



March 6, 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Further to the strategic consultation process I led on behalf of the Board of Directors of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), I am pleased to submit my final report "*Voices of Consensus and the Road Ahead*".

This report addresses the objectives that the Board approved in May 2016, notably to define the contribution of the MUHC as an academic health centre (AHC) within the Quebec health network and explore new forms of collaboration with partners while taking into account the reforms brought about by Bill 10 (*An Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies*).

Over the course of my mandate, I consulted broadly, including senior managers, clinical and non-clinical personnel, physicians, patients, as well as representatives of our foundations, corporations, unions and Friends of the MUHC. It was deeply satisfying to see how participants engaged in the process, speaking passionately and liberally about their points of view and what would be in the best interests of patients.

I would also like to note that the Board's work is timely given the ongoing consultation process led by Dr. Arvind Joshi regarding the organization of health and social services offered in the west-end of Montreal. My report reflects a strong consensus within the MUHC and, as such, represents valuable input for Dr. Joshi's information gathering.

#### What Was Heard

Being an academic health centre affiliated with McGill University is a source of enormous pride for our community. For the population we serve it is reassuring to know they can count on the MUHC to receive the complex, specialized and ultra-specialized care that they may require at various stages of their healthcare journey. They are also happy to see themselves in the MUHC, as it reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of Montreal. For our healthcare professionals, the McGill affiliation is the essence of our identity. They are particularly supportive of the McGill model of care with its emphasis on interdisciplinarity, as well as academic training and continued professional development.

McGill University has a pivotal role to play in the MUHC's capacity to reach its full potential, and similarly in the McGill academic health network. Conversely, the McGill academic health network is a magnet for healthcare professionals trained at the renowned university. The MUHC's relationship with the Faculty of Medicine should be strengthened, enhanced and promoted.

Volunteers, foundations and corporations emphasized their strong key community links and desire to support patients and their families through their dedicated efforts and fundraising. They are essential to the MUHC's mission and their role should be recognized and enhanced.

Our focus on the patient truly unites the MUHC community. The fundamental message from all stakeholders is that *putting the patient first* should be the guiding principle governing all of our activities and our decisions. In this spirit the MUHC is being urged to work even more effectively with its network partners and to play a leadership role in terms of quality standards and innovation and the transfer of knowledge across the network.

As we consider the actions necessary to improve the accessibility, continuity and fluidity of patient care, it is clear that we need to focus on building trust with our partners as part of a network where there is genuine respect and recognition of expertise. This will also improve the patient experience and remove existing obstacles to access and navigation through the system.

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## **The Road Ahead**

By the end of the consultation sessions, there was also consensus amongst stakeholders on future steps, which led to the report's conclusion and recommendation. There is no doubt that the MUHC is in the midst of a major transition prompted by the move to the Glen site, budgetary pressures, Bill 10-related changes, ongoing efforts to complete the modernization of each MUHC site and the search for a new president and executive director. Members of the MUHC community are calling for a pause, to have the time and the opportunity to consolidate the changes that are currently being implemented. The debate about the future of the MUHC and the opportunities for alliances has inevitably loomed over our consultations. At no time did we solicit an opinion on these possibilities. Nevertheless, participants wanted to express their point of view. The MUHC community does not at this time support proceeding with a merger, be it with two or three organizations. For their part, patients are not persuaded that a mega-structure is the solution to the issues around access to services, continuity and fluidity of care.

Status quo, however, is not favoured.

Our recommendations are to:

1. Maintain the current governance of the institutions of the west-end of Montreal, as well as their close and respective ties to their community and foundations;
2. Implement a major change in the organization and coordination of the continuum of care, in partnership with patients and their families, by implementing an integrated clinical governance model under the umbrella of a revitalized RUIS.

It is felt that the MUHC along with its partners in the network must have the courage to abolish swiftly the barriers to access and continuity of care. Based on the consultation sessions, an organic change process, driven by our healthcare professionals and our patients and implemented in collaboration with our partners, should be envisaged.

These strategic orientations call for a set of key elements, including:

- That the academic director, the Chair, be the head of the medical department assembling the members of the three organizations and therefore be responsible for the medical workforce and the quality of the act on the whole continuum of care;
- That the chairman of the RUIS Steering Committee (the president and executive director of the AHC) coordinate the development of care and services trajectories, in partnership with patients and their families, drawing on the professional expertise in health and social services present in all three organizations;
- That each organization remains responsible for assuring care and services across the continuum of care;
- That ties with McGill University be tightened and revitalized to integrate academic activities within McGill-affiliated institutions;
- That, in its capacity as the AHC of RUIS McGill, the MUHC be mandated to provide leadership in the implementation of this new model of clinical health governance.

I am pleased to highlight that this innovative model of clinical governance has already proven successful. The evidence is compelling, as it has been shown to improve patient outcomes and the patient experience, as well as to generate system-wide innovation and improvement in care.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to carry out this strategic exercise. It was insightful and, I believe, productive and most beneficial.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Sonberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Melissa Sonberg