



Healthcare Providers
Community of Practice for
French Language Services



COMMUNAUTÉ DE PRATIQUE
POUR PROFESSIONNELS BILINGUES

REPORT

REGIONAL OUTREACH TOUR ON ACTIVE OFFER, USE AND DEMAND OF FRENCH LANGUAGE HEALTH SERVICES 2024

Sarnia-Lambton

Mars 2024

Cambridge
Avril 2024

Mai 2024

Hamilton
Juin 2024

Chatham-Kent
Juin 2024

PLÉNIÈRE
RÉGIONALE
Octobre 2024



EXCELLENCE
TRANSPARENCE
IMPUTABILITÉ
COLLABORATION

Entité 
ÉRIÉ ST. CLAIR/SUD-OUEST
Planification des services
de santé en français

Entité²
French language health planning for the regions of
Waterloo-Wellington-Hamilton-Niagara-Haldimand-Brant



**Ontario
Health**



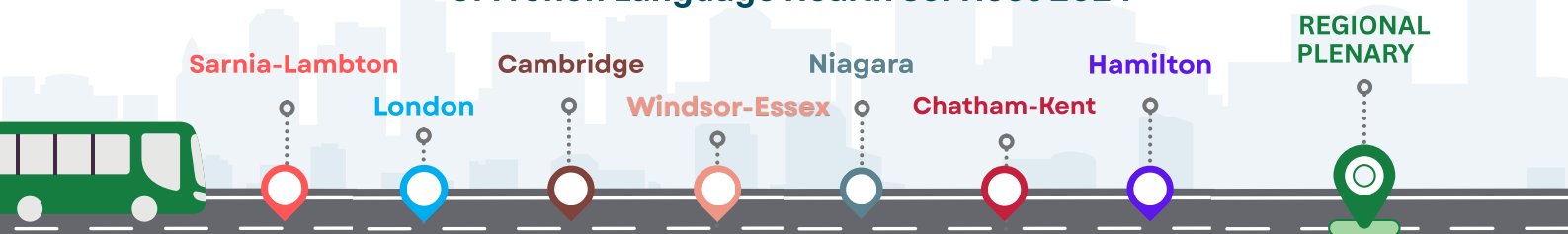
Desjardins

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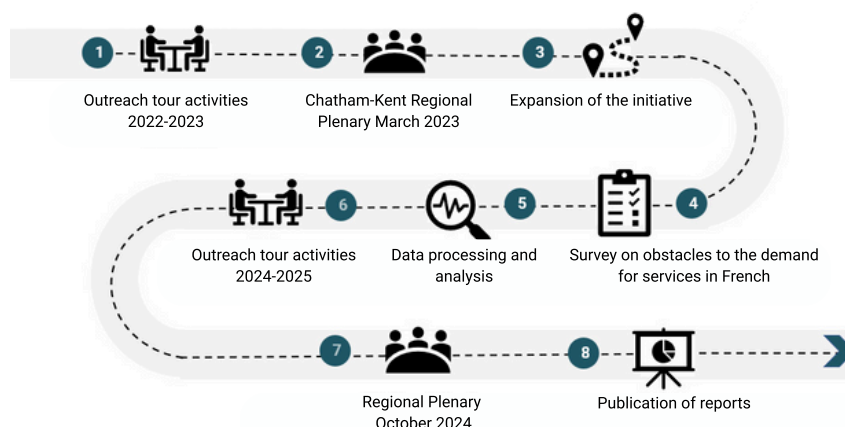
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional Outreach Tour on Active Offer, Use and Demand of French Language Health Services 2024



Objectives, context and steps of the Regional Tour

Led by Entities 1 and 2, the Regional Tour visited seven key cities and regions to raise awareness among communities and providers, and to better understand their needs and challenges. The tour culminated at the Regional Plenary in London, where Francophone community members in the West Region, service providers and key partners constructively discussed their respective challenges and possible solutions.



Supported by more than 30 local, regional and provincial partners



Survey on obstacles to the demand for services in French

7 regions surveyed
320 Francophone respondents



Outreach tour activities

7 key cities and regions visited
23 meetings
329 people reached



Regional Plenary October 2024

164 participants including:
56 community members
73 service providers
35 strategic partners

Highlights of the Regional Outreach Tour Report:

- Profiles, strengths and opportunities of 7 Francophone regions
- Interorganizational collaborations as a mean to strengthen the health system
- Challenges encountered in the field and innovative opportunities to advance active offer

REPORT



Discover the highlights and profiles of the 7 regions visited. Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to explore the report.

Version en français disponible [ici](#)



Table discussions - Regional Plenary London, October 29, 2024

Regional Outreach Tour on Active Offer, Use and Demand of French Language Health Services 2024

Context

The purpose of the Regional Outreach Tour was to increase the offer, use, and demand for French-language health services among Francophone community members and health and wellness service providers. The ultimate goal was to collaboratively improve access to French-language health services in Ontario Health West Region.

