



### HABS' LINEUP READY TO GO

Waivers are only unknown left **NP8**



**STUDENTS WELCOME**  
Libraries offer study space **A3**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021

SINCE 1776

POSTMEDIA

## NEWS

### HANES

Doctor suicide a reminder of virus's toll on health care **A2**

### NICOLAS

Trumpism isn't just an American thing **A5**

### BROWNSTEIN

Habs a relief from the news madness **A6**

## NP

### WORLD

Democrats file Trump impeachment charge **NP1**



### IVISON

Rollout ready in time for an election? **NP1**

## FP

### ANALYSIS

Lightspeed poised for global growth **A9**

### CANADA

Business outlook turns slightly positive: poll **A9**



\$1.74 plus taxes at retail



The English Montreal School Board showed off its new air purifiers at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School on Monday. The HEPA filter, which the Quebec government believes is not necessary, hangs from the wall in the background while principal Tanya Alvarez takes over a class. **DAVE SIDAWAY**

# HOSPITALS NEAR TRIAGE TIPPING POINT

'We're going to kill people' deciding who gets ventilators: ICU doctor

**MICHELLE LALONDE**

Calling the situation in Montreal's hospitals "really critical," Quebec Premier François Legault again begged Quebecers to avoid indoor gatherings particularly with people over the age of 65, because they are most likely to need hospitalization due to COVID-19 complications.

"The situation is really critical, especially in the greater Montreal region," Legault said at his latest COVID-19 update in Montreal Monday afternoon. "Surgeries are having to be postponed, there is pressure on our emergency wards. I know it's difficult, but Quebecers are capable to work as a team when necessary."

More than half of Quebecers living in long-term care facilities — 21,478 people in total — have now received a first dose of vaccine against the deadly virus. And of the 115,375 doses the province has received so far, 80 per cent have already been administered.

But with 1,436 COVID-positive patients in hospitals across the province, many hospitals are overwhelmed, particularly in the Montreal region. The situation is at the point where hospital staff in Mon-

ter-more likely, possibility that they will soon be forced to choose who lives and who dies in their intensive care facilities.

"It is really scary and people don't realize how close we are to that very scary part," Dr. François Marquis, chief of Critical Care Medicine at Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital, told the Montreal Gazette Monday.

"We are going to kill people, because this is what the triage does. You kill people. One is okay and the other one will die. Everyone thinks there is a way out or a way around that process. There is none. You are a number. If they start the triage, what I have to do is I have to give a score to each and every patient in the ICU. Based on that score, some patients will die. We will remove the tube. We will kill them. This is what we are asked to do (in that scenario). That system doesn't care about your beliefs or your religion or personal choice, nobody cares. It is a systematic application of a grid, and it's not only for patients with COVID."

He said it is not only a question of not providing life-saving treatment but actually removing someone from a respirator who will die,

## Schools spreading COVID-19, new study concludes

May undermine lockdown, curfews

**JESSE FEITH**

While Quebec Premier François Legault described reopening schools Monday as a calculated risk, a new study suggests schools have been a driving factor behind the spread of COVID-19 in Montreal.

To be released Tuesday, the study concludes elementary schools reopening despite the recent surge in cases will likely undermine any possible benefits from the partial lockdown in effect.

The study looked at infections in the city between September and early January. Researchers found cases first increased among 10- to 19-year-olds before later increasing among adults aged between 30 and 49.

For Simona Bignami, a demographer and professor at the Université de Montréal involved in the study, the results show that cases among children weren't the result of community transmission, as government officials have suggested, but it was rather the other way around.

In other words, the study found it's children who passed the virus onto adults when schools reopened in the fall, feeding the alarming spread seen in Montre-

## SPORTS



### COWAN

Price's new mask design melds man and machine **NP8**

## YOU



### COLUMN

Energetic octogenarians

metropolitan area  
\$2.61 Quebec City region

Montreal are now doing online training for the "advanced triage protocol" to prepare for the horrific, and ev-

because another patient needs the bed.  
SEE HOSPITALS ON A4

al during the pandemic's second wave.  
SEE SCHOOLS ON A4

are making headlines **NPS**



DIMITRI  
EPIIDES  
1939-2021

## FNC co-founder saw film differently

T'CHA DUNLEVY

Festival du nouveau cinéma co-founder Dimitri Epiides died Jan. 6, at the age of 82. The lifelong cinephile and internationally known film programmer, who had not lived in Montreal for over three decades, was a soft-spoken man known as a passionate defender of film as art. He died in his hometown of Athens, Greece, following a long illness.

