

Francophone engagement in our OHT-ESO

Background

The preamble to the Population Health Care Act, 2019 recognizes "that the public health care system should reflect the diversity of Ontario's communities and meet the requirements of the French Language Services Act with respect to the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of health care services for the French-speaking community of Ontario.

A critical component of the implementation of the 2019 Act and the transformation of Ontario's health system is the creation of Ontario Health Teams. Our OHT-ESO is in a FLS designated area with an estimated 20% of our OHT-ESO's attributed population identified as Francophone.

We are well positioned to meet the needs of Francophones. See attached update of the status of our partners' French Language Services (FLS) designation: 15 are designated agencies, 5 are identified agencies and 35 are non-identified agencies. In addition, we have partners in the social services sector that do not follow a designation process but are either francophone or bilingual agencies.

In our application, we confirmed our commitment to ensure quality planning and delivery of services with and for the Francophone community in all its diversity. Their unique needs will be considered in every aspect of care planning and redesign. We acknowledged that this would require Francophones to be represented in all capacities of the team's work, including its leadership. That said, all leaders will assume collective responsibility for working effectively with and on behalf of Francophones.

To ensure Francophones have access to appropriate care and support, during the care planning and redesign process, we explained that our OHT-ESO would:

- Proactively identify Francophone clients
- Ensure culturally appropriate service delivery, taking into account the diversity of the Francophone community, including new immigrants whose official language is French
- Work with the principle of active offer of service
- Establish a clear trajectory to serve Francophones across the continuum of health and social services, including transitions from youth to adult services, ensuring navigation services are offered/available in French
- Address inequities affecting the Francophone population
- Align with other OHTs to establish common practices for working with Francophones
- Evaluate performance metrics specific to Francophones (e.g. satisfaction, wait times)

Proposal (the how):

As we move forward with our OHT-ESO, I would like to propose the following on how best to be inclusive of the francophone community in our OHT-ESO process at this time. This could change over time, depending on resources. As I previously discussed, we are not interested in creating a separate francophone table. We are interested in being part of the conversations as they are unfolding.

Practical recommendations for implementation

Public materials: As per our commitments, all materials should be translated in both official languages in a timely manner.

Working documents: Only final documents to be translated to French as they are public.

Action Teams: While the working language of all our groups and committees will be in English, participants should be able to express themselves in either official language. In order to make this effective, a facilitator, chair or member of the team can be identified to translate the question for the group. All participants will need to have the capacity to review materials in English. Each action team should ensure francophone engagement in their work.

Identify a Francophone trajectory: In the action teams, ensure that we identify a trajectory for Francophone clients, including French-language navigation and coordination of desired services. Client choice must always be of fundamental importance.

Proactive active offer of service: When the work unfolds, in order to identify francophone clients, it is important to proactively ask in which language clients are most comfortable receiving their services. This free online training on Active Offer of French Language Health Services in both English and French is a useful recommended tool: <http://www.reseaudumieuxetre.ca/pour-les-fournisseurs/formations-et-ateliers/formation-interactive-en-ligne-sur-loffre-active-des-services-de-sante-en-francais/>

Diverse francophone population: We need to aim for a diverse representation from the francophone community, particularly in terms of age, race, income, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation, as they will bring diverse realities in how they access the healthcare system, particularly in the transitions.

Include Francophones in digital health strategies: We need to ensure that our digital tools, software and resources are bilingual, especially those that are patient-facing (e.g., portals) and include this in certification criteria if new tools are explored.

Ensure that services are accountable to Francophones using performance measures: Use accountability measures to ensure that our OHT-ESO is accountable to Francophone populations. Ensure that French language performance indicators are included in the planning, implementation and development of our OHT partnerships.

Outreach to francophones: The outreach component is key to our work with Francophones. Beyond our FLS designated and identified partners, one key resource is the Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario's (RSSFEO). Practically, we can access their weekly email newsletter that is sent to all its membership – both organizations and individuals. Any document/poster that we send in both official languages can be sent to: Marianne St-Jacques info@rssfe.on.ca 613 747-7431, poste 204 www.rssfe.on.ca In addition, we can reach out to our FLS partners in our OHT-ESO.

Key resource to support our OHT-ESO: The RSSFE has provided their contact person who can be consulted by our OHT-ESO action groups, including our client partner table, when they need advice to inform their work regarding French language services. The contact person is David Scullion who can be reached via this email address: dscullion@rssfe.on.ca