



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

Annual Report

Transformation and Continuity: an Ongoing Commitment to French Language Health Services



2025
2026

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Message from the Chair

Isabelle Charbonneau

It has been another busy year for the Chair of the *Réseau*, which acts as the voice of Francophones on health matters at both national and provincial levels.

The networks, along with the *Société Santé en français* (SSF), have highlighted the work and endorsed the recommendations of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages' report titled, Breaking Down Language Barriers in Health Care: For Equitable, Safe and Quality Health Care and Health Services. Based on numerous testimonials, including several from Ontario, the report highlights the fact that Francophones living in minority communities all too often end up paying the price for health inequalities.

It was also important to highlight the significant contributions made by the Networks toward improving access to French language health services when the French Language Health Services Planning Centre was established. The relationships of trust built by the *Réseau* with its communities, educational institutions, healthcare professionals and health service providers (HSPs), and government authorities, as well as the tools and expertise it has developed, make it a trusted partner that remains closely connected to the population across Northern Ontario.

In this fourth year of our 2022–2027 strategic plan, we have observed progress in the awareness of the need for an active offer of French language health services. Our engagement with communities has led to positive developments noted by participants, such as the recognition by health service providers of the importance of training their staff on how to actively offer services in French.

We are also seeing increased visibility of active offer visual elements among certain providers. However, much work remains to be done. These same engagements continue to highlight persistent access issues in key sectors such as mental health, home care and long-term care. The active offer of services is often absent or inconsistent; patient information is frequently unavailable in French, and bilingual staff are not assigned effectively to serve Francophone populations. Our work to ensure a Francophone perspective throughout the system and with all partners must continue.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board of Directors for their dedication to our mission and for their work across the region representing Francophones in Northern Ontario. I would also like to extend my thanks to Jonathan Bussières, Interim Executive Director, for all your hard work. The team has shown an unwavering commitment to French language health services.

Finally, the *Réseau* would like to thank community members and all our partners for their support and recognition of the *Réseau*'s work. Your valuable collaboration will continue to be essential in advocating for the rights of Francophones in healthcare and paving the way toward equitable access to high-quality French language health services for all our communities.

Isabelle Charbonneau

Message from the Interim Executive Director

Jonathan Bussières

This past year has been marked by significant change and filled with emotion, as most of our team transitioned to the French Language Health Services Planning Centre. The first half of the year at the *Réseau* was very different from the second, marking the end of our role as the French language health services planning entity for Northern Ontario after more than 16 years of service.

The *Réseau*'s mandate is now different, and responsibility for planning will continue within a separate organization. While this represents a change, the *Réseau*'s work in support of French language health services remains rooted in continuity. Our role as a member network of the *Société Santé en français* (SSF) remains unchanged, and our collaborative approach with communities, health service providers (HSPs), healthcare professionals, educational institutions and the health system continues to guide our work.

The *Réseaux du Nord* and *Moyen-Nord*, which merged to become the *Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario*, were established alongside the other SSF member networks because Francophones living in minority communities had little or no access to services in their own language. The progress achieved since then has been possible through collaboration with Francophone partners and with the healthcare system. Looking back over these years, I can only feel proud of the work accomplished:

- a commitment from communities, regardless of where they were in their journey toward improving French language health services;
- a renewed interest in and greater accountability toward designation and its requirements;

- studies on long-term care, the home care sector, and the experiences of Francophones with the healthcare system;
- projects such as *Franco-Santé*, Healthy Early Years and Francophone Immigration;
- a series of training programs on the active offer of French language health services, now adapted to several sectors;
- and the launch of the Winning Strategies for Serving Francophone clients initiative in collaboration with the *Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario* and Ontario Health Team Kids Come First.

Among the achievements worth noting over the past year, in August we shared an overview of community engagements and the validation of priorities for the North. We continued to support HSPs, and the submission rate for the annual French language services reports remained at 98.7%. Winning Strategies have now been adopted by 37 HSPs across the North. It has been another successful year for active offer training, with the pilot of a new module for the pharmacy sector and the development of content for a module for home care. More than 3000 certificates were awarded during the year, bringing the total to over 17,000 certificates since the launch of the training.

The *Réseau* has remained a trusted partner in improving French language health services, and all of our activities have continued to raise awareness of the challenges faced by Francophones in accessing French language health services, as well as the solutions and tools available to improve this access.

I would like to thank our entire team, our Board of Directors, our communities and our partners for the energy, dedication and expertise they bring to this work every day.



