

# Active Offer of FLS in Health

## Employee Fact Sheet

### **What is Active Offer of FLS (French Language Services)?**

**Active Offer** begins when :

Awareness is created within an organization and health service providers are proactive and supportive to the offer and provision of quality French language services.

**Active Offer** happens when...

Francophone members of the public are **informed** about available services in French, have **access** to these services and are **satisfied** with the quality of these services.<sup>1</sup>

### **How does Active Offer of FLS fit into the health care system?**

Active offer is an important factor when engaging patients in the local health system transformation. It provides for a better quality of service that is responsive to client needs and has a positive impact for clients, institutions and communities, as a clear understanding of one's health. It makes for a healthier individual and environment.

**Local health service providers** who are identified or, under the *French Language Services Act*<sup>2</sup>, designated to provide FLS, are encouraged to be proactive in establishing and offering services in French, **rather than relying on the public having to request them.**

As stated by the French Language Services Commissioner – François Boileau – in his *Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario, 2009*: “It has been shown, time and time again, that active offer has a considerable impact on the demand for services. The more actively a service is offered, the more demand there is for it. This is as true for health as for any other sector.”

### **How do I promote an Active Offer of FLS?**

- 🗣️ When delivering services in **person**, extend a two-language greeting, such as **Hello, Bonjour.**
- 🗣️ If the client/patient responds in French, continue the conversation in French. If you can't carry on the conversation in French, say **Un moment s'il-vous-plaît** (One moment please: UN MO-MON S'EEEL-VOO-PLAY). Then go get someone who can speak French.
- 🗣️ When delivering services on the **phone**, answer in both languages. Example: **Hospital XX, Bonjour.** If you can't understand or speak to the French caller, say **Un moment s'il-vous-plaît** and transfer the call to someone who can.
- 🗣️ If you are bilingual, your voice mail should include a two-language greeting, such as **Hello/Bonjour. You have reached XX, please leave a detailed message.... Vous pouvez également laisser votre message en français.**
- 🗣️ If you speak French, wear a **badge** or **name tag** that clearly identifies you as French-speaking. That way, the French client/patient will know that they can speak to you in French.

<sup>1</sup> From “*OPS Framework for Action: A Modern Ontario Public Service*”, 2006

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90f32\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90f32_e.htm)

- 👉 DON'T assume that if the client/patient is French, they will ask for their services in French or speak to you in French first. For whatever reason, they might feel awkward initiating the conversation in French. BE **PROACTIVE** by identifying yourself as French-speaking and making them feel comfortable to speak to you in French.
- 👉 DON'T be embarrassed if you feel that your French is “not good enough”. Every bit helps, and the French client/patient will surely appreciate the effort. Don't worry if you don't know the “technical” vocabulary in French. Chances are that your client/patient won't know it either!
- 👉 The **active offer** of French language services is all about **good customer service!**