A bus journey to bring regions closer together

In total, we held 23 meetings in seven different cities and regions from Windsor to Welland, via Chatham, Sarnia, London, Cambridge, and Hamilton. We spoke to more than 300 people, including members of the Francophone community, bilingual professionals and service providers.

Goals

Francophone Community Members



- Learn more about the importance of utilizing existing French Language Health Services
- Know their rights to receive services in their preferred language, French
- Learn how to access available resources and actively contribute to the enhancement of French-language health services

Health and Wellness Service Providers



- Learn about the importance of active offer and their obligations in delivering health services in French
- Gain insight into the needs and priorities of the Francophone community
- Explore available resources and support

Regional Tour Bus Stops



Why a Bus Tour?

Inspired by 2023 Regional Tour, the 2024 Regional Outreach Tour adopted the symbolic image of the Franco-Ontarian green bus to represent its journey through the territories of Entities 1 and 2. Each stop corresponds to a region or city where there is a Francophone community and where we held various meetings with community members, Francophone organizations, health and wellness service providers and key partners. This metaphor illustrates a collective journey to improve access to and quality of French-language services in Ontario West Region, strengthening unity and synergy among all partners.

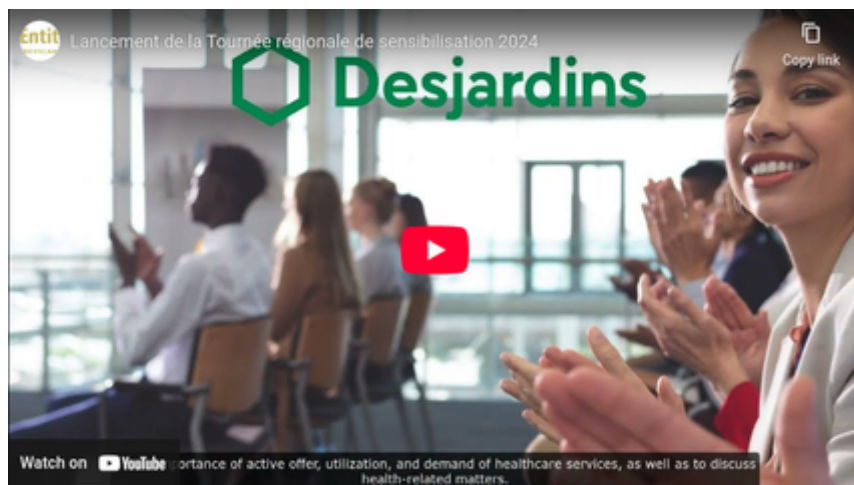


REGIONAL OUTREACH TOUR ON THE ACTIVE SUPPLY, USE AND DEMAND FOR FRENCH-LANGUAGE HEALTH SERVICES

Watch the Regional Outreach Tour launch video

The tour, led by Entities 1 and 2, is the result of a fruitful collaboration between members and partners of the two Communities of Practice, which promote the sharing of good practices and expertise and exchanges between their members.

- **Healthcare Providers Community of Practice for French Language Services.**
[Register here](#)
- **Community of Practice for Bilingual Professionals.** [Register here](#)



Methodology

The 2024 Regional Outreach Tour adopted a methodical and participatory approach, integrating data collection tools, regional consultations and an analysis of the needs of Francophone communities.

The collaborative approach harmonized regional efforts and mobilized key partners to identify appropriate and long-lasting solutions to meet the needs of Francophone communities

- **November 2023 to February 2024** - Survey of active demand for services in French in Entities 1 and 2 territories.
- **March to October 2024** - Regional consultation and exchange meetings with community members and service providers.
- **October 29, 2024** - Regional plenary to share information, network and speak out on issues and opportunities to increase access to services in French in Ontario West Region.
- **November 2024 to March 2025** - Compilation and analysis of information gathered during the Regional Tour and drafting of the report.

Thanks to the partners and contributors of the Regional Outreach Tour 2024

We would like to thank the Tour and Plenary participants, as well as the special guests and community partners who gave us such a warm welcome in their city. We would also like to thank the organizations that financially supported this initiative, including CCFWEK, La Girouette, CSCHN and Réseau franco-santé. Thank you to Ontario Health for providing interpretation services during the Plenary, contributing to the success of this event.

Special thanks go to Caisse Desjardins Ontario, which supported the 2024 Outreach Tour by funding its expansion into both Entities 1 and 2 territories, thereby increasing awareness and networking opportunities. This contribution has been instrumental in fostering the active offer and demand for French-language health services, as well as promoting linguistic equity in support of lasting solutions to improve care for Francophones in Ontario West Region.