Epiides opened Montreal's Underground Film Centre (later known as Cinéma Parallèle) with Dimitri Spentzos, on St-Laurent Blvd., in 1967. The two parted ways a year later, and Epiides was joined by a gregarious young film buff named Claude Chamberlain.

Epiides and Chamberlain took over the Underground Film Centre, and in 1969 sought and got the support of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, during their Bed-In at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

In 1971, Epiides and Chamberlain launched the Festival international du cinéma en



Dimitri Epiides

16mm, renamed the Festival du nouveau cinéma in 1980. It became Montreal's auteur film festival par excellence, attracting rising stars including Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog, Agnieszka Holland, Frederick Wiseman, Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee, Peter Greenaway and Chantal Akerman.

Along the way, Epiides taught film history at Loyola College and McGill University.

He left Montreal and the Festival du nouveau cinéma, in 1988, to become a programmer for Toronto's Festival of Festivals (now TIFF).

At the time, program director Piers Handling (who in 2018 retired as TIFF CEO and executive director) praised his commitment to bringing new, independent cinema to North America.

Epiides worked out of Athens, and specialized in film fare from Eastern Europe, Western and Central Asia, and Greece. He remained at TIFF until 2018. He stayed on as co-director of the FNC until 1994, when a change of festival dates led to a standoff between him and Chamberlain. He returned to the event a decade later, as a programmer.

"I learned everything from him, how to see cinema differently," Chamberlain told the Montreal Gazette, in 2015.

Epiides kept busy in Greece, serving as artistic director of the New Horizons section at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, and founding the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival.

He also served as program director at the Roxykiosk Film Festival, and served on juries at international festivals including San Sebastian, Istanbul, Tehran, Moscow, Seoul, Karlovy Vary, Amsterdam and Bilbao.

Handling, in a statement, praised Epiides as "a pure, gentle soul and one of the most committed programmers and cinephiles I have ever known... It was through him that I met (filmmakers) Béla Tarr, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Theo Angelopoulos, Cristian Mungiu, Abbas Kiarostami and Goran Paskaljevic, just to name a few of the modern icons of cinema."

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Tanya Alvarez, principal at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School in Rosemont, and EMSB chairman Joe Ortona stand in front of a newly installed air purifier at the school on Monday. The school is one of 30 buildings the board is in the process of equipping with the devices. DAVE SIDAWAY

## Shortage of nurses, RTs has ICUs in crisis mode

HOSPITALS FROM A1

The prospect of this scenario has ICU doctors across the Montreal region begging the government to do everything possible to avoid this scenario.

"You could be on a ventilator that you need to survive and I will be asked to remove the ventilator. By withdrawing support you already have, it's not just that I am not giving you access to a life-saving device. You are on the device and I am removing that device. So I don't think it's overly dramatic when I say that they are going to ask (doctors and nurses) to kill someone, because they know that without that machine the patient will die in the next minutes."



François Legault

"advanced triage scenario" that everyone wants to avoid.

Moving ICU patients, especially those who may need intubation, is very risky, he noted, especially if they have to be moved long distances, which is happening now in many regions of the province. His hospital has been transferring ICU patients almost daily, but mainly to the larger Montreal hospitals, the CHUM, the MUHC and the Jewish General.

At the government's news conference yesterday, the assistant deputy minister of health and social services, Dr. Lucie Opatry, confirmed that a lack of staff is bringing Montreal ICUs to the brink.

"The issue of a lack of staff is huge — it is the underpinning, crucial matter," Dr. Opatry, who is responsible for medical, nursing and pharmaceutical issues.

She said the province has substantially fewer staffed ICU beds available for many reasons. Many nurses can't work because they are sick or immuno-compromised, she said, while many others have been deployed to CHSLDs or testing centres. She acknowledged that placement agencies have also sapped staff from hospitals.

"The huge amount of absenteeism for different reasons... is really the critical reason why we are lacking personnel in the hospitals," she said.

Asked whether he is considering a more severe lockdown, due to the critical situation in hospitals, Legault said he believes current measures, including the new 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew, will keep people from infecting the vulnerable.