2022 - 2027 Strategic Plan

Our 2022–2027 strategic plan was in its fourth year, and despite significant changes within the organization and the team, we have achieved many of the objectives that were set out prior to this transition. The Réseau will now have to redefine its strategic priorities in light of the new provincial context in order to continue working with partners and to fulfil its mandate, taking into account the strengths of each stakeholder to maximize the impact of its activities.

The following pages outline the initiatives, projects and activities the Réseau worked on over the past year.

Our Projects

Winning Strategies for Serving Francophone Clients

We launched the Winning Strategies initiative last year to help health service providers implement six priority actions aimed at improving French language health services. Thirty-seven providers have now confirmed their commitment to the strategy, and six Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) in the North are now supporting the initiative. We have prepared summary reports for these Northern OHTs to help them track their members' progress in carrying out the strategy's actions. These reports are updated as needed, and Community Engagement and Planning Officers have supported them in this initiative. Among these OHTs, four have already had their staff complete the training and are encouraging their members to do the same.

During the second half of the year, we focused our efforts on establishing and maintaining partnerships, including with the French Language Health Services Planning Centre, to ensure the continuation of the project, now that certain data will be collected by the Centre and the active training component is being led by the Réseau. These partnerships will be key to the success of this initiative.

6 OHTs support the initiative

37 HSPs on board

Certificates awarded to 4 OHTs



Active Offer of French Language Health Services Training

All the work and progress achieved since the launch of the training were recognized at the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO) Congress with the *Horizon franco-ontarien 2025 Award*. This award “ [...] highlights the collective work of a group, organization or institution that responds to a real need and has had a tangible impact on its community.”



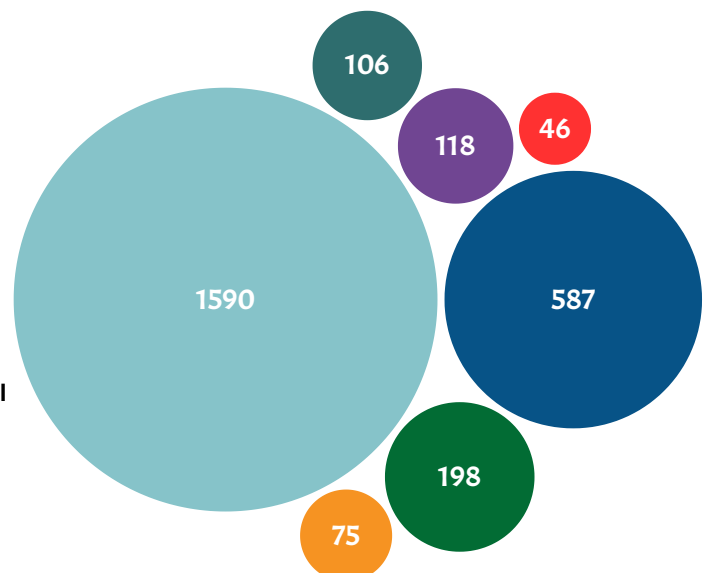
Summary of Results

Since the launch of the group registration feature, we now have 58 groups with 88 subgroups registered for the various training modules on our platform. We have added 34 of these subgroups over the past year to enable providers to better assign the appropriate modules to different groups within their organizations.

The momentum of the training continues, and efforts to integrate the training into providers' policies and their commitment through the “Winning Strategies” initiative continue to bear fruit. A total of **3,203** certificates were awarded this year.

The modules adapted for Prince Edward Island continue to help train home care and long-term care staff on the importance of active offer. The modules adapted for the Yukon have also been updated this year with the addition of the module on Francophone immigration, which will enable the training of provider staff in this region, which has a significant Francophone minority.

