



MEMO

To: Northeastern Ontario Health Teams Working on Full Application, In Development, In Discovery

From: Monique Rocheleau, Associate Executive Director, Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario (Réseau)
Cynthia Stables, Senior Director, North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN)

Re: **Consideration of French Language Health Services and Ensuring Northeastern Ontario Francophones' Access to Health Care Services in French as part of OHTs**

French language services (FLS) is a key component of health equity and the provision of quality care. It is also a key pillar within a health care system that is effective, efficient, safe and patient-centered.

This memo, and accompanying document, has been put together to assist health service providers across Northeastern Ontario who are working on an Ontario Health Team submission. It outlines how to incorporate the Francophone lens throughout the application process and ensure Francophones have equitable opportunities for health care.

To date, the NE LHIN and the Réseau worked collaboratively to enhance coordinated care, improve the patient experience, increase access to services in French, reduce inequities, and strengthen the sustainability of French Language Health Services (FLHS) across Northeastern Ontario. The North West and North East LHINs worked in collaboration with the Réseau to create a [French language services toolkit](#) (click to access) for health service providers to help with planning for services in French.

The Réseau, developed an online, six-module Active Offer (AO) training program. It takes less than five hours to complete, is easy, and following completion, participants receive a certificate. The modules allow for flexible sessions of 45 minutes at a time throughout a period of several weeks. To access the training, click [here](#).

Active Offer means to offer, in a proactive way, at the first point of contact with a patient, service in the patient's official language of choice. More specifically, it means that patients are enabled to express themselves and to be serviced in the language they feel most comfortable – whether English or French.

There are several other ways to consider your team's commitment to meeting the health care needs of the nearly ¼ of Northeastern Ontario population (23%) who identify French as their language of choice. For example, how do you identify Francophone clients to ensure FLS throughout the continuum of care?

As you work through the OHT submission process, please remember:

- OHTs will be accountable for the implementation of FLHS within their geography;
- OHTs will be responsible for providing health care services that meet the needs of their communities, including Francophones;
- OHTs are expected to recognize the value of FLHS and its contribution to achieving a person-centred system of care for the Francophone portion of the population;
- The integration of FLHS principles throughout all OHTs initiatives will help improve access to services in French across the province.

We hope you will find the attached document useful in your efforts to become an Ontario Health Team. Please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance in any way.