

**i** **Health Partners (HP; also known as PWLE):** people involved as partners for their experiential knowledge for the benefit of the healthcare system.

# SUMMARY

## Being an integral component of strategic discussions

The government would gain from incorporating the population that utilizes Quebec's health system into discussions regarding the definition of healthcare and services provided, their implementation, and the metrics employed to assess their effectiveness and promote ongoing quality enhancement. Nevertheless, our consultations and analysis of practices in Quebec indicate that such partnerships are still limited, despite their critical importance.

Particularly given the law's aspirations regarding empowerment—encompassing prevention, self-care, therapeutic education, virtual care, and services—the scientific literature unequivocally demonstrates that health partnerships (HP) are effective.

The population's limited trust in its governmental institutions (Le Quotidien, 2024; Kanji & Tannahill, 2013), as reported in the media (Morin-Martel, 2023), underscores the necessity of establishing effective communication channels between the population and the government. Existing organizations can play a significant role in this endeavor.

*"One of the biggest challenges in implementing partnership is making sure the information reaches everyone, especially since it's just one priority among many at the Quality, Evaluation, Performance, and Ethics Department. A telling example: in most Integrated health care and services center (called CISSSs and CIUSSSs), only two or three staff members are dedicated to partnership—for organizations with over 12,000 employees."*

— Mireille Morin, Patient partner involved in steering committees and transition work toward Santé Québec

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Over fifty individuals from the sectors of health, social services, research, education, and community services contributed to the content of the position statement presented in this summary.

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This document seeks to enhance the discourse surrounding the implementation of the law governing the health and social services system to ensure it genuinely addresses the needs of the individuals involved.

## Towards a collaborative organization fostering cohesive cross-functional practices



Different ministries employ diverse partnership frameworks, which may restrict the optimization of practices and their potential for consistent application across all stakeholders.

## Clarifying roles

Partnership in healthcare operates on multiple fronts (Unité de soutien SSA Québec, 2024); however, a **confusion of roles remains**, particularly in relation to Users' Committees. Whether addressing partnership, co-construction, or advocacy, it is essential to clarify these rich and complementary roles to effectively engage the appropriate individuals in the appropriate contexts.

## An underused potential

The complementarity of experiential, professional, and scientific knowledge among participants is increasingly acknowledged in practice. The law also recognizes its significance. **Nevertheless, the potential of this practice remains only partially exploited.** According to the scientific literature, key success factors include formal recognition, structured support, and reinforcement of the practice — all of which seem to be lacking in Québec.

## Enhance and optimize the impact of Quebec's expertise.

Forces, levers, and initiatives have shaped the distinctive partnership ecosystem in Quebec, an ecosystem acknowledged globally (Pomey et al., 2015 and 2024). Among the principal accomplishments:

- Integration of healthcare partners in:
  - Committee and transition initiatives for Santé Québec
  - Co-Leadership Research Chairs
  - Training of healthcare professionals (clinicians, administrators, etc.)
- Establishment of many *Bureau du partenariat* within CISSSs and CIUSSSs and the integration of peer support into care pathways.
- Establishment of Citizen Tables on Sustainable Health, Aires Ouvertes and Réseaux éclaireurs

## ★ Priority actions

These recommendations are based on an understanding informed by the information available about the structures being deployed at the time of publication

