

June 3rd, 2022



There are among us exceptional clinicians who quietly commit to extremely challenging roles, sometimes for decades, with little recognition or support, providing essential services in very difficult areas. One such physician is **Dr. Aurore Côté**. In addition to her busy pediatric respirology practice, Dr. Côté has committed significant effort to the Jeremy Rill Centre. Dr. Côté has been with the centre since 1987, and has been the director for the past 21 years. The Jeremy Rill Centre, established by the Ministry of Health in 1986, is dedicated to sudden deaths of infants and children less than 2 years of age. These sudden deaths are relatively rare events ($\approx 1/1000$ live births) and there was an identified need to concentrate the expertise in one provincial centre; the Montreal Children's Hospital was selected to provide this expertise. The work of the centre includes coordinating specialized investigations to find the cause of death and avoid further deaths in the families, coordinating services to families, organizing and providing training to professionals involved with the sudden death of infants or young children, and organizing monthly multi-disciplinary case discussions with all pathologists (MCH, CHU-Ste-Justine, ISJML) and coroners in charge of cases. In addition, centre staff work with the MSSS, INSPQ, Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada, and The Canadian Paediatric Society to develop policies and recommendations to decrease mortality in infants and young children.

As director of the Centre, Dr. Côté personally reviews all cases of sudden death referred by the centralized service at the Coroner's office or by pathologists, contacts the physician of the families to organize the initial investigations, discusses the autopsy report with pathologists and coroners, and organizes specialized investigation when needed. She also personally meets all affected families to review autopsy results and refer for support services.

In the past 5 years, the Center has been referred 50-70 cases per year, of which about 30-50 undergo full review. This is challenging work. Calling bereaved parents may be among the most difficult things any of us ever has to do, and Dr. Côté has done this hundreds of times. The devotion of Dr. Côté to this very challenging role is inspiring. Please join me in thanking Dr. Côté for her exceptional dedication to this very difficult job and in maintaining the operations of this critical service over such a long period.

Have a great weekend.

Beth Foster, MD, MSCE, FRCPC
Professor of Pediatrics
Chair, Dept. of Pediatrics McGill University
Pediatrician-in-Chief, Montreal Children's Hospital of the MUHC
Harvey Guyda Chair in Pediatrics