



FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES IN LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES AND HOME CARE IN NOVA SCOTIA ACADIAN REGIONS

**** Non-Official English Translation ****

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A French version of this report is available on request.

Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote and improve access to quality health and wellness services in French in the province’s Acadian regions.

Our vision, and our dream as an organization, is that Acadians in Nova Scotia can flourish while benefiting from a health care system that respects their cultural, social and linguistic values.

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The following is provided as an English interpretation of responses to the above-mentioned survey. It does not constitute an official translation completed by a trained and certified translator.

Introduction

The long-term goal of this project is to improve access to French-language health services in Nova Scotia. However, to improve services offered in long-term care (LTC) facilities and by home care agencies, we must first understand the realities of these institutions.

The main activity of the project was to survey LTC facilities and home care agencies in Acadian regions of Nova Scotia to find out about their realities, their challenges and their needs. Recommendations included with this report will contribute to Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse examining possible solutions and future collaborations.

This report can be used as a guide for Acadian non-profit organizations, including Réseau Santé to:

- learn about the situation in the continuing care organizations identified;
- better understand the challenges and issues facing LTC and home care organizations;
- collaborate with administrators to share tools or solutions to tackle some of their challenges.

Methodology

The research focused on communicating with administrators of LTC facilities and home care agencies. The first step was to send letters to LTC facilities and home care organizations in Nova Scotia to introduce them to Réseau Santé, the Bonjour / Hello! Program, as well as to provide them with a USB key including resources and reports such the Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector, the Guide to Planning and Providing Long-Term Care in French, and the impact of language barriers on patient safety, among others.

Sample letters are included in Appendix A as well as the list of facilities and organizations that received letters. The list of resources and websites can be found in Appendix B.

We also called LTC facilities in Acadian regions and we had the opportunity to talk to some of the institutions' administrators. We were able to contact and speak with some of the home care agencies administrators, although it was more difficult to join them. Appendix C presents the questions asked during the phone interviews.

Those we could not reach by phone, were sent an email as a follow up. Unfortunately, a number of LTC facilities and home care agencies did not respond to our enquiries. Listed below are the facilities that did respond to our questionnaire.

Table 1

Nova Scotia Southwest Region Long-Term Care Facilities					
	Foyer Nakile	Villa St-Joseph	Villa Acadienne	Foyer Céleste	Au Logis d'Meteghan
Residents	47	79	85	19	22
French-speaking or bilingual residents	27	28	65	18	22
Health care professionals	95	130	148	14	17
French-speaking or bilingual health care professionals	40	34	102	12	17

Table 2

Nova Scotia Northeast Region Long-Term Care Facilities			
	Foyer Père Fiset (Chéticamp)	Inverary Manor (Inverness)	Alderwood (Baddeck)
Residents	71	71	70
French-speaking or bilingual residents	61	5	0
Health care professionals	100	135	130
French-speaking or bilingual health care professionals	80	1	0

Table 3

Home Care Agencies				
	Digby/Clare Home Support Agency	Yarmouth/Argyle Home Support Agency	Guysborough Co. Home Support Agency	Richmond Co. Home Support Agency
Clients	294	356	141	182
French-speaking or bilingual clients	102	92	0	0**
Health care professionals	58	54	30	49
French-speaking or bilingual health care professionals	8	6	1	12

** We are aware that a number of clients in Richmond Co. have French as a mother tongue.

Challenges

Long-term care facilities as well as home care agencies both reported that the greatest challenge they encounter on a daily basis to better serve French-speaking clients is the availability and recruitment of French-speaking professionals.

This difficulty is compounded by the fact that, except for Halifax Regional Municipality and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Acadian communities are located in rural areas. Some institutions have tried to prioritize French-speaking positions but at this point, qualified individuals will be hired even if they don't speak French. The shortage of staff is widespread whether they are licensed practical nurses (LPN), registered nurses (RN), kitchen or cleaning staff. Administrators admitted that some positions cannot be filled.

Staff training courses are mainly offered in English. Administrators believe that as long as staff can speak in French with residents and clients, the language of training is not crucial. Most employees have studied in English (even Acadians), especially nurses, and prefer to continue professional development in their language of study.

An LTC administrator indicated that their organization provided French language training to some of their anglophone staff. The class was well received, but employees found that it was too demanding and would prefer to spend time with their families instead of studying. Although, anglophone staff do not speak French, they may know some basic words such as *coucher* (bedtime), *lever* (get up), *de l'eau* (water), etc.