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Entities Areas of involvement	MSSS	Santé Québec	Establishments / organizations	Success factors
<b>1</b> GOUVERNANCE  <b>Integrating partnership into the system</b>	<b>Legitimize health partnership through coherent and strategic means</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen coherence</li> <li>Create a Strategic Committee of Partners in Health</li> <li>Allocate sufficient financial resources to match the expected positive outcomes</li> <li>Promote interministerial coherence</li> </ul>	<b>Structure the implementation process</b> <p>★ <b>Formalize a provincial structure dedicated to the coherent implementation of partnership within the system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign responsibility to an overarching authority</li> <li>Reserve two seats on the Board of Directors for partnership representation</li> </ul>	<b>Support ongoing implementation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Assign co-leadership within teams responsible for partnership</b></li> <li>Establish these collaborations</li> <li>Confirm the foundations of partnership in future service agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legitimacy, clarity, and formal recognition</li> <li>Accountability at the partnership level</li> <li>Support for deployment and implementation</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> CARE AND SERVICES  <b>Meaningfully mobilizing experiential knowledge</b>	<b>Openly recognize value</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support initiatives that foster the sharing and alignment of practices</li> <li>Connect and reinforce existing communities of practice</li> </ul>	<b>Facilitate meaningful Integration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the development of key partnership roles</li> <li>Integrate knowledge into organizational processes</li> <li>Recognize the contribution and complementarity of Users' Committees</li> </ul>	<b>Develop synergy</b> <p>★ <b>Simplify recruitment, onboarding, preparation, and compensation processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage communities of practice</li> <li>Acknowledge and value the status of patient and public partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplification and harmonization of practices and processes</li> <li>Shared understanding</li> <li>Clarity of roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> COMMUNITIES  <b>Making health more accessible and participatory</b>	<b>Focus on sustainable health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-create sustainable health goals and priorities that generate value, and integrate them into the Ministry's dashboard</li> </ul>	<b>Welcoming the population into health Innovation</b> <p>★ <b>Establish patient and public advisory tables within local service networks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and provide appropriate spaces to host them</li> <li>Create opportunities for two-way dialogue between the population and the healthcare system</li> <li>Support the provincial rollout of innovative projects in sustainable health</li> </ul>	<b>Promote embracing the sustainable health concept</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster collaborations between sustainable health stakeholders within local communities</li> <li>Use patient and public partner tables to create opportunities to improve community health</li> <li>Facilitate the creation of an information, support, or navigation corridor within the system, starting at the community level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition of the different forms of partnership and their complementarity</li> <li>Synergy in recruitment and engagement</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> EDUCATION  <b>Fostering a structured approach to shared understanding</b>	<b>Strengthen the foundations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote awareness of partnership in health and build the capacities of stakeholders in the health and social services system</li> <li>Create a centralized point of contact for interested individuals</li> </ul>	<b>Demystify partnership and train stakeholders</b> <p>★ <b>Ensure a shared understanding of partnership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote cultural change and train stakeholders</li> </ul>	<b>Promote knowledge sharing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set aside permanent physical spaces dedicated to discussions about health</li> <li>Co-develop health information that is simple, clear, and accessible</li> <li>Establish a mentorship system</li> <li>Introduce health and partnership concepts as early as possible in academic settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonization of training practices and processes</li> <li>Recognition mechanisms</li> <li>Consistency and cohesion</li> </ul>
<b>5</b> RESEARCH  <b>Using knowledge from partnered research to define and measure quality improvement in healthcare in Québec</b>	<b>Co-develop a provincial strategy for quality evaluation</b> <p>★ <b>Include health partners in strategic planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate research and partnership into quality evaluation and improvement</li> <li>Strengthen the role of the Integrated University Health and Social Services Networks (RUISSSs)</li> </ul>	<b>Integrate research to guide and evaluate health partnerships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a research component in the mandate of the provincial partnership structure</li> <li>Ensure public engagement in the rollout of the Health Information Act</li> <li>Establish partnerships with health research funding agencies</li> </ul>	<b>Strengthen the role of patient and public partners in RUISSS governance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include partners in health on the steering committees of the University Health and Social Services Networks (the RUISSSs)</li> <li>Develop mechanisms to facilitate access to partnership opportunities</li> <li>Demonstrate return on investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginal participation in the definition and evaluation of quality</li> <li>Harmonization of practices and processes</li> <li>Support at the structural level</li> <li>Evaluation of partnership practices that are variable and optional</li> </ul>

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