

Community of Practice for Bilingual Professionals Regional Outreach Tour

Final Report

April 2023

SUMMARY

Priorities and recommendations for action suggested during the Outreach Tour to increase French-language health services in Southwestern Ontario.

Regional Outreach Tour of the Community of Practice for Bilingual Professionals



Fier bénéficiaire de l'appui du gouvernement
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Proud recipient of support from the Government
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EXCELLENCE
TRANSPARENCE
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COLLABORATION

Entité
ÉRIÉ ST-CLAIR/SUD-OUEST

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The “Community of Practice for Bilingual Professionals Regional Outreach Tour” project was headed by Entité 1 during the period from November 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. The tour hosted five meetings and workshops with health partners in the cities of London, Windsor, and Sarnia. A regional plenary day in Chatham brought together 50 bilingual health service providers, partners, and professionals from the greater Southwest region to discuss the active offer of health services in French.



MISSION

Raise awareness among, and support, bilingual health service providers, partners, and professionals on the importance of actively offering health services in French

OBJECTIVES

- Promote networking among bilingual professionals
- Welcome new bilingual professionals to the community
- Discuss health issues with partners as well as issues related to French-language services and raise awareness about the active offer of French-language services





FINDINGS

Main issues and needs identified

The main issue discussed in this project was the expansion of French-language health services in Southwestern Ontario. Sub-themes included language barriers, lack of data, precarity of bilingual professionals, scarcity of French-language services, lack of awareness of existing services, problems with referrals between services offered, the designation process for organizations, and the clarification of partner roles. The priorities and actions reported are based on these issues and needs.

The report's 52 findings stem from the following five sources:

1. Surveys and feedback from participants at the five outreach tour meetings and workshops in the cities of London, Windsor, and Sarnia.
2. The current state of play and potential courses of action the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) put forward in the presentation by Fabien Hébert, President.
3. The resources the French Language Services Unit of the Office of the Ombudsman recommended in the presentation by Carl Bouchard, Interim French Language Services Commissioner.
4. The opportunities and priorities suggested by the five panelists during the plenary day (Anne-Élisabeth Noppens, Geneviève Laferrière, Jill Best, Marthe Dumont, Paul Lachance).
5. The wishes and priority actions that participants identified during the plenary day working session.

PRIORITIES

3 priority sectors identified

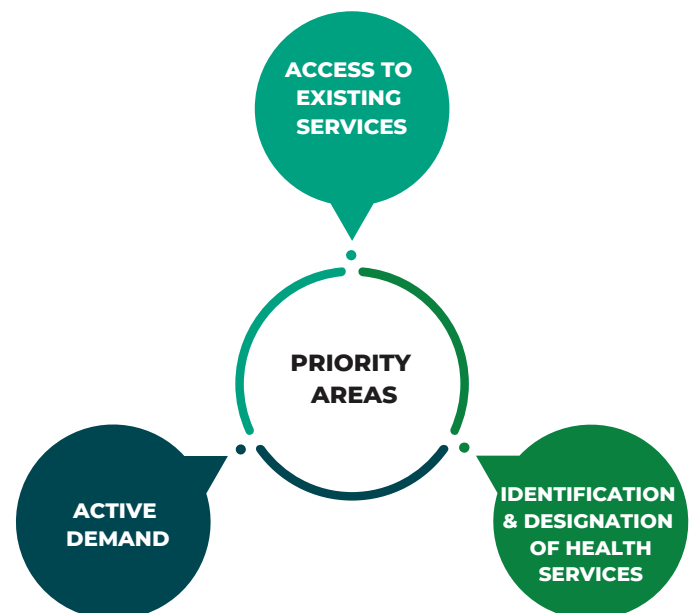
Participants at the various outreach tour meetings agree that primary health care, mental health services, home care, and long-term care are the priority areas where significant efforts must be undertaken to increase the availability of French-language services over the next five years.



3 priority areas

Strategic actions must be set in motion simultaneously in three areas to increase French-language services.

- Support the promotion and use of, and access to, existing French-language services
- Encourage and support the identification and designation of French-language services
- Promote requests for French-language services within the Francophone community



COMMUNITY PLAN

French Language Health Services Improvement Plan

Three times during the workshops, the expert panel, and the working session, participants mentioned the importance of developing a community strategic plan to improve French-language services in the region. This plan, in the form of a program or project, should include clear short-, medium-, and long-term deadlines with measurable results.

"We have identified priorities and actions that will help us with our 2023-2024 planning"

Plenary Day Participant
Evaluation Survey

French Language Health Services Improvement Plan



POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS



Increase access to existing services

Bilingual professionals often have to build their own contact and referral network to meet the needs of their clientele. They've indicated they would like to have access to a directory or registry of French-language services in the region and a navigation system to ensure a continuum of care and services in French. They also expressed an interest in having more networking opportunities with other professionals to share best practices. Finally, participants want to see more promotion of French-language services to the Francophone population to increase demand for and use of services.

