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HEALTHCARE HIGHWAYS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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This abstract serves to introduce a 10 minute video in which I will discuss issues pertaining to the structure of the healthcare system in Quebec. At the same time I will review the concept of community within and around that system. The relationship and interplay between the two will be explored in the hope that the viewer might find resonance and meaning, and perhaps a springboard to further reflection and conversation. Many perceive a need for change in both the organizational systems as well as in the existing cultures within healthcare institutions, both in and outside of Quebec. Yet we often feel powerless to act. I will touch upon ideas on how we can make a difference using our individual influence to bring about the changes we seek.

The concepts under discussion are abstract. In the hope of creating a greater degree of tangibility, I will offer a metaphor – namely the long-term detrimental effects brought about by the disruption, and in many cases destruction, of vibrant North American communities, caused by the building of highways straight through their hearts. I will suggest that though there may have been benefits to the society as a whole arising from the building of those highways, the adverse effects extended well beyond the individual communities involved. With this metaphor in mind, I will present the argument that the current structure of healthcare in Quebec, brought into effect in 2015, has resulted in over-bureaucratization and “decommunitization”, with a consequent diminution in the presence and role of culture, ultimately

representing a loss for the community at large. Unintended deleterious societal effects arising from social system restructuring, are a phenomenon not unique to healthcare, nor to Quebec. It may take years for these consequences to become manifest, by which time they may prove difficult to reverse. ■