An administrator expressed that there is a lack of understanding and willingness from the Health Association of Nova Scotia (HANS) to better support French-speaking students and staff. This organization is influential with the Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) program at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). For example, there is an evaluation tool for students called "Competency Assessment Tool" which could be translated in French for those who would prefer to complete the assessment in French, but it is only available in English.

All LTC facilities that answered the survey reported that they have a wait list. The individual on the wait list does not have the choice to refuse a bed that becomes available in another community or in an English-speaking only facility.

Conclusion

LTC facilities in Acadian and francophone regions understand the importance of French-language services in their facility, especially if the administrator is Acadian or francophone. However, there is still a lot of work to be done with LTC facilities and home care agencies to raise awareness of the cultural and linguistic needs of French-speaking residents or clients.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that language loss is often associated with dementia creating additional challenges for elderly French-speaking patients. As they become older, they begin to lose their ability to communicate in their second language (English) and, often without noticing, find themselves speaking their mother tongue.

The present research has clearly identified the shortage of health care professionals as the greatest challenge to LTC facilities and home care agencies administrators, whether they speak French or not. Fewer individuals than in past register in CCA, LPN and RN programs. In addition, students in these programs may not return to their rural region of origin, which adds to the workforce shortages in continuing care.

Recommendations for Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse

- Follow up with long-term care facilities and home care agencies that did not respond to Réseau's questionnaire. In particular, Isle Madame region is not well represented in this continuing care report.
- Contact the Health Association of Nova Scotia located in Halifax Regional Municipality to raise awareness about the Acadian and francophone community and its health issues, needs and priorities.
- Build positive relationships between Réseau Santé's and LTC facilities and home care agencies through the Réseau's regional coordinators.
- Promote the Réseau Santé's campaign and tools "Bonjour/Hello" within LTC facilities and home care agencies to identify French-speaking staff, and provide material for clients and staff.
- Inform LTC facilities and home care agencies on new developments or initiatives in the Acadian community.
- Promote college and university programs for CCA, LPN and RN.
- Work in collaboration with the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (Acadian school board) to promote CCA, LPN and RN programs.
- Strategically target provincial and municipal governments to implement incentives for CCA, LPN and RN to relocate in rural areas.
- Offer incentives to students registered in Université Sainte-Anne's CCA and LPN programs.
- Develop a strategy with Université Sainte-Anne to access RN programs in French.

Appendix A

Sample letters for long-term care facilities

Chère Monsieur/Madame,

Nous vous écrivons pour présenter notre organisme et de partager avec vous notre désir de collaborer avec vous et vos employés.

Le Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse est un organisme sans but lucratif, qui a pour mission de promouvoir et d'améliorer l'accessibilité en français aux services de santé et de mieux-être de qualité dans toutes les régions acadiennes de la province.

Les résidents des foyers de soins de longue durée dans les régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse ont des besoins spéciaux. Non seulement que leur santé physique doit être une priorité mais leur langue et leur culture doivent aussi être prise en considération pour assurer le bien-être global du patient.

Nous sommes au courant qu'il y a bien des défis et des enjeux qui vous préoccupent dans votre foyer de soins à longue durée et nous aimerions en discuter davantage avec vous afin de connaître vos besoins et pour trouver des pistes de solutions ensemble.

Nous possédons des ressources qui pourraient vous être utiles que nous avons compilé sur une clé USB pour que vous puissiez en prendre connaissance. Entre autres, le projet de la Société Santé en Français, « Améliorer l'accès des personnes âgées au Manitoba et de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard aux services de santé en français », le cadre pour les ressources humaines bilingues ainsi qu'une application pour les téléphones intelligents avec une base de données de vocabulaire. Nous aurons aussi des épingles et des collants que nous vous enverrons que nous avons créé où les professionnels de la santé pourront s'afficher en tant que personnel bilingue et les collants pourront identifier les résidents francophones/acadiens.

Nous aimerions travailler ensemble avec vous pour vous aider à mieux servir vos résidents acadiens dans votre foyer de soins de longue durée. Nous espérons pouvoir vous contacter la semaine prochaine pour discuter de vos besoins. Au plaisir de connaître vos besoins et vos inquiétudes dans les prochains jours.

Cordialement,

Jeanne-Françoise Caillaud
Directrice générale du Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse

Dear Madam/Sir,

We are writing to you in order to present our organization and to inform you that we would like to collaborate with you and your employees.

