

Health Care in French, Now More Important Then Ever





LE RÉSEAU DU MIEUX-ÊTRE FRANCOPHONE DU NORD DE L'ONTARIO

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Legend

aféséo: Association francophone à l'éducation et des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario AFO : Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario FARFO : Fédération des ainés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario LHIN : Local Health Integration Network NOSM : Northern Ontario School of Medicine Réseau : Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario RISE : Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange SSF : Société Santé en français

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Message from the Chair

A Year Unlike Any Other ...

Yes, a year when we had to adapt quickly to the new reality of the pandemic. We soon realized that the most vulnerable were the ones most affected and in addition, that access to French language services was not always equitable. A real indication of the importance of the work of the *Réseaux* and the Entities and one more reason to continue to be vigilant to ensure that Francophones' voices are heard and respected. To accomplish this, the *Réseau* continued to collaborate with the other Entities to create a provincial Entity analogous to Ontario Health. Our work took the form of joint position statements and an offer of support to ensure integration of the Francophone lens into the work of key stakeholders in the Ministry and Ontario Health.

This year, we are saying farewell to three members of our Board of Directors. Mr. Fabien Hébert, a founding member of the *Réseau du Nord* and the *Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario*. He has taken on a number of roles over the course of his 20 years with the *Réseau* family at the national, provincial and regional levels. We are grateful for his in-depth knowledge of Francophones and of health issues. We also wish to thank Lyne Robitaille, who was with us for eight years, representing the Algoma region. Thank you for your commitment towards the Francophonie in your region and the *Réseau*. We also extend our thanks to Marc-André Gravel, who represented the Cochrane region, leaving after three years due to a change in employment. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to emphasize that your contribution continues to be an excellent resource for us and for all Francophones.

We also passed a major milestone by celebrating 10 years as a French Language Health Planning Entity. I would like to thank all our partners who contributed to our success and who celebrated our 10th anniversary virtually with us. We are proud of all that we have accomplished, and we would like to thank the members of the Board of Directors, our Executive Director and the members of the *Réseau* team for their dedication and outstanding support, especially during this exceptional year. In addition, we wish to salute the health care workers and essential workers who put their health at risk to protect us and keep our economy going.



Collin Bourgeois Chair Board of Directors

Message from the Executive Director

Health Care in French, Now More Important Then Ever

This past year has driven us to reflect on new ways of doing things to ensure that key system stakeholders recognize the relevance and importance of equity in the provision and accessibility of French language services. Especially in a time of pandemic, when Francophones were at their most vulnerable, shared responsibility of all players is essential to meet needs and find viable solutions. We worked with Ontario Health at the provincial level to ensure better integration of French language services into the new structure and responsibility framework. In addition to continuing our work with Ontario Health Teams, we also collaborated with RISE (Rapid-Improvement Support and Exchange) on developing two documents on French language services and active offer. RISE is a team at McMaster University that, at the request of the Ministry of Health, has taken on responsibility for supporting Ontario Health Teams.

We are happy to announce that our mandate as a French Language Health Planning Entity has been renewed for another two years. Our work with different levels of government and on the ground has not gone unnoticed. Despite the transfer of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to Ontario Health, our working relationship with the North East and North West LHINs, now known as Ontario Health North, continues as before.

As you will see in the annual report, our work with providers and our partners has produced encouraging results for French language health services. We are most grateful to our providers and partners, who kept French language services in the forefront for their clients, patients and residents. It is always a pleasure for me to share with you the continued success of our online active offer training. Three other provinces and territories have committed to working in partnership with their local *Réseau* to promote the training in their region. Our goal is to continually move the training forward. A goal that we are meeting year after year.

