



The Réseau, Catalyst of the Health Care System for Francophones

Annual report 2023-2024



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

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It is only farewell for now

This year, it is with great pride that we mark 20 years of presence of the *Réseaux de santé* in the North. For two decades, we've been committed to working towards equitable access to French-language services. Over the past 20 years, we've carried out projects that have influenced the healthcare system for Francophones: training on Active Offer, status reports, gathering testimonials, submitting briefs, as well as providing support at the provincial level with the Entities to plan French-language health services projects, and at the federal level with our contribution to the Société Santé en français' Convergence 2028 plan. We have also overcome challenges, and demonstrated resilience and adaptability, especially in the face of the pending results of the Entités' provincial evaluation.

Today, we celebrate not only our past achievements but also our commitment to the future. We remain determined to continue working together, not only to support and promote the importance of French-language health services but also to ensure equity of care, in French. It is thanks to you, our members and partners, that we are where we are today, and it is together that we will continue to move forward.

It is also with some emotion that I mark the end of my mandate as Chair and member of the Board of Directors of the *Réseau*.

These past nine years have been filled with challenges, accomplishments and unforgettable moments, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served the Francophone community. I want to extend my warmest thanks to my colleagues on the Board of Directors, the Executive Director Diane Quintas, the dedicated staff of the *Réseau*, our partners and, of course, you, our members, and the community for your trust and support during my tenure. As I pass the torch to my successor, I am confident that the *Réseau* will continue to thrive and advance the interests and needs of Francophones in healthcare.



Collin Bourgeois

Chair
Board of Directors

20 years of impact

This year has been marked by many successes and achievements, reflecting well the 20 years of the *Réseaux de santé's* commitment to the Francophone community in Northern Ontario. Our theme for this year, "The *Réseau*, Catalyst of the Health Care System for Francophones" is very relevant, as it highlights the Réseau's active role in planning health care services for Francophones at many levels of the health care system. This theme underlines the impact of the Réseau on positive changes in access to equitable health services, in French, for Francophones.

At the local and regional health system level, we optimized our collaboration with Ontario Health North, and developed strategies for French-language services to support Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) in their efforts to meet the needs of Francophones. We also continued to support health service providers in their offer of French-language services through the Active Offer training, which continues to be recognized and used across the province - and even the country!

At the provincial level, we have also offered several recommendations to Ontario Health (with a particular focus on their business plan), and to the Ministry of Health regarding the importance of access to French-language health services, care planning, reporting on French-language services, the evaluation of Ontario's French-language health services planning model, and finally to the government regarding new regulations. We also continue to collaborate with many provincial organizations, including the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO) and its health committee, to develop positioning documents on health priorities for Francophones. At the national level, the Réseau also contributed to the Société Santé en français' 2023-2028 programming and call for project proposals, and continued to act as a resource for Active Offer training. At the community level, we adapted our interactions to strengthen trust and collaboration in Francophone communities through new initiatives. We are proud of the role we play in the healthcare system, and we remain committed to continuing to positively influence access to French-language healthcare services for Francophones in Ontario. I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the members of the Board of Directors, and especially to our Chair, Mr. Collin Bourgeois, who has completed his mandate after nine years with the Réseau. I would also like to thank our dedicated team, our partners and our members for their ongoing commitment and support. It is thanks to your collaboration that we are able to achieve our mission and make a real difference.



Diane Quintas

Executive Director

Our strategic directions for 2022-2027

Strategic Directions

- ❖ Cultivate and enhance the information and data of the RMEFNO to inform, advise and support the healthcare system in the development and delivery of French language health services.
- ❖ Advise and support the regional healthcare system in the development and delivery of French language health services.
- ❖ Develop, lead and evaluate the progress of evidence-based projects in support of the RMEFNO's strategic priorities.
- ❖ Strategically coordinate the engagement and mobilization of Francophone partners and healthcare system collaborators.

Mission

The Réseau relies on evidence-based data, the community and the Francophone movement, as well as its collaboration with the healthcare system to ensure active offer and equitable access to French language health services.