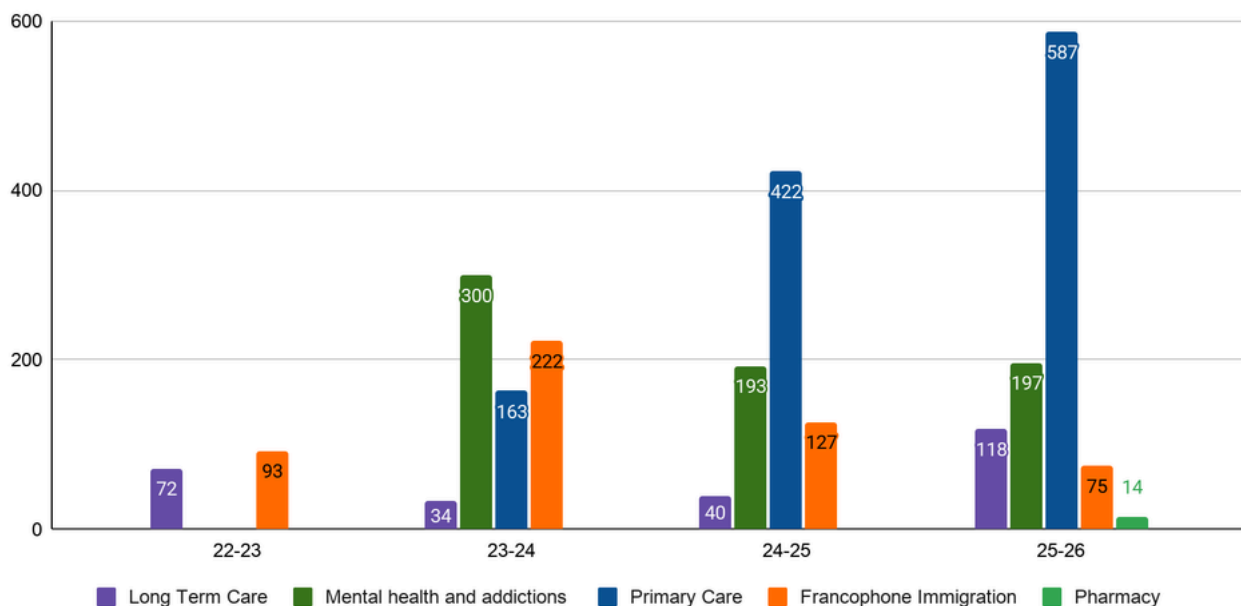
- **Modules 1 to 3 (Ontario)**
- **Modules 1 to 6 (Ontario)**
- **The Active Offer of French Language Health Services to Francophone Immigrants in Ontario**
- **Culturally Appropriate Care for Francophones in Long-term Care Homes**
- **Services Adapted to Francophone Clients in the Mental Health and Addictions Sector**
- **Francophone Cultural Awareness in the Primary Care Sector**
- **Modules adapted for Prince Edward Island**



The 2025–2026 year was marked by the presentation of certificates of completion to **seven** HSPs, all of which had 100% of their staff complete the training. These organizations, representing a total of **192** employees, are an encouraging sign of their commitment to French language services. We also have 11 providers with group registrations whose progress is at 80% or higher. We will continue working with our partners to bring them to 100% next year.

The chart below shows the progress made over the past year. Complementary modules now account for 32% of the total certificates issued this year, the highest proportion since the launch of the first complementary module on long-term care.

The evolution of complementary modules



It is also the best year in terms of the number of certificates for the primary care (587) and long-term care (118) modules since their respective launches. Seeing the interest in and importance of sector-specific training, we have also completed the pilot of the pharmacy module, which is now available in Ontario to all individuals working in the pharmacy sector. We have also developed the content for a module tailored to the home care sector, which will be launched online in the coming year.

Evaluation of the Active Offer Training

The final report on the evaluation of the training, which began in 2023–2024, has not yet been published, but preliminary results show that the training is effective in improving knowledge, behaviours and attitudes associated with active offer. Participants demonstrated improved performance after completing the training, and these improvements were sustained for at least nine months. Stay tuned for the publication of the final report and further updates on the project.

User Testimonials

"This training offers a useful framework for understanding how language access intersects with equity and quality of care. I would recommend it to any health or social service professional working in diverse communities, as it reinforces the importance of meeting clients where they are, culturally and linguistically, which is relevant across a wide range of practice settings."

"As someone who speaks French, I didn't believe this training would pertain to me as I switch languages based on patient preference. This course was an excellent reminder on why it's so important to have this service available, as the French active offer extends past simply giving services in the preferred national language. It's a reminder in empathizing with others in our community, recognizing differences and stepping up to provide the support people deserve without having to be asked. I also feel I gained valuable insight into Franco-Ontarian culture."

Yes, I would recommend this training because it is very helpful, clear, and practical. It explains important concepts like active offer, equity, safety, and cultural competency in an easy-to-understand way. It also made me more aware of how important communication and language are in patient care. I feel it has improved my understanding and will help me provide better service to patients in my role."

"It was eye opening to see how much not offering French in a health care environment can affect a patient's care."

