

0035

**The role of evaluation to improve a complex network of services:
Fourteen years of experience to share.**

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Development of evaluation capacity is one of the current challenges deemed essential to ensure evaluation development within governments and institutions responsible for implementing programs. It is also considered vital as a means of ensuring continued improvement of services available to public. This presentation will use, as a case study, a Canadian health care services network, namely the Québec trauma care network. In 1992, Québec implemented a province-wide integrated traumatology system that covered the components of pre-hospitalization, hospitalization, rehabilitation and social integration (98 designated institutions).

The presentation will trace the history over the last 14 years of evaluation policies, means, procedures and strategies that have been part of the continuous improvement process which occurred within the network (provincial committees, evaluation cycles by independent audits, regional and local initiatives, website, etc.). It will highlight their contribution to the progressive improvement the evaluation expertise of its various components. The results obtained from actions that have been implemented will be presented in terms of impacts and benefits for the services network, organizations, clinic programs and target clients. The principal factors to success and pitfalls to avoid will also be profiled, along with the challenges and issues encountered during the course of these experiences. The indisputable contribution that the process of building evaluation capacity has made to the accountability process (local, regional, provincial) will be explained. The transferability of lessons that have come forth and that have been learned, to other situations conducted to improve evaluation know-how in complex environments will also be demonstrated.