Values

- ❖ Equity
- ❖ Partnership with the Francophone community
- ❖ Collaboration with the healthcare system
- ❖ Respect
- ❖ Innovation

Evaluating the impact of our work

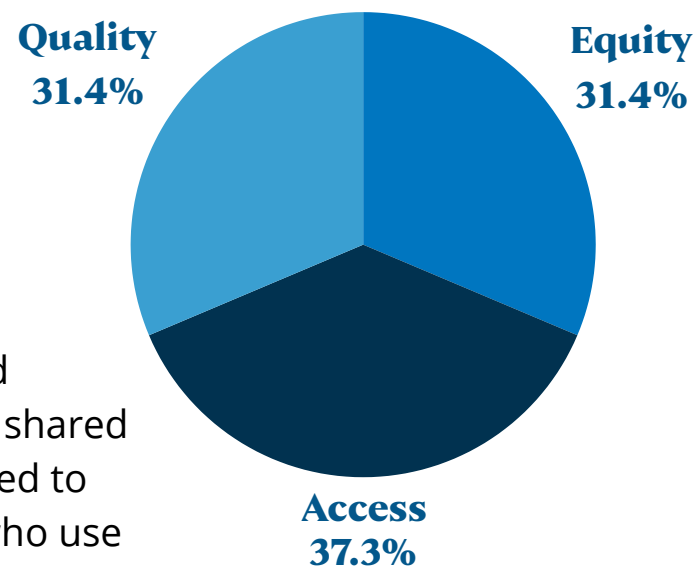
Our ongoing efforts to foster a culture of improving French-language health services that are better adapted to the needs of the Francophone community are demonstrated through our efforts to evaluate of our work. We have undertaken a collaboration with the [Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research](#) (CRaNHR) to assess the impact of the Active Offer training on the behaviour of people who took the training. The data collection process began last year. To date, 7,000 participants have completed the pre-training questionnaire and since December 2023, 416 the post-training questionnaire have been completed. This collection will continue until May 2025.

In addition to the evaluation project, we gathered information on participants' satisfaction with the Active Offer training. We are proud to say that 96.4% are satisfied or very satisfied with the training.

The Importance of Francophone patient stories

Through its various commitments and projects over the years, the *Réseau* has gathered testimonials on the experiences of Francophone clients and patients with French-language healthcare services in Northern Ontario. We targeted 52 testimonials to highlight the challenges faced by Francophones when seeking healthcare in their mother tongue.

While many factors can influence the patient experience, access, equity and quality of services in French were identified as priority issues by those who shared their stories. These elements were highlighted in a summary report prepared to support our planning work by demonstrating the reality of francophones who use healthcare services in Northern Ontario.

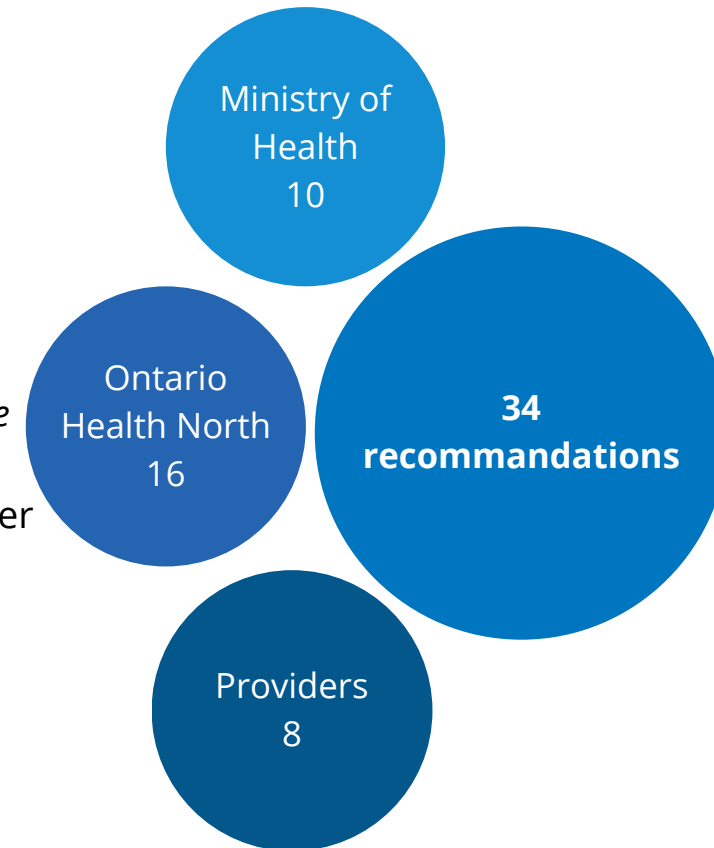


Recommendations for strengthening the French-language health care system

This year, 34 recommendations were shared with provincial and regional government bodies to provide a clear roadmap for necessary changes based on a thorough understanding of the needs and challenges specific to Francophones.

