



Joint Position Statement on the Active Offer of French Language Health Services in Ontario

***The Regroupement des Entités de planification des services
de santé en français de l'Ontario***

and

the Alliance des Réseaux ontariens de santé en français

March 2015

Background

The concept of active offer is widely used within the context of government services in French in Ontario and it is gaining currency in the area of French language health services. As Ontario's French Language Health Planning Entities (Entities) and French Language Health Networks (Networks), we recognize that health services are not always available in French and are not always actively offered in French. We are convinced of the relevance of active offer in our sector, insofar as the services are actually in place and available in French.

There are a number of definitions of active offer and several approaches to implementation. After systematically examining the literature and practices regarding the foundations and forms of active offer¹ and considering the particular context of French language health services in Ontario, we have come to a common understanding of active offer, which we set forth here.

This position statement establishes the relevance of active offer, provides a definition adapted to health services for Ontario's Francophones and identifies the roles and responsibilities of several key actors in its implementation.

The document calls on, in particular, local health integration networks (LHINs), as part of their planning responsibilities, and health service providers, as part of their service delivery responsibilities, to commit to the active offer of health services in French.

We are convinced that such a commitment along with the clear definition of these roles and responsibilities will ultimately lead to improved access to health services by Ontario's Francophones.

Active Offer

Active offer of health services in French is the regular and permanent offer of services to the Francophone population. Active offer of services:

- respects the principle of equity;

- aims for service quality comparable to that provided in English;

- is linguistically and culturally appropriate to the needs and priorities of Francophones;

- is inherent in the quality of the services provided to people (patients, residents, clients) and an important contributing factor to their safety.

It is the result of a rigorous and innovative process for planning and delivering services in French across the entire health care continuum.

¹ Socius recherche et conseils. (2014). *Offre active des services de santé en français en Ontario. Document de fond.* Prepared for the Alliance des réseaux ontariens de santé en français and the Regroupement des entités de planification des services de santé en français de l'Ontario.



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It depends on accountability at several levels and requires partners to exercise appropriate leadership with respect to health services in French.

In concrete terms, it takes the form of a range of health services available in French and offered proactively, that is, services are clearly announced, visible and easily accessible at all times.

Implementation

Implementation of active offer of French language health services requires an appropriation of responsibility at several levels:

- The system (Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, LHINs) that designs the policies and programs, sets the rules, allocates resources, retains providers' services and holds them accountable;
- The organizations that provide the services;
- The professionals who work with patients, residents and clients;
- And the individuals who use health services.

Careful planning of active offer at each of these levels is necessary to ensure effective implementation and optimal conditions for Francophone patients.

The System Level

Implementation and active offer of French language health services in Ontario are governed by a number of laws and regulations:

- French Language Services Act, and Ontario Regulation 284/11 on the provision of French language services by third parties and the criteria for designation under the Act;
- Local Health System Integration Act, 2006 and Ontario Regulation 515/09, which creates the model of collaboration between the LHINs and the French Language Health Planning Entities;
- Excellent Care for All Act, 2010, which sets the criteria for service quality and positive patient experience.

Under this legal and regulatory framework, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is responsible for holding LHINs accountable for the active offer of health services in French. In turn, the LHINs ensure that this accountability is shared by service providers, by including it, among other things, in funding and accountability agreements and in their guiding principles.

In a health system that takes Francophones into account, these responsibilities for active offer are reflected in ministry plans, in LHIN integrated health service and annual business plans and in providers' strategic and operational plans.



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Organizational Level

Service providers are responsible and accountable for the active offer of French language health services. In a health system that takes Francophones into account, they play a leadership role by opening their governance to the Francophone community, by stating their policy on active offer and by publicizing this commitment. They plan and coordinate their actions accordingly. They build an internal culture that supports active offer and hire professionally and linguistically competent staff. Finally, they continuously assess and improve their capacity to provide quality health services in French.

Professional Level

In a health system that takes Francophones into account, health professionals use their professional, linguistic and cultural competencies as well as their ethical judgement to proactively welcome their Francophone clients in French, understand their needs, and provide them with the necessary care or refer them to the resources able to provide such care. They also take on a leadership role in their environment by promoting active offer. In this way they ensure quality of care for and the safety of the people they serve.

Individual Level

In a health system that takes Francophones' reality into account, Francophones actively use French language health services to express their needs and obtain appropriate care. As language is a social determinant of health, they also contribute to the improvement of health services by communicating their viewpoint on the quality of the services they receive or, when they have the opportunity, by participating in the planning and governance of the agencies responsible.

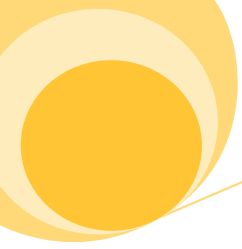
Our Commitment

As Entities, we play an advisory and awareness role with respect to the LHINs and we also engage the Francophone community on French language health services.

As Networks, we proactively promote networking among the key partners in the health system (political decision-makers, health professionals, communities, health service managers and training institutions) and support projects to improve the health of Francophones.

Together, we collaborate to improve the health of the province's Francophone communities.

Our contribution touches on all dimensions of active offer the system, organizational, professional and individual levels.



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Collectively and individually, we have a responsibility to ensure that active offer of French language health services is consistent across the province.

The *Joint Position Statement on the Active Offer of French Language Health Services* is evidence of our commitment to our partners to work with them in planning and developing active offer. The Ministry, LHINs, health service providers and our communities can count on us to continue our efforts to equip key actors with information and tools on active offer as part of a collaborative approach.

Our actions fall within the broader Ontario policy framework of improving patient experience with a view to creating better access to health care for Francophones in Ontario.

Who we are:

Ontario's French Language Health Networks and French Language Health Planning Entities work to improve the health of Ontario's Francophone communities. Although their spheres of action, accountabilities and funding are different, the Networks and the Entities work together on provincial issues of common interest.

French Language Health Networks of Ontario



Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario



Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario



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

French Language Health Planning Entities