Le Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse (the health network of Nova Scotia for Acadians and Francophones) is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to promote and improve access in French of health care and wellness to all Acadian regions of the province.

The clients of long term care services in the Acadian regions in Nova Scotia have special needs. Not only must their physical health be a priority but their language and culture must also be taken into consideration to ensure quality of care, safety and the overall health of the patient.

We are aware that there are many challenges and issues that are of concern for long term care and we would like to discuss these with you further in order to better understand your needs and to find solutions together.

We also have resources that may be beneficial for you and your employees that you can consult that we have compiled for you on a USB key. Among other things, la Société Santé en français' project "Improving Access to Health Services in French for Manitoba and Prince Edward Island Seniors", the framework for recruitment and retention for bilingual human resources as well as an app that can be downloaded on smart devices that will help find health related vocabulary. We will also have pins that we can send you, if you have any bilingual staff, where the health professionals will be able to show that they are bilingual by wearing the pin 'hello, bonjour'.

We would like to work together with you to help you better serve your Acadian and Francophone clients. We hope to contact you next week in order to discuss your needs.

Looking forward to speaking with you in order to better understand your needs and concerns in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Jeanne-Francoise Caillaud
Executive Director – Réseau santé – Nouvelle-Écosse

Sample letters for home care organizations

Cher Monsieur, Madame,

Nous vous écrivons pour présenter notre organisme et de partager avec vous notre désir de collaborer avec vous et vos employés.

Le Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse est un organisme sans but lucratif, qui a pour mission de promouvoir et d'améliorer l'accessibilité en français aux services de santé et de mieux-être de qualité dans toutes les régions acadiennes de la province.

Les clients des services de soins à domicile dans les régions acadiennes de la Nouvelle-Écosse ont des besoins spéciaux. Non seulement que leur santé physique doit être une priorité mais leur langue et leur culture doivent aussi être prise en considération pour assurer le bien-être global du patient.

Nous sommes au courant qu'il y a bien des défis et des enjeux qui vous préoccupent pour les soins à domicile et nous aimerions en discuter davantage avec vous afin de connaître vos besoins et pour trouver des pistes de solutions ensemble.

Nous possédons des ressources qui pourraient vous être utiles. Entre autres, le rapport de Danielle De Moissac « L'expérience des communautés minoritaires à faible densité de francophones au Canada », le cadre pour les ressources humaines bilingues ainsi qu'une application pour les téléphones intelligents avec une base de données de vocabulaire. Nous aurons des épingles que nous pouvons vous envoyer, si vous avez du personnel acadien, où les professionnels de la santé pourront s'afficher en tant que bilingue.

Nous aimerions travailler ensemble avec vous pour vous aider à mieux servir vos clients acadiens. Nous espérons pouvoir vous contacter la semaine prochaine pour discuter de vos besoins. Au plaisir de connaître vos besoins et vos inquiétudes dans les prochains jours.

Cordialement,

Jeanne-Françoise Caillaud
Directrice générale du Réseau santé – Nouvelle-Écosse

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to you in order to present our organization and to inform you that we wish to collaborate with you and your employees.

Le Réseau Santé – Nouvelle-Écosse (the health network of Nova Scotia for Acadians and Francophones) is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to promote and improve access in French of health care and wellness to all Acadian regions of the province.

The clients of the home care services in the Acadian regions in Nova Scotia have special needs. Not only must their physical health be a priority but their language and culture must also be taken into consideration to ensure the quality of care, the safety and the overall health of the patient.

We are aware that there are many challenges and issues that are of concern for home care and we would like to discuss these with you further in order to better understand your needs and to find solutions together.

We also have resources that may be beneficial for you and your employees. Among other things, Danielle De Moissac's research report "The experience of sparsely populated francophone minority communities in Canada", the framework for recruitment and retention for bilingual human resources as well as an app that can be downloaded on smart devices that will help find health related vocabulary in French. We will also have pins that we can send you, if you have any bilingual staff, where the health professionals will be able to show that they are bilingual by wearing the pin 'hello, bonjour'.

We would like to work together with you to help you better serve your Acadian and Francophone clients. We hope to contact you next week in order to discuss your needs.

Looking forward to speaking with you in order to better understand your needs and concerns in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Jeanne-Francoise Caillaud
Executive Director – Réseau santé – Nouvelle-Écosse

List of LTC facilities that received a letter from Réseau Santé. Names and addresses were taken from the Department of Health and Wellness document “Nursing Homes and Residential Care Directories”.

