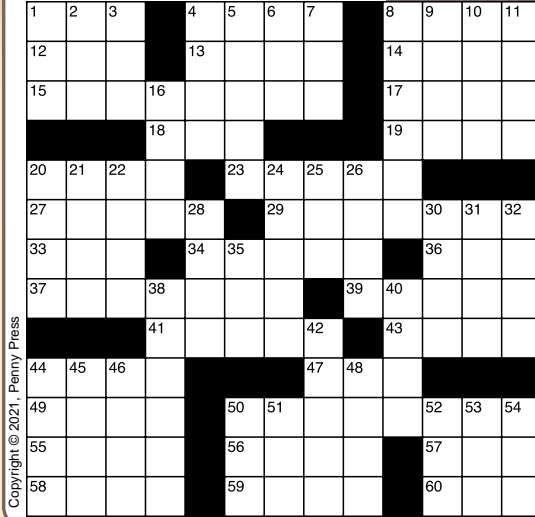
PISCES

Your colleagues will enjoy working with you because you're not afraid to tackle challenges or step up and take initiative in organizing upcoming events. However, family tensions could throw everything out of balance.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 293



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ACROSS

1. Dangerous curve
4. Send a letter
8. Silly
12. Gab
13. Hand-cream ingredi-ent
14. Peer
15. Living
17. Verb's counterpart
18. "____ Me No Ques-tions"
19. Matured
20. Catch
23. Emit
27. Sultan's wives
29. By this time
33. Picnic invader
34. Granny Smith, e.g.
36. Pigeon's cry
37. Lash enhancer
39. Be anxious
41. Amid
43. Audition tape

DOWN

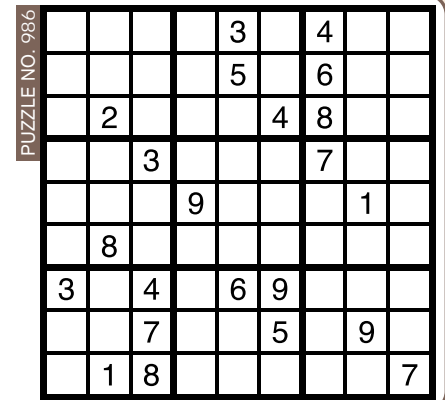
1. Peeper
2. Jazz instrument
3. Use snow runners
4. Gym pads
5. Identical
6. Electrified particle
7. Shake a ____
8. Give away
9. Full of excitement
10. Chimney part
11. See (to)
44. Politician Gingrich
47. Highest card
49. Yoked animals
50. Detoured around
55. Prima donna
56. Marsh plant
57. Building vine
58. Dance part
59. Ifs, ____ or buts
60. Good grade
16. Wise man
20. Counterfeit
21. Mom's mom
22. Martial ____
24. Tokyo's site
25. House extension
26. Ship's men
28. Form of address
30. Land unit
31. College residence
32. Stringed toy: hyph.
35. Authority
38. Brief snooze
40. Works by Keats
42. Stared
44. Dozes
45. Leave
46. "____ Got Tonight"
48. Creeps
50. Bathing-suit top
51. Yearning
52. Bro or sis
53. First female
54. Coloring agent

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.

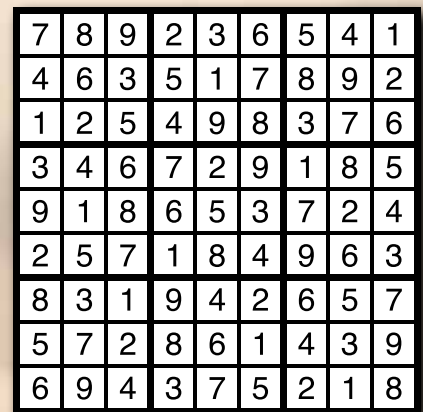


Last Issue's Answers

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Sudoku



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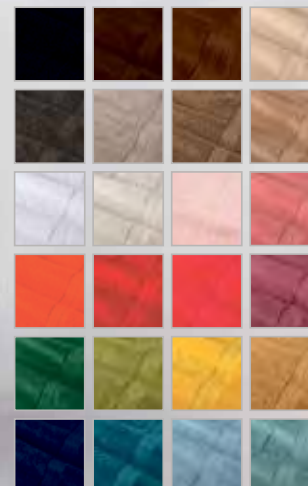
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