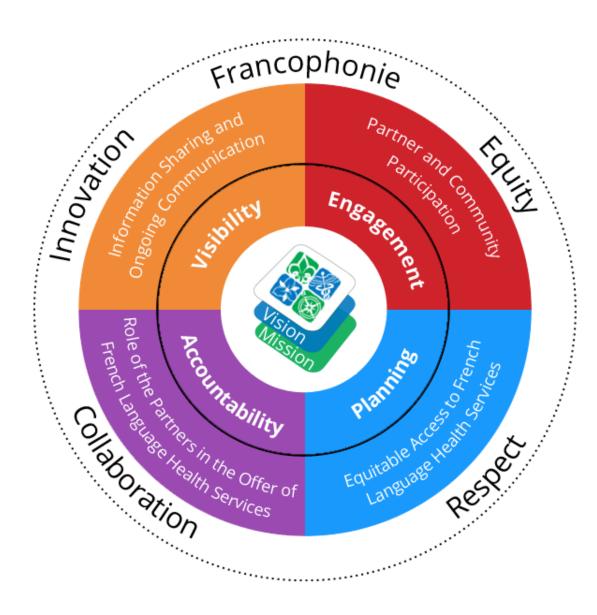
I wish to acknowledge the essential contribution made by the team that works every day to ensure equitable access to French language services in the North. We often do our work in the background, but I can assure you that you make a difference and that we have much to be proud of.



Díane Quíntas Executive Director

Strategic Planning

Our 2016-2021 Strategic Objectives



Our Values

Francophonie

Promote the Francophone culture and its regional characteristics.

Équity

Provide access to health services that respond to individual needs.

Respect

Act in a fair and impartial manner.

Collaboration

Build and enhance strategic partnerships.

Innovation

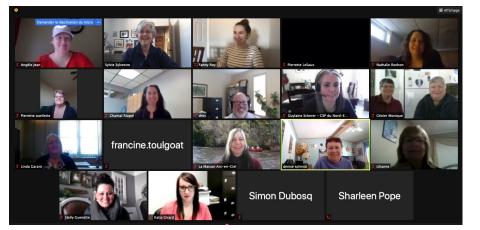
Be creative in the development and implementation of strategies.

Carrefours santé and Virtual Reality

The community is an essential partner with which the Réseau Carrefours engages to guide its work in French language health services and Tables planning. It is important to maintain an ongoing dialogue with santé the community and stay abreast of Francophones' lived Meetings experience. The *Réseau* used to do this through meetings of the 12 Carrefours santé (Health Hubs) and Tables santé (Health Tables) held in person in different communities across Northern Ontario. Virtual platforms have become essential for continuing to stay in touch with Francophones. Virtual reality allowed us to connect *Carrefours santé* from different communities to discuss shared issues, a more effective and strategic approach that was appreciated by participants. These virtual engagement activities enabled people to contribute who normally could not travel to take part in activities in person because of the distances involved. Carrefours santé are a way for Francophones to have a positive impact on French language services in their region, especially when providers are invited to present at the meetings, as the quote from the North West Regional Palliative Care team demonstrates.

Some of the activities we've partnered on include: engaging with the *Carrefour Santé* group to identify priorities for the regional palliative care work plan; delivering a Lunch n' Learn presentation to health care providers on the unique needs of the Francophone community; and compiling a directory of French language resources available for palliative care clients, families, and caregivers in our region."

- North West Regional Palliative Care Program Team, St. Joseph's Care Group



Carrefours santé from Cochrane and Temiskaming regions



Carrefour santé of Thunder Bay

The Francophones of Northern Ontario and the Pandemic

In June 2020, the *Réseau* held engagement sessions with the Francophones of its region to learn more about their experiences during the pandemic. The information gathered allowed us to identify issues, highlight best practices and develop recommendations for better health system planning and better access to French language health services. Over 60 people attended the sessions or responded to an online survey. The Réseau consolidated all of the input and proposed solutions in a report, Experience of Northern Ontario Francophones during COVID-19 Pandemic: Report of June 2020 Community Engagements and Progress to Date.