- Directory or registry of French-language services in the region
- Navigation system for a continuum of care services
- More opportunities to share best practices
- More promotion of French-language services to the population



Encourage and support the identification and designation of French-language services providers

Several participants mentioned the need to increase cultural and linguistic awareness among healthcare providers in order for more organizations to understand the importance of offering services in French. They also consider it essential to provide support and guidance to organizations regarding their designation process, as the process is complex. It should be noted that at the provincial level, the AFO is calling for the establishment of clearer processes and policies regarding French-language services, for a well-defined role for partners, for incentives for service providers to undertake the designation process and complete it within three years, and for an accountability process related to French-language services.

- Increase cultural and linguistic awareness
- Support organizations during their designation process

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

During the plenary day, the model of the Accès franco-santé hub in London came up several times as an effective practice to gather information on and to replicate in the Windsor-Essex, Sarnia, and Chatham regions, in order to create guidelines for future Francophone community health centres in the Southwest.



Promoting the request of French-language services

While the focus during the outreach tour was on the active offer of French-language services, participants during the plenary also noted the importance of raising awareness within the Francophone community to promote the active request for, and use of, French-language services. As a panelist mentioned, members of the public must express their need for French-language services and have access to a simple and easy complaint process in the event of a lack of services. This echoes the message of Carl Bouchard, Interim French Language Services Commissioner, who encourages Francophones to use their Compass tool as a guide to assess their satisfaction with French-language services and to contact the French Language Services Unit to share their experience.

- Raise awareness within the Francophone community to promote the active request for, and use of, French-language services
- Promote and use a simple and easy complaint process in the event of a lack of services

*"If we work together, we can get health services in
French in the Southwestern Ontario region"*

Paul Lachance, panelist
President of Entité 1

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Increasing human resources capacity by recruiting and retaining bilingual professionals is absolutely essential to support access to existing services in French and to add new ones. Four participants mentioned three priorities for action that should be implemented.



Supporting the integration of professionals trained outside Canada

Participants mentioned the importance of recognizing the skills of internationally educated health professionals and streamlining their integration process. These health professionals have an invaluable wealth of knowledge and can help better meet the health needs of Southwestern Ontario's diverse population. For this reason, participants indicated they would like to see bridging programs to facilitate integrating and onboarding new professionals into the regional health system.



Promoting health careers in French

Participants emphasized the need to continue encouraging young people to live and work in French to preserve the gains made by the French-language community. In addition, better access to French-language health programs in the region would be an important asset. Finally, participants would like inclusion and health equity to be taught in health training programs to raise awareness of future professionals.



Retaining professionals in the region

Panelists mentioned the importance of developing workforce strategies that incorporate the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The adoption of collaborative regional or sector-specific approaches that value bilingual human resources and reduce the mental load on professionals, to prevent them from becoming exhausted and leaving the health sector or the Francophone community, is also essential.

ALIGNING OUR EFFORTS

Discussions with professionals and partners during the Regional Tour, as well as presentations by the AFO and the French Language Services Unit of the Ombudsman's office, demonstrated that all stakeholders had an interest in French-language services and a collective desire to increase the supply of and demand for services in the future. Each person has a role to play in achieving this goal.



Supporting the work of provincial partners

The evaluation survey for the plenary day shows that participants greatly appreciated hearing Mr. Fabien Hébert, President of the AFO (Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario), discuss the progress achieved in French-language health services in Ontario, as well as Mr. Carl Bouchard, Interim French Language Services Commissioner, present the services offered by the French Language Services Unit at the Ombudsman's office and outline how his team can help support Francophones in the region. Aligning the efforts of provincial and regional partners is certainly crucial to improving French-language services in Southwestern Ontario.

"This day made me realize that we have a lot of work to do, but that we can pool our resources to get there"

Plenary Day Participant
Evaluation Survey



RESOURCES

“Retour sur la Tournée de sensibilisation régionale” video (“A look back at the Regional Outreach Tour”) and presentations and photos of the regional plenary

- French www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/28/Formations/
- English www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/36/Training/

Toolbox

List of resources, training opportunities and practical tools to assist you in your work, available in English and French

- French www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/29/Bote_outils/
- English www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/37/Toolbox/

Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO), the uniting organization and the political voice of Ontario's French-language community

- www.monassemblee.ca

Ontario Ombudsman's French Language Services Unit

- <https://www.ombudsman.on.ca/what-we-do/topics/french-language-services>

THANKS

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Santé Ontario
Ouest



Réseau franco-santé
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Carl Bouchard, Commissaire au
services en français par intérim

Carl Bouchard, Interim French
Language Services
Commissioner

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