

French Language Services Guidelines for Ontario Health Teams Applications

The following information can also serve as a guide for the OHT for the implementing and operating process.

The OHT is committed to comply with the *French Language Services Act* by ensuring provisions in French to their catchment area. The needs of the Francophone populations will be met by ensuring the following:

- Prioritize FLS services where gaps are identified;
- Implement and/or improve the active offer of FLS, meaning services that are clearly communicated, visible, available at all times, easily accessible and equivalent to the quality of services offered in English;
- Develop and work toward an OHT FLS HR recruitment strategy;
- Address issues specific to Francophone patients in service planning, design, delivery and evaluation by working in collaboration with the FLS Planning Entity;
- Collaborate with the FLS Planning Entity, develop policies, bylaws and requirements related to FLS, as outlined in the FLS annual reports submitted through the OZi portal;
- Ensure information intended for patients and the general public is actively offered in French;
- Ensure Francophone patients receive information on services available in French;
- Ensure access to virtual care, interpretation services or provision of French services by another HSP when services are not available in French by OHT members;
- Adoption of the linguistic variable to identify Francophone patients.

To assist OHTs with the application of the Francophone component when completing the OHT application, the French Language Health Planning Entities prepared the following document outlining how to incorporate the Francophone lens in the applicable sections of the application. We recognize there is limited space to include all the information that is shared in this document, which is why it is important to include an overarching statement on cultural awareness, safety and sensitivity in the OHT application.

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Section 1.3 - Are there specific equity considerations within your population?

It is important to note in the application, the challenge regarding the lack of data on health outcomes and status for Francophones. Taking this into consideration, there are a few data sources that can be used for the Francophone population:

- Demographics - Inclusive Definition of Francophones (IDF) (based on 2016 census);
- Health Status - Regional information for Francophones.

Include a statement on the cultural awareness, safety and sensitivity of the Francophone population. The need for inclusion of the Francophone lens in co-design and delivery of the full continuum of care. i.e. The members will work together with respect to culturally sensitive, equitable and readily accessible services in French to meet the unique needs of the Francophone population and to improve their experience and health outcomes. By actively offering FLS to the Francophone population, we will help health care professionals provide quality services that are safe, ethical and fair.

Section 2.3 - How can your team leverage previous experiences collaborating to deliver integrated care?

Inclusion of a statement regarding demonstrated compliance to FLS Act for designated members; commitment to improve the provision of French language services by identified and non-identified members. i.e. The increased collaboration between HSPs who are part of our OHT will increase the compliance and the commitment toward the improvement of FLS. As per past practice, HSPs will continue to improve access and quality FLS offered to the Francophone population. Designated HSPs under the French Language Services Act (FLSA) will continue to provide health services in French in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. HSPs identified to provide FLS will continue to improve and provide health services in French in accordance with their existing FLS capacity. HSPs not designated under the FLSA, nor identified to provide FLS, will develop mechanisms to address the needs of the Francophone community including improving their provision of FLS and providing information on local health services available in French.

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Section 3.1 - Has your response to the COVID-19 pandemic expanded or changed the types of services that your team offers within your community? (this may include ED diversion services such as telemedicine or chronic disease management, in-home care, etc.)

- Indicate how French language services were maintained by offering virtual care and how it also provided easier access to services for many individuals who would normally have to travel great distances for their appointments.
- Indicate the COVID-19 tables, committees or working groups of which the French Language Health Planning Entity was part of to ensure the Francophone lens was incorporated throughout the response to the pandemic.

Section 4.2 - How will your team provide virtual and digitally enabled care?

Virtual care through the Francophone lens:

- Inclusion of a statement indicating that patient access channels and tools, including virtual ones, will be bilingual (FR/ENG) and indicate how this will be done;
- Include opportunities to provide FLS through virtual care with Francophone professionals, i.e. Francophone psychiatry through Montfort; Virtual Care - Interprétation by OTN with L'Accueil francophone de Thunder Bay.

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Section 4.3.2 - How will you work with Francophone populations?

Members of the OHT will engage the Francophone population by the following means:

- Evaluation of the quality and access of FLS through client and patient surveys;
- Inclusion of Francophones on committees;
- Collaboration with the Francophone community to seek input on how to offer services and programs that meet the needs and reflect their values, cultures and experience;
- Collaboration with the FLS Planning Entity on engagement and planning activities.

It is also important to note the OHT's capacity to provide services in French to the Francophone population:

- Refer to the number of providers who are designated and identified for FLS;
- State percentage of Francophone professionals that work in the region (state Francophone HR capacity % as per FLS report);
- Explain how the providers address requests for FLS;
- State how many partners/providers/staff have taken the active offer training.

Section 4.3.4 - How will your team work with populations and settings identified as vulnerable for COVID-19 and influenza?

- Even though Francophones do not necessarily live in communities and settings in which social distancing and other infection prevention and control practices are a challenge, the lack of information and communications on COVID-19 in French increases their vulnerability to this disease. Indicate how the OHT will contribute to create and share quality information on COVID-19 in French and in English simultaneously.

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Section 4.4 - How will you partner, engage, consult or otherwise involve patients, families, and caregivers in care redesign?

- Client satisfaction surveys that include questions to evaluate the quality of French language services offered
- Engagement of Francophone clients, families and caregivers on committees
- Collaboration with the French Language Health Planning Entity and the Francophone community to seek input on how to offer services and programs that meet their needs and reflect their values, culture and experience.
- Community engagement with Francophone patients and caregivers regarding needs assessment, strategic planning, service planning, program design, and decisions regarding services.

Section 5.2 - What non-financial resources or supports would your team find most helpful?

- Access to quality data on Francophone population health, including on COVID-19, to support planning of French language services.

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For questions, please contact your local French Language Health Planning Entity:

Entité 1	Erie St.Clair, South West
Entité 2	Waterloo Wellington, Hamilton, Niagara Haldimand Brant
Entité 3	Central West, Mississauga, Halton, Toronto Central
Entité 4	Central, Central East, North Simcoe, Muskoka
Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario	South East, Champlain
Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario	North East, North West

Adapted in September 2020 from the document developed by the *Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario*.