COVID-19 Sessions Organized 5

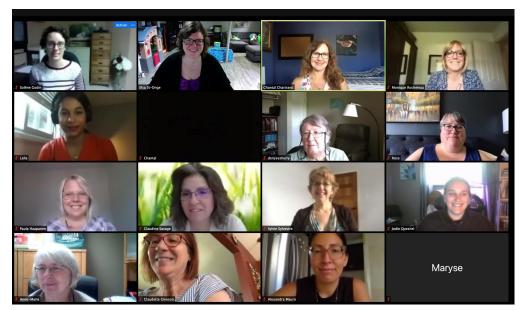
Participants to COVID-19 Engagements 60

With the pandemic, and with a number of services that were provided in person being transformed into virtual services, which has become our "new normal", we must make sure that platforms, tools, etc. are available in French and that there is an active offer."

- Member of the Francophone community [Translation]



COVID-19 community engagement session Cochrane region



COVID-19 community engagement session North West region

Engagement with Community Partners

The *Réseau* continues to engage with its community partners. This year, the *Réseau* took part in a number of community committee meetings. Through this participation, the *Réseau* was able to stay connected with Francophones and clearly identify local priorities. The northern table of the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO)* is one vehicle that enables us to dialogue and collaborate on strategies to advance the needs of Northern Ontario Francophones. This year, one of our main partners was the *Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario (FARFO)*.

FARFO is grateful to the *Réseau* for its involvement and active participation in our collaboration tables on the aging of Francophone seniors in Northern Ontario. Their sharing of information and resources was most helpful in writing our report and exploring solutions. We are eager to continue to work together to examine the continuum of residential services and potential improvements to these services in the region."

- Micheline Lalonde, Regional Coordinator, Mid-North/Far North, FARFO [Translation]

Engagement with Virtual Care

The Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) met with the Entities, including the *Réseau*, to identify Francophones' priority needs and targeted health service providers with which to work to improve access to services for Francophones. The *Réseau* facilitated meetings between OTN and health service providers in its

service providers in its geographic region to encourage them to offer and obtain French language telemedicine services. Provider Meetings 16 Our organization has made some significant strides in French Language Services planning. Many of these achievements are attributed to a positive partnership with the Réseau. This partnership has led to new project opportunities with expansion of French language services through OTN, presentations at staff meetings to promote Active Offer training, sharing and use of interpretation services by OTN with *L'Accueil Francophone de Thunder Bay*, Francophone engagement meetings hosted at the health centre as well as the sharing of our best practices and policies to assist other organizations in improving their capacity."

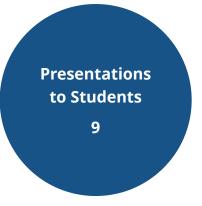
- Heidi West, Executive Director, Mary Berglund Community Health Centre Hub

Community Committee Meetings



Meeting With Students

The *Réseau* is always happy to have an opportunity to work with its partners in education and training. The well-established partnership with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) continued this year. The Réseau also had a chance to meet with students several times during presentations to the University of Ottawa, Université de Hearst, Algoma University, Lakehead University, NOSM, and Collège Boréal.



Presentation to Collège Boréal

Franco-santé: Identifying Francophone Students

The Franco-santé project started this year and strives to identify and equip French-speaking students in health training programs in English language postsecondary institutions so they will have the skills to provide French language health services once they are working in their field. Postsecondary students from all across the province took part in one of the two presentations made by the

Réseau on active offer of French language

health services.

Students Participating in Franco-Santé project 25



Presentation for the Franco-santé project

The Francophone Lens at the Provincial Level

At the provincial level, the *Réseau* works in collaboration with the other French Language Health Planning Entities (Entities) in the province. This year, the Entities worked with Ontario Health to ensure better integration of French language services into the new structure and responsibility framework. The *Réseau* is also collaborating with the other Entities to create a provincial Entity analogous to Ontario Health. Here is an overview of some key moments from the last year.



Meeting with the Minister of Francophone Affairs

April 2020 – Submission of a Brief submitted as part of the examination of Bill 175: Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act

May 2020 – Letter sent to the Ministry of Long-Term Care following the creation of an independent commission on long-term care

June 2020 - Submission of a Brief as part of the examination of Regulation 569 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act with the goal of safeguarding access to quality home and community care in French for Francophone patients.