Our interventions enabled :

- the enhancement of the platform created for annual reports of French-language services that are required by providers
- the initiation of the legal process for updates required in the *French language services Act* for certain providers who have changed status or name
- the updating or inclusion of policies by providers to ensure the Active Offer of French-language services in order to ensure compliance to their designation status
- a collaborative approach with Ontario Health North to capture data on Francophones
- a continuation of the joint work plan between the *Réseau* and Ontario Health North



French-Language Services Annual Reports

Each year, health service providers are required to complete a French-language services report. Thanks to the support of the Réseau, 99% of providers have submitted their annual French-language services report for 2023-2024.



An inclusive engagement strategy

The face of the Francophone population is changing, and so we need to change the way we engage Francophones to reduce disparities and promote equity and inclusiveness.

It was therefore important for the Réseau to work closely with francophone minority groups to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

Our engagements this year

- As part of the Immigration project, the Réseau continued to work with local settlement services to ensure that all francophones are heard.
- The Réseau continues to work with the carrefours and health tables to keep the community's pulse.
- Participation in the Resolutions 2023: Overcoming Racism Together conference.
- The entire team participated in a six-session training offered by Ontario Health on equity and inclusion. This training enabled us to inform them on how to ensure greater inclusion of Francophones in their training, which is intended for all their employees.

The question of the Month



Listening to Francophones in the North

The Question of the Month is a new engagement initiative that saw its debut in February 2024. We launch one question per month to gather information on the reality of Francophones. The results of these questions help us direct our work toward the topics that matter in health for the region's Francophones. Topics addressed to date include: access to primary care, interpretation services, patient and family counsels, and mental health.

Question results are available on our [Website](#).

Support work that has an impact on the system

Every three years, designated health service providers are evaluated by the Réseau and Ontario Health North to determine whether they meet the requirements for designation under the *French Language Services Act*. This year, 17 evaluations were completed. Of the 17 assessments, 10 providers complied with 100% of the requirements. Congratulations to the compliant providers for their dedication to maintaining the French-language service requirements. We continue to support the remaining seven providers so that they can be compliant with the necessary requirements in the coming year.



Presentations and webinars



Themes	No of presentations
Active Offer training	2
Mental health and addictions module	5
Long-term care module	5
The active offer of French-language health services	5
Module on health services to Francophone immigrants	1
Winning Strategies	1
Designation	1



New developments for the training

Improvements have been made to the Active Offer training platform to facilitate group and participant registration, as well as data extraction.

We have also added two new complementary modules: [Services Adapted to Francophone Clients in the Mental Health and Addictions Sector](#) and [Francophone Cultural Awareness in the Primary Care Sector](#).

Certificates awarded this year

Active Offer Training

8083



Long-term care module

34



Immigration module

222



Primary care module

163



Mental health module

300



Staff awareness

Following our partnership with [Home and Community Support Services](#), the organization has implemented a policy that all employees (9 000) must complete the Active Offer training. We worked with the 14 regional offices to register and send out reminders as well as produce completion status reports for managers in each region.

The list of providers who have completed the training is growing. This year, five healthcare organizations received certificates of training completion when 100% of their teams completed the training. The growing list now includes 17 providers.

In addition, the [NOSM University](#) has made the complementary primary care module mandatory for all residents in their program. This measure ensures ongoing awareness among our future physicians.



User testimonials

" I worked in the healthcare sector for 15 years before discovering this training. It would have been useful to have seen it at the start of my career. I would share it so that everyone would have access to this knowledge and information. It's part of my contribution to improving health outcomes and health care equity."

"[The training] gives a good idea of the obstacles facing Francophone communities, but also helps to develop a detailed plan regarding active offer implementation, recruitment and planning. "

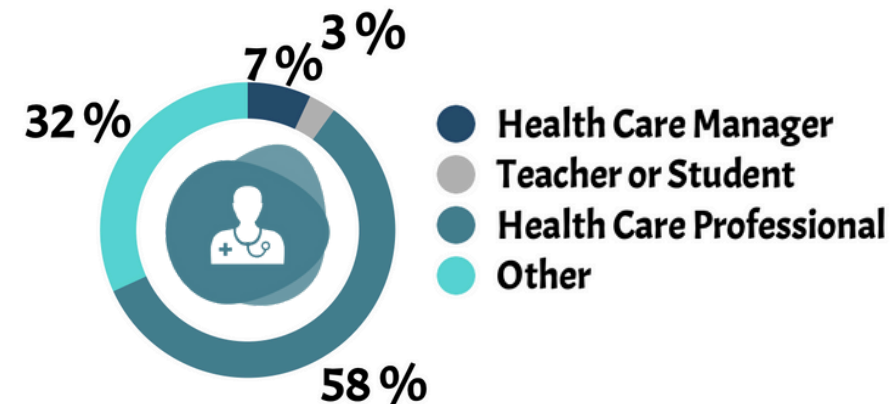
Promoting the training at a provincial level

- Presentation by Diane Quintas, Executive Director of the *Réseau*, on the Active Offer training and its complementary modules at the Colloquium on the Health of Official Language Minority Communities of Canada as well as at the Alliance for Healthier Communities annual conference.
- Participation of Diane Quintas on the panel on aging at the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario's annual Conference.