[Promotional video of the Regional Outreach Tour, produced by Caisse Desjardins](#) (English subtitles)



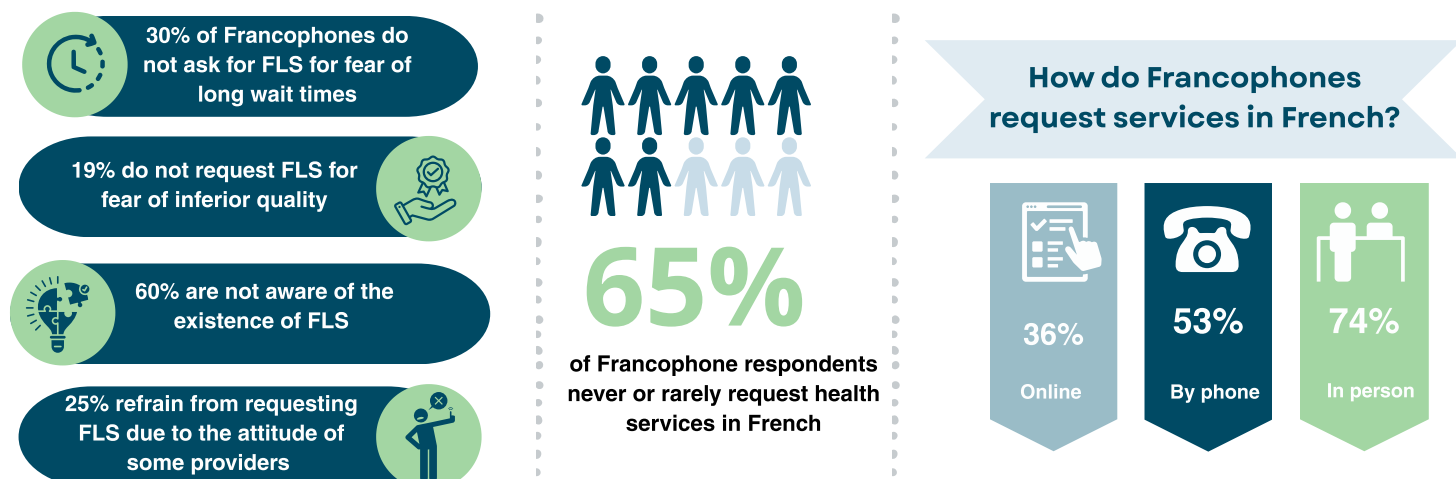
USE OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES BY FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY MEMBERS



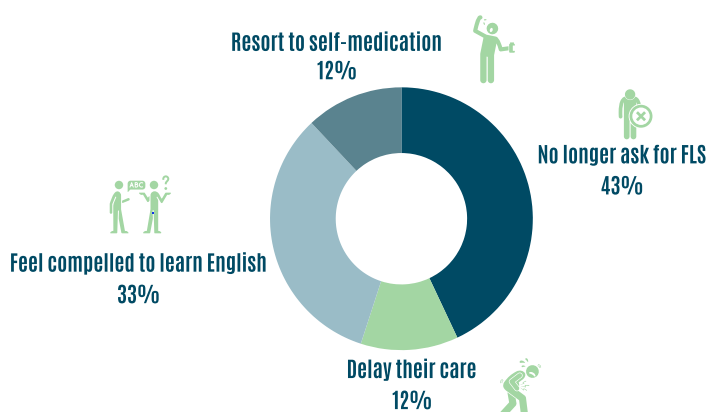
Results of the regional survey on active demand for French Language Health Services

In order to begin the regional tour with a better understanding of the reality of Francophone communities, a survey was conducted to understand the obstacles to active demand among Francophones in the territories of Entities 1 and 2. This survey, conducted from November 2023 to February 2024, aimed to better understand the use of French-language services. The results were used to guide discussions with service providers and Francophones during the Regional Tour. The infographic below illustrates the overall results of the survey administered across Ontario Health West Region, while regional specificities appear in each of the seven regional profiles (pages 7 to 13).

*FLS: French Language Services



Confronted with the lack of health services in French, what are Francophones doing?



What are the most requested health services in French?

Primary health care 65%

Emergency services 39%

Mental health services 28%

Long-term care 19%

SARNIA-LAMBTON REGIONAL PROFILE



London

Cambridge



Windsor-Essex



Niagara



Chatham-Kent



Hamilton



REGIONAL
PLENARY



2 consultation meetings

17 community members consulted

14 service providers consulted

29 respondents to the active demand survey

*Statistics based on mother tongue, Census 2021

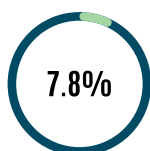
Sarnia-Lambton

Francophone
Population*



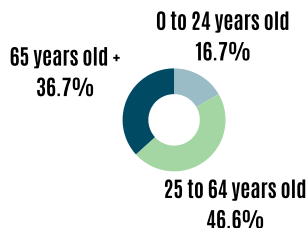
2 370

% Francophone
Immigrant
Population*



7.8%

% Francophone
Population by Age Group*



0 to 24 years old

16.7%

65 years old +

36.7%

25 to 64 years old

46.6%



WHAT WE HEARD

Increasing the active offer of French-language services and identifying bilingual professionals are priorities for meeting the needs of this community. Collaborative solutions such as Accès Franco-Santé Sarnia can help address the local realities of this region.

The city of Sarnia, recently designated under the *French Language Services Act*, boasts a dynamic and deeply committed Francophone community despite the challenges associated with its aging population. The community is working hard to attract and integrate Francophone