September 2020 - Publication of French Language Services Guidelines for Ontario Health Teams Applications based on a document developed by the *Réseau* in 2019

October 2020 – The *Réseau* meets the Minister of Francophone Affairs, Caroline Mulroney, in Thunder Bay

December 2020 – Contribution to the content of <u>RISE Brief #25</u> for Ontario Health Teams

December 2020 – Statement on the renewal of the mandate of Ontario's French Language Health Planning Entities for two years

March 2021 – Support for the Brief on Digital Health in French in Ontario submitted to the Ministry of Health by the *Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario*

The Francophone Lens at the Regional Level

At the regional level, the *Réseau* sits on on various local and regional planning tables to provide a Francophone lens to different sectors: hospitals, long-term care, primary care and community health centres, mental health and addictions, community support services, palliative care, and public health. At these meetings, the *Réseau* shared solutions, tools and resources in order to improve French language health services in different settings. This year, as a result of the pandemic, our Planning and Community Engagement Officers dedicated a great deal of their time in the community support services and mental health and addictions sectors.

Presentations to Health Service Providers

23

We value the partnership and guidance that the *Réseau* has been able to provide when working on various initiatives together such as presenting at Algoma University, collaborating on various local planning tables such as the three Ontario Health Teams in the region, Algoma Home and Community Care and Caregiver ID project and through the ongoing work of improving French language services at our organization. In the spirit of collaboration, we appreciate the approach, guidance and professionalism when working closely with the *Réseau* to advance supports and services for our clients in the Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma region."

- Terry Caporossi, Executive Director, Alzheimer Society of Sault Ste. Marie & Algoma District

An Essential Partner for Ontario Health Teams

In 2019-2020, the *Réseau* was recognized for developing support documents for Ontario Health Teams that were much appreciated by our partners. This year, the *Réseau* continued its work on integrating the Francophone lens with approved Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) or groups seeking to become OHTs.

The *Réseau* has been a very important member and integral partner of the Nipissing Wellness OHT since the very beginning. They have been instrumental in the application of the equity lens and the importance of social accountability as it pertains to Francophones. We appreciate the resources and knowledge they bring to the table as we move forward with the implementation of the OHT model."

- Dr. Paul Preston and Jamie Lowery, Nipissing Wellness OHT Co-chairs

Public Health and COVID-19

The pandemic brought to light the importance of offering French language services by public health units. When certain groups of people have trouble understanding health guidelines and measures, it has an impact on the entire population. Currently, public health units are not subject to the *French Language Services Act*, even if they are strongly encouraged to comply with it. This is a reform that the Entities have advised government officials to implement.

The pandemic gave the *Réseau* an opportunity to forge links with the public health sector. In the early months of the pandemic, it was already obvious that communication and access to services in French were uneven across the *Réseau's* geographic region. This information was validated by the Francophones who participated in community engagement sessions on COVID-19 organized by the *Réseau* in June 2020.

Early on in the pandemic, the *Réseau* communicated with the seven public health units in Northern Ontario to reiterate the importance of communicating in French and to offer our assistance and resources to support planning. Although access is still uneven, some improvements have been made. On several occasions, the Porcupine Public Health Unit ordered *"Je parle français"* items to identify its Francophone staff and volunteers at vaccination sites. The *Réseau* joined committees to provide the Francophone lens to ensure that all aspects of French language services were considered in the vaccine rollout. In anticipation of the vaccination sessions, Public Health Sudbury & Districts invited the *Réseau* to visit the Sudbury Vaccination Centre so that it could support and advise them on improving French language services. In 2018, when Public Health Sudbury and Districts

implemented policies and procedures for the active offer of French language services, we benefited greatly from the support, resources, and information provided by the *Réseau*. Since the start of the pandemic, the *Réseau* has helped us by providing advice and discussing strategies for overcoming the barriers to active offer created by the state of emergency. We particularly appreciated the *Réseau's* support with respect to our COVID vaccination program, including a visit to one of our vaccination clinics in Sudbury and practical suggestions to ensure French language services were available at every step."