User satisfaction

92% of them would recommend the training to their colleagues.

Who took the training



Franco-Santé Project

The Franco-Santé project is an initiative for the Francophone and Francophile student population enrolled in post-secondary health training programs in English. At the national level, a study was conducted to develop a national outreach strategy to engage faculties and programs. The Réseau contributed to the process by providing comments and recommendations on the strategy during discussions at the national table. We also shared issues and best practices with other Réseaux to ensure the sharing of expertise, tools and resources. As part of the project's programming, the Réseau organized a training session on services adapted to Francophone clients in the mental health and addiction sector.

Healthy Early Years Project

Although the Réseau is responsible for the project in Ontario, the work in the field is carried out by two promoters, [Health Nexus](#) and the [Association Francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario](#) (AFÉSEO). This year marks the end of a five-year funding period and the beginning of a new funding cycle for the project.

This year, our partners have, among other things:

- set up an advisory committee of professionals and parents;
- set up a Facebook group, *Parenthèse Ontario: Informations et ressources en petite enfance*;
- published 11 resource podcasts featuring parent testimonials;
- delivered four webinars on mental health promotion and Francophone living practices;
- facilitated five support groups;
- delivered two webinars and created two autism resources.



For more information and a full report on activities, we invite you to visit the websites of the project promoters, [Health Nexus](#) and [AFÉSEO](#).



Francophone Immigration Health Project

The Francophone Immigration Health project is led by the [Réseau franco santé du Sud de l'Ontario](#) (RFSSO) in Ontario in collaboration with the [Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario](#) (RMEFNO) and the [Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario](#) (RSSFE). As part of this year's project, the RFSSO has developed the training module: [Connaître le système de santé de l'Ontario et comprendre comment s'y retrouver](#). It is available on the [eQUNITY Link](#) platform. For its part, RMEFNO has developed a [Virtual Resource Kit for Improving Health Services for Francophone Immigrants in Ontario](#) as part of the project to follow up on the training [Active Offer of French Language Health Services to Francophone Immigrants in Ontario](#).

Long-term care

Following discussions with caregivers in the community about the Active Offer training complementary module on [Culturally Appropriate Care for Francophones in Long-term Care Homes](#) and the accompanying [tools and resources kit](#), it was identified that a specific resource for family caregivers should be created to facilitate navigation between the homecare and long-term care systems, as well as available resources. The result was a [resource kit for caregivers of Francophones in long-term care](#).

Strategically Coordinating Engagement and Mobilization

12

Ontario Health Teams

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are a new, more patient-focused way of organizing and delivering care in their local communities. Northern Ontario has eleven OHTs, including two accelerated OHTs, Nipissing Wellness and Noojmawing Sookatagaing.

How we support OHTs

The Réseau continues to support the OHTs in building capacity for French-language services and ensuring equitable access.

We provided recommendations on what to include in the French services section of the work plan for the two accelerated OHTs. These recommendations were also shared with other OHTs to inform their French-language services work plans. The Réseau is also an active member of the OHTs equity committees as an advisor on French-language services, and we have helped them engage the Francophone community to include the Francophone perspective in the deployment of OHT activities.



Strategically Coordinating Engagement and Mobilization

WINNING STRATEGIES

FOR SERVING FRANCOPHONE CLIENTS



The Réseau launched the Winning Strategies initiative in Northern Ontario with the goal of helping all health service providers improve the quality of and access to French-language health services. We received support from five OHTs to implement the initiative, as well as from Ontario Health North.

In collaboration with [Nipissing Wellness](#) OHT, the initiative was officially launched in Northern Ontario.

This initiative was created by the [Kids Come First](#) OHT and the [RSSFE](#). To date, 14 OHTs in the East and the North have committed to participate in the initiative.

The [resources on Winning Strategies](#) can be found on the Réseau's website.