"A useful resource to help healthcare professionals better understand the impact of the active offer of French language services on their patients' well-being. Easy to follow and self-paced, making it accessible even with a busy schedule." - translated from French

User Satisfaction

Recommend the training



No perception of bias



Training meets its goals



Satisfaction - complementary modules



In addition to the results demonstrating the effectiveness of the training, satisfaction among individuals completing our modules remains very high, with an average of 90.5% of users recommending the training across all modules combined. Furthermore, 90.9% of respondents did not perceive any bias in the content of the modules. An impressive 99% of respondents indicated being satisfied or very satisfied with the training in terms of achieving the learning objectives.

For the complementary modules specifically, an average of 94.2% of participants who completed them reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the overall module. These results, consistent with those of previous years, are a source of pride for us and further evidence of the quality of our training.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we use the feedback and suggestions received to improve the content, enhance accessibility and ensure it remains up to date. We therefore thank everyone who took the time to provide suggestions and comments.

Franco-Santé

For several years, the *Franco-santé* project has aimed to reach Francophone and Francophile students enrolled in post-secondary health programs in English-language institutions. As part of the project this year, we facilitated four active offer training sessions for health sciences learners at NOSM University, with a total of 36 participants.

Algoma University also provided its social work students with a recorded presentation on active offer that had been delivered the previous year.

Feedback from someone who took part in one of these sessions:

“Learning how prominent French speaking clients really are in the community, understanding that this active offer is even a thing, and that helping to uphold it can make a big, positive difference in someone's life. The presentation gave me more confidence in speaking French with patients regardless of how long I've been out of practice. Speaking French in a medical setting has been my biggest stressor about this placement, and I feel a lot more relaxed about it now. Also, I really liked the distinction between everyday French and literal translation... my whole life my mémère would tell me « j'ai mal aux reins ». I thought she had kidney pain”.

Petite enfance en santé (Healthy Early Years)

As the Lead network for the Healthy Early Years project in Ontario, the Réseau supports the two project promoters, Health Nexus and the *Association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario* (AFÉSEO), in promoting their activities.

We facilitated the dissemination of their resources through our platforms and to the other two Networks in Ontario. We also supported them in mobilizing partners to ensure the success of their initiatives and participated in the Provincial Advisory Committee for Francophone Early Childhood.

Designation and French Language Services Reports

During the first half of the year, the Réseau supported designated HSPs, in collaboration with Ontario Health North, in their work to meet the requirements of their designation.

Since the transition in September 2025, the Réseau has continued to provide support to all providers through the resources it has developed, which are available on our website, as well as through our active offer training, group registration, and personalised support offered to all health service providers in the province.

HSPs are required to complete an annual report on French language services. With support from the Réseau, 98.7% of providers in the North submitted their 2024-2025 annual report in the summer of 2025.

The Réseau in the Community

Community Engagement

The Réseau initiated a community engagement plan in 2024–2025 and completed the activities outlined in that plan. In August 2025, we published a report summarizing these engagement initiatives and their outcomes. This report is the result of **14** engagement sessions that reached **144** participants across the North West and North East. These engagements confirmed the six priorities identified in previous consultations and highlighted findings based on participants’ experiences as Francophone patients or caregivers.

[See the summary report.](#)

Presentations

The Réseau carried out significant awareness-raising work by addressing topics such as the importance of French language health services, active offer, the Winning Strategies initiative, the “Interpretation and You” training developed by l’Accueil Francophone de Thunder Bay, and a presentation on the current state of long-term care and home care. Through **15** activities, we reached **266** people, where we were able to both present to and listen to the communities and partners in attendance. Among these presentations, we delivered a training session on active offer to a group of 41 people from the AMANI Mental Health & Substance Use Program, which provides services that are culturally responsive and affirming to Black youth.

Question of the Season

Our “Question of the Month” initiative, launched last year, has evolved this year into a “Question of the Season”. The goal is to focus on questions that address issues of importance to French language health services in Northern Ontario and to gather more responses to each question. In the fall of 2025, our question asked whether government efforts to improve access to primary care had had an impact on Francophones and whether this had affected their ability to receive services in French. Respondents reported having access to a primary care provider at a rate of 70% prior to January 1, 2025. This proportion rose to 80% at the time of the survey, indicating improved access to primary care among respondents. However, only 50% of these individuals had access to these services in French.



Our second question was launched at the very end of March. In response to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages’ report titled Breaking Down Language Barriers in Health Care: For Equitable, Safe and Quality Health Care and Health Services, this question aims to better understand the impact for Francophones of not receiving services in French.