- Renée St-Onge, Director – Knowledge and Strategic Services, Public Health Sudbury and Districts [Translation]



Visit at the Sudbury Vaccination Centre

Improving the Francophone Patient Experience

This project, whose objective was to understand the experience of Francophone patients in order to develop appropriate solutions to overcome the gaps in French language health services, is drawing to a close. The pandemic led to a re-design of the project, including filming videos remotely. We also added a section to help us better understand the experience of Francophone newcomers. This information now supports a provincial project led by the *Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario* in connection with French language health services for newcomers. The tools created as part of this project will be used in <u>activeoffertraining.ca</u>, *Réseau* presentations and support to health service providers.

Access to French Language Services in Long-Term Care Homes

The objective of this project was to implement the recommendations in a study carried out by the Réseau. Actions included items like identifying homes for French language services, providing the homes with support and development of strategies for implementing culturally appropriate care. This year there was supposed to be a forum to present best practices in long-term care. The pandemic gave us an opportunity to rethink the project to create a training module specifically for people working in long-term care to be added to the <u>activeoffertraining.ca</u> platform. This module is created with tools, ressources and best practices gathered within the context of the project.

The *Réseau* has acted as convenors and catalysts for the *Petite enfance en santé* project. Through its knowledge of realities on the ground, the *Réseau* has helped the partners find their place and work together with their complementary knowledge sets."

- Martine St-Onge, Executive Director, AFÉSÉO [Translation]

Petite enfance en santé (Healthy Early Childhood)

The *Réseau* is the lead on this project for the entire province. The *Réseau*'s role in this project is to bring the partners together to implement the Healthy Early Years Community Services Plan for Ontario. The *Association francophone des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (aféséo)* and Health Nexus are the primary project partners and promoters implementing the plan. The *Réseau* contributed a great deal of support and expertise in partnerships and demonstrated much flexibility, agility and leadership. As for Health Nexus, we have benefited from the opportunity to be part of a group that listens and to be supported by the *Réseau.*"

- Katerina Firlova, Manager Strategic Partnerships and Operations (Interim), Health Nexus [Translation]

Tools

Created

17

Tools

Created

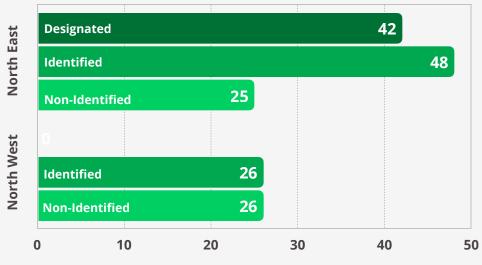
Accountability

Data for Better Planning

For access to French language services to improve, it is essential that partner providers be held accountable for improving French language health services. The Réseau provides support to all designated, identified and non-identified providers to help them complete their annual French language services report via the OZi web portal. Hospitals, long-term care homes, mental health and addictions services, community support services and community health centres are the sectors with which the *Réseau* works on data collection. Analysis of this data gives us a better understanding of where providers stand so we can help them with planning and implementation as well as with compliance with designation criteria. A range of tools and resources developed by the *Réseau* or by its partners are shared with them to provide them with the support appropriate to their needs.

Completion rate of the Annual French Language Services Report 99 %

Status of Health Service Providers*



Number of health service providers

*The factors that have an impact on the number of providers in each category are: new identifications, new designations, new agencies and agency amalgamations.

Support for Non-Identified Providers

Following an analysis of the French language services reports, the Réseau recommends that providers be identified to provide French language health services. This year, the *Réseau* has again recommended the identification of four long-term care homes in the North East. The pandemic and the crises in the long-term care sector have slowed down the work of identifying these providers by Ontario Health North. The new providers identified this year are the *Centre de santé communautaire de Timmins* and Nipissing Serenity Hospice.