<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Nursing-Homes-and-Residential-Care-Directories.pdf>

Western Zone

Au Logis d’Meteghan, Meteghan

Foyer Céleste, Meteghan

Nakile Home for Special Care, Glenwood

Olson’s Glo Estates Home for Special Care, Yarmouth

Pont du Marais Home Boarding Home, West Pubnico

The Meadows – Tidal View Manor, Yarmouth

Villa Acadienne, Meteghan

Villa St-Joseph-du-Lac, Yarmouth

Eastern Zone

Alderwood, Baddeck

Foyer Père Fiset, Chéticamp

Inverary Manor, Inverness

Port Hawkesbury Nursing Home, Port Hawkesbury

Richmond Villa, St.Peter’s

St. Anne Community and Nursing Care Centre, Arichat

Central Zone

Northwood Inc., Halifax

List of home care agencies that received a letter from Réseau Santé as per Department of Health and Wellness Home Care Agencies Directory https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Home_Support.pdf

Western Zone

Lunenburg County Home Support Services Society, Bridgewater
Region of Queens Home Support, Liverpool
VON Lunenburg County, Blockhouse
VON Queens Country, Liverpool
Digby/Clare Home Support Agency, Weymouth
VON Tri-County Branch, Yarmouth
Yarmouth Argyle Home Support Services Society, Tusket
VON Annapolis Valley, Kentville

Northern Zone

VON Pictou Branch, New Glasgow
VON Colchester East Hants, Truro
VON Cumberland, Amherst

Eastern Zone

VON Cape Breton Branch, Sydney
Antigonish & Area Homemaker Service, Antigonish
Guysborough County Home Support Agency, Guysborough
Richmond County Home Support Agency, Louisdale
VON Antigonish, Antigonish
Cape Breton County Homemakers Agency, Sydney
City Homemakers Service Society, Sydney
Inverness County Home Support Society, Port Hood
New Waterford Homecare Services Society, New Waterford
Northside Homemaker Service Society, Sydney Mines
Victoria County Home Support Service Society, Baddeck

Central Zone

Bayshore Home Health, Halifax (HRM)
Closing the Gap Healthcare Group, Bedford (HRM)
Northwood Homecare Ltd, Dartmouth (HRM)
Red Cross Home Partners, Canadian Red Cross, NS Region, Dartmouth (HRM)
Paramed Home Health Care, Bedford (HRM)
RJF Healthcare Services Ltd, Halifax (HRM)
VON Greater Halifax, Halifax

Appendix B

Along with the Réseau Santé's introductory letter, LTC facilities received a USB key including resources in French and in English.

Publications

Improving Access to Health Services in French for Manitoba and Prince Edward Island Seniors, Société Santé en français.

Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector, Société Santé en français and Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario.

Le guide de planification et de prestation des soins de longue durée en français du Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario.

The Impact of Language Barriers on Patient Safety and Quality of Care, Sarah Bowen, PhD for Société Santé en français.

The Experience of Sparsely Populated Francophone Minority Communities in Canada, Danielle De Moissac for Société Santé en français.

La création de Villages culturels, René Aucoin pour le Réseau Santé - Nouvelle-Écosse.

Video

Communication, Quality and Safety in Health Care

Websites

Educacentre.com and their mobile apps. Terminology glossary in French and in English.

Health Human Resources Strategy: Provide Effective Delivery of French Language Health Services in your Organization, Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario and Société Santé en français.

This online resource presents concepts and courses of action for improving access to French language health services across Canada, and supports the vision and strategic directions set out in Health Canada's Health Human Resources Strategy.

<http://hhrstrategy.ca/>

Portail de formation linguistique et d'adaptation culturelle en santé du Consortium national de formation en santé

<http://cnfs.net/portail/formation-flacs/>

Mobile App

Hello Santé – NS Health Care mobile app. This application aims to empower front line employees at Nova Scotia’s health centres. The vast majority of health professionals possess little or no knowledge of the French language. This application provides them quick access to a tool containing basic French vocabulary that can be used when welcoming French-speaking clients.

Other

Health in French. A bilingual lexicon for health and social services.

Appendix C

Questions asked during phone interviews.

1. Did you receive the letter from Réseau Santé (French Health Network)?
2. How many clients do you have? How many of them are French-speaking or bilingual?
3. How many health professionals do you have? How many are bilingual?
4. What are your challenges (e.g. staffing, bed spaces, other)?
5. Do you offer any professional development days in French? Or any French language training courses?