Collaborations and Partnerships

The *Réseau* continued working with its partners on several health-related issues. Here are a few examples:

- Contribution to the Green Paper presented by the AFO as part of the *États généraux de la francophonie*
- Consultation on the preparation of a briefing note regarding bilateral health agreements (work started in March 2026)
- Meetings with Practice Ready Ontario, the organization responsible for facilitating the licensing of internationally trained health professionals. They need to develop a French language pathway to facilitate the recruitment of bilingual professionals. We raised the need for active offer training and the concerns surrounding the College of Physicians guidelines suggesting the use of family members as interpreters for patients who do not speak English.
- Participation in the committee of the French language Health Service Providers Network in Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Francophone Advisory Committee of the Alliance for Healthy Communities
- NOSM University Francophone Advisory Group
- Participation in the opening of the new *Centre de santé communautaire de Timmins*



Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario (FARFO)

Ongoing partnerships with the provincial FARFO, as well as the *Grand-Nord* and *Moyen-Nord*, has supported reflection and action related to French language services for seniors. Discussions on the current state of home and community care services have helped explore FARFO's role in supporting identified priorities. Participation in the *FARFO Grand Nord* advisory committee, as well as exchanges with provincial and regional leadership, has also contributed to promoting the importance of accessible French language services for seniors, particularly in home and community care and long-term care.





Collaboration with Researchers

The *Groupe de recherche sur la formation et les pratiques en santé et service social en contexte francophone minoritaire* (GReFoPS) published two reports this year on home care and long-term care. The Réseau collaborated with the research team during the implementation of these projects, and the findings support our work.

We are also a partner and utilize knowledge provided by *FORCES-Santé*, a collaborative research network dedicated to the health of Francophone minority communities in Canada. The development and pilot project of our active offer training module for the pharmacy sector is one of the projects associated with *FORCES-Santé*.

As mentioned in the section on active offer training, evaluation results measuring knowledge, behaviours and attitudes related to the active offer demonstrate the effectiveness of the training. Our collaboration with a researcher from the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHRR) and the members of the project's advisory committee is continuing this year thanks to funding for the researcher confirmed in January 2026.

Collaboration with Government Agencies

The Réseau continued its collaboration with Ontario Health North in our joint efforts to encourage health service providers across the North to adopt the active offer training. This support and recognition of the quality of our training add credibility and weight to our efforts to persuade health service providers to make the training mandatory for their staff.



Visibility

Newsletters

The Réseau continues to distribute the INFO Newsletter to its 877 subscribers. This year, seven issues of the INFO Newsletter were shared, along with six press releases, announcements, or calls for applications, all aimed at sharing news about the Réseau, the Francophone community, relevant resources and invitations to events.



Articles/Interviews

📅 June 24, 2025 (Radio-Canada)

[« J'ai hâte » : mise en place du Centre de planification des services de santé en français \(available in French only\)](#)

📅 June 25, 2025 (ONFR)

[Financement provincial retiré : le Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord craint pour sa mission \(available in French only\)](#)

📅 June 25, 2025 (Francopresse)

[Ontario : des réseaux de santé en français dissous sans consultation \(available in French only\)](#)

📅 October 15, 2025 (ONFR)

[Six lauréats franco-ontarien honorés par l'AFO avec des prix de reconnaissance \(available in French only\)](#)

Social Media

In addition to its newsletter and website, the Réseau uses Facebook to reach a diverse audience. Among other things, this platform enables the Réseau to share messages from partners related to French language health services and to promote activities for Francophone communities, health service providers, healthcare professionals, and individuals studying or working in educational institutions.



Subscribers 
1487

Posts 
108

Interactions 

(number of "Likes", reactions, saves, comments, shares, and responses to content)

1542

Visits 

(number of times the page was visited)

2400



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[linkedin.com/company/rmefno](https://www.linkedin.com/company/rmefno)

Website

The Réseau publishes and maintains a database of tools and resources on its website. Filtering options allow users to search by type, topic, sector and the language in which the tool is available. Here are a few examples of the documents available:

- [Cheat Sheet: French Language Services - If You Speak French](#)
- [Cheat Sheet: French Language Services - If You Don't Speak French](#)
- [Virtual Resource Kit for Improving Health Services to Francophone Immigrants in Ontario](#)
- [Francophones and Health Services – Summary Report of Collected Testimonials](#)
- [Template – Francophone Experience Survey \(Questionnaire\)](#)
- [Poster – Active Offer of French Language Health Services](#)
- [Plan de services communautaires pour la petite enfance en santé de l'Ontario - avril 2024 à mars 2029](#) (available in French only)



<https://reseaudumieuxetre.ca/en/outils-et-ressources/>

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The Healthy Early Childhood project is made possible through funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

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



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