A glimpse

The strategy aims to unite OHT members and partners around six actions promoting active offer:

1. Identify one or more champions
2. Empower staff members
3. Identify staff members able to provide services in French
4. Identify Francophone clients
5. Match Francophone clients with staff able to provide services in French, or refer Francophone clients to another provider offering equivalent services of equal quality in French.
6. Measure results



The 14 OHTs from the East and North involved in the initiative

Strategically Coordinating Engagement and Mobilization

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Important moments of the year

Provincial

- Presentation on Active Offer at the Alliance for Healthy Communities annual conference.
- Evaluation of the Entities model.
- Extension of the Entity mandate for the Réseau until August 2024.
- Participation in the AFO Annual Conference and presentation on the panel on aging organized by ONFR - TFO.
- Joint letter from the Entities and the Fédération des aînés et des retraités Francophones de l'Ontario (FARFO) on the definition of a Francophone bed in Long-Term Care sent to the Ministry of Health.
- Participation in the Northeast/Northwest Health System Recovery and Transformation Table. The purpose of the table is to advise Ontario Health North on local and regional system coordination.
- Participation in the provincial French-language services committee of Home and Community Care Services.



Diane Quintas at the AFO panel on aging

Federal

- The Réseau continues to act as a resource for the Active Offer training at the federal level.
- Presentation on the Active Offer training and its complementary modules at the Colloquium on the Health of Official Language Minority Communities of Canada.
- Meeting of the Executive Directors of the Réseaux across Canada and the Société Santé en français in Ottawa and Quebec City to plan the *Convergence 2028* work plan and funding for the Réseaux.
- Participation in the 50-30 challenge aimed at strengthening equity in our work.

The Réseau's presence in the media

Survey on inclusiveness among nurses available in English only (article in French)

The College of Nurses of Ontario survey, which should lead to more "equitable and inclusive" policies, has not been translated into French. Diane Quintas highlights the survey's shortcomings. - March 12, 2024

Canada faces a caregiver "crisis" (article in French)

Sylvie Sylvestre, caregiver and Community Engagement and Planning Officer at the Réseau, talks about her experience. - November 8, 2023

The barriers to accessing long-term care homes (interview in French)

Radio interview with Diane Quintas on *Le matin du Nord* to discuss the difficulties faced by Francophones in long-term care homes. - October 31, 2023

Doctor shortage in Northern Ontario remains a concern (interview in French)

Radio interview with Diane Quintas on *Le 6 à 9* about Northern Ontario's doctor shortage. - August 10, 2023

Three new Ontario Health Teams (interview in French)

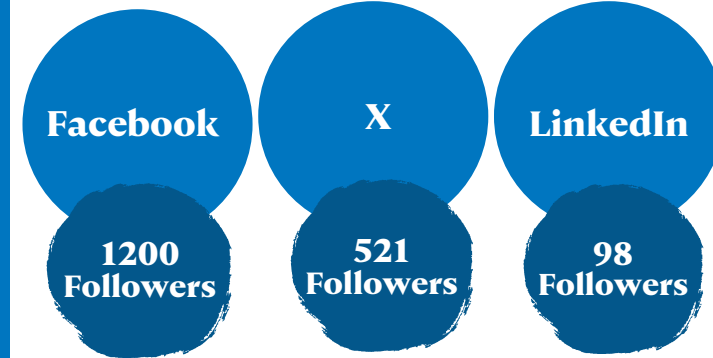
Radio interview with Monique Rocheleau, Assistant Executive Director at the Réseau, on *Le matin du Nord* to discuss OHTs - July 14, 2023

The pandemic and its impact on French-language healthcare services (article in French)

During the pandemic, public health units in Northern Ontario had to interrupt or drastically reduce many services. The situation had an impact on French-language services, Diane Quintas shares her thoughts on the subject. - June 13, 2023

Diane Quintas, fighter for the health of Francophones in the North (article in French)

Article highlighting the exceptional work of our Executive Director - May 6, 2023



The Réseau continues to publish its "Bulletin info Newsletter" to keep the community up to date with the latest news about the Réseau and the health issues that affect them.

This year, the Réseau published **14 newsletters** to keep the community informed.

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Bulletin INFO Newsletter



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**LE RÉSEAU DU MIEUX-ÊTRE
FRANCOPHONE
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This initiative is funded by Health Canada as part of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028:
Protection-Promotion-Collaboration.

The Healthy Early Years project is made possible by funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Francophone Immigration Health project is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario receives support from Ontario Health North and the Ontario government.

The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Société Santé en français, Ontario Health or the Government of Ontario.

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