"We have to concentrate on people who are 65 years old or more, since they represent 80 per cent of those in hospital with COVID and 95 per cent of deaths," he said. "Most of those don't work and are not at school. They are at home. So our challenge is really to have fewer gatherings in homes in Quebec, especially (involving) people who are over 65 years old... I don't think if we close more companies or close more schools we will solve this crisis. That would be an efficient way to postpone the dreaded

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## Premier says he stands by his 'calculated risk'

SCHOOLS FROM A1

Bignami said she fears a similar result now, at a time when Quebec's health network can't afford another surge in cases.

"The objective right now should be to flatten the curve," Bignami said. "Yet opening schools will strongly limit, if not outright cancel, the benefits the other measures in effect could have."

Quebec implemented a province-wide curfew Saturday following a partial lockdown over the holidays, but decided to reopen elementary schools to students as of Monday. High schools will follow next week.

During a news conference Monday, Legault said he heard some experts questioning the province's decision to reopen schools so soon.

But Legault said he stands by his "calculated risk." "I understand very well that there's a risk with bringing children back into schools, but there are other disadvantages to keeping them at home. Social disadvantages, learning disadvantages," Legault said.

"It's part of my job to make decisions," the premier added, "and I think there are more disadvantages than advantages to keeping children at home."

Bignami said she understands school attendance is fundamental to children's development and mental health, but warned the province is reaching a breaking point and should be looking at every possible way of reducing cases.

The study was based on data from Montreal's public health department and information collected by Covid19colesquebec.org, a volunteer website that has been tracking school outbreaks since the fall.

Researchers needed to rely on the website, the study says, because Quebec only releases a list of schools with outbreaks but doesn't detail the number of cases in each school.

Beyond the link between school-age children and community transmission, the study also found the city's boroughs with the most reported cases among children are located in areas with the highest number of schools reporting outbreaks.

In its conclusion, the study calls on the province to make distance learning an option for all parents who want it, saying the goal should be keeping as few students in classrooms as possible.

It also calls for better ventilation systems in all schools, an issue that's been at the heart of the school debate since the beginning of the pandemic.

Last week, Quebec's public health department said it doesn't recommend installing air purifiers in classrooms.

The department said there's no proof the devices limit the transmission of aerosols that contain the virus, and having them can lead to a false sense of security.

But some school boards have already gone ahead with the measure. Monday morning, the English Montreal School Board held a news conference at Pierre Elliott Trudeau Elementary School in Rosemont, where the board had 26 air purifiers installed over the holiday period.

The school is one of 30 buildings the board is in the process of equipping with the devices. DAVE SIDAWAY

"We obviously maintain that air purifiers do help in reducing the spread of COVID-19," EMSB chair Joe Ortona said.

The board has purchased more than 800 air purifiers. Buying and installing them has cost \$1.75 million. Despite the government's stance, Ortona said it's money he still feels the province should reimburse.

"We're going to continue to fight and demand that the government should be paying for it," Ortona said. "This is a safety and security measure and we've taken all the measures necessary."

Monday's return to class came with added measures for elementary schools, mainly that masks are mandatory for students in grades 5 and 6.

Those in grades 1 to 4 must wear masks while moving within the school, in common areas and on school buses, but not in the classroom.

As of last Friday, the province was reporting 835 active COVID-19 cases between 471 private and public schools, including 663 students.

From when schools reopened in September until the holiday break, there were 21,410 confirmed cases across the network.

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## You can walk your dog on a leash after curfew, but not your partner

A woman in Sherbrooke who was stopped after curfew with her partner on a leash told officers she was walking her pet.

The couple were spotted by Sherbrooke police at 9 p.m. on Saturday, one hour after Quebec's provincewide 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew had come into effect.

Advised that they were breaking regulations, the couple "did not collaborate at all," police spokesperson Isabelle Gendron said.

"One of them had the other on a leash, and she said she was taking her dog, pointing to her partner, out on a walk, as allowed under the exceptions provided by Quebec's

premier under its curfew law." The woman is 24 years old, her partner 40.

Quebec's curfew regulations allow dog owners to take their canine companions out after 8 p.m. as long as they stay within a kilometre of their homes. The couple said it would be a "pleasure" to receive

the fines and "it would not stop them from breaking the rules in the future and they would see how many tickets they could get," Gendron said.

The couple were given fines of \$1,546 each, and additional tickets of \$100 and \$50 for breaking municipal regulations.