Accountability

Support for Identified Providers

Identified providers are called upon to plan and implement French language services with the goal of eventually submitting a request for designation under the *French Language Services Act.* Although one might think that the pandemic would have slowed down advances in French language services, we have seen remarkable progress in the implementation of French language services by identified providers in the North East and North West regions. In the North East, the implementation indicator increased from 18.4% to 27.5%. In the North West, the indicator went from 32.4% to 56.4%. These increases are evidence of a strong commitment on the part of health service providers to serving the Francophone population well, even in regions where the Francophone population is small. Unfortunately, one of the biggest challenges facing providers is the shortage of French-speaking human resources.

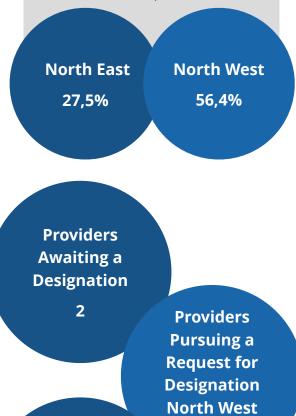
The *Réseau* provides support to identified providers pursuing a request for designation. This year, Timiskaming Home Support and the *Centre de santé communautaire de Timmins* submitted their requests to the Ministry of Health, and they are now awaiting their designation. Three other providers supported by the *Réseau* are working on submitting a designation request, including one as part of a pilot project on modernizing the designation process led by the Ministry of Francophone Affairs.

The *Réseau* has been extremely supportive in helping us effectively increase our ability to meet the requirement for the provision of French language services by formalizing a lot of our processes. The *Réseau* provided suggestions on how to meet the requirements, helped with the French language services report, meet with our Board of Directors to explain our French language services responsibilities, provided us with draft policies and pointed us to organizations willing to share their policies, all of which assisted us immensely. What seemed initially to be an overwhelming amount of work was achieved successfully."

- Anita Jean, Manager of Community Development & Engagement, NorWest Community Health Centres

Implementation Indicator

Percentage of completed French language services requirements for identified providers



1

Providers Pursuing a Request for Designation North East

Accountability

Support for Designated Providers

The second triannual designation evaluation cycle started last year. Following the evaluation and the resulting recommendations, providers are asked to improve their compliance with the designation criteria and the *Réseau* supports them through this process. Once again this year, there was a great deal of progress. All providers in the North East made notable progress with regard to compliance as the indicator rose from 77.8% à 89.4%. This year, a new agency met the 34 requirements for designation under the French Language Services Act. Five Francophone agencies were already counted as providers compliant with designation requirements, but they had not yet received their certificate. The Réseau and the North East LHIN presented compliance certificates to:

- Maison Renaissance
- Maison arc-en-ciel *
- Centre de santé communautaire du Témiskaming
- Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury
- Centre de santé communautaire de Kapuskasing et région
- West Nipissing Community Health Centre

In 2018, PHARA and the *Réseau* talked about French language services and how as an organization we were far from compliant. The Réseau worked with us, built us up, and PHARA moved forward. Today, in 2021, amidst a pandemic, PHARA, with the *Réseau*'s assistance, expects to be deemed French language services compliant and is serving the populations of our communities with proper language services."

- Mike Van der Vlist, Executive Director, **PHARA**



Compliance Indicator

Percentage of completed French

language services requirements

North Est 89,4%













Visibility

Virtually Present

The *Réseau* is usually present on the ground at different events organized by our partners. This year, we were present on our virtually. The *Réseau* also managed to make its presence felt beyond its partners, even as far as Nunavut where the *Réseau* and *L'Accueil francophone de Thunder Bay* in partnership with the *Réseau de santé en français du Nunavut* delivered the "Interpretation and You" workshop to a new interpreter at the Qikiqtani General Hospital. In addition, two articles appeared in our partners' newsletters and our Executive Director took part in a video campaign celebrating Entité 4's 10th anniversary. Also, a member of the *Réseau* team facilitated the virtual raising of the Franco-Ontarian flag in Sudbury.

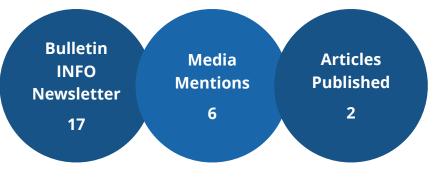
- Le Relais de l'AFNOO 1st Semester 2021 <u>10 ans tissé serré... en pleine</u> pandémie p.29 (in French)
- Petit T@ndem de l'aféséo Summer 2020 L'importance de l'offre active des services de santé en français pour les parents et les enfants d'âge préscolaire vivant en milieu minoritaire p.31(in French)
- De la stabilité pour les services de santé en français Interview with the Executive Director on the renewal of the Entities' mandate (in French)
- <u>Ce que l'identification linguistique sur les cartes santé pourrait changer</u> Quotes from the Executive Director (in French)
- <u>Certains déplorent le manque d'information en français durant la</u> <u>pandémie</u> - Article on community engagement meetings organized by the *Réseau* (in French)

Published Videos

- 10 ans tissé serré / 10 Years Tightly Knit : 10 videos
- Experiences of Francophone Patients: 10 videos
- <u>Culturally Appropriate Care for Francophones in Long Term Care</u>: 6 videos



Raising of the Franco-Ontarian flag in Sudbury



A Revamped and Practical Website

One of our big visibility projects this year was updating our website. The new website includes a database of tools and resources that is easier to navigate. This compilation of tools and resources also fills a need resulting from the long-term care project on sharing resources in culturally appropriate care.



Results 2020-2021

April 1st, 2020 to March 31, 2021



formationoffreactive.ca activeoffertraining.ca

Essential and Quality Training

The training launched in 2018 has continued to be a favourite with our partners. This year, the *Réseau* signed contracts with three provinces/territories to adapted the online training to their region online.

A promotional toolkit was also developed. This panCanadian enthusiasm for our active offer training shows that it is recognized for its quality.

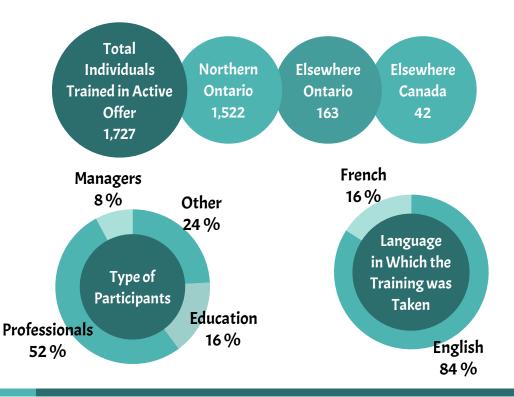
Individuals Trained in Active Offer in 2020-2021 474

Following up on the *Réseau*'s recommendations, we have made the online active offer training mandatory for all our employees. As this is quality training, it was easy to get all of our 120 employees to take the *Réseau*'s active offer training. The first people to take it spread the word to others to convince them that taking this training was worthwhile."

- Paul Jalbert, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association Cochrane Timiskaming Branch With 88% of our staff having completed the training, we continue to include it as part of our new staff orientation requirements and ensure it is available to all teams. Active Offer has been instrumental in helping to raise staff awareness and understanding of the importance of the delivery of French language health care services to the Francophone population of the North."

- Cynthia Stables, Senior Director, Health Equity, Ontario Health North

Users Since the Launch





LE RÉSEAU DU MIEUX-ÊTRE FRANCOPHONE DU NORD DE L'ONTARIO

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The Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario (Réseau) receives financial support from Ontario Health North (formerly North East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and North West LHIN) and the government of Ontario.

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, the Société Santé en français, the LHINs, Ontario Health or the government of Ontario.

With funding from



Government Gouvernement of Canada du Canada



Société **Santé** en francais



Ontario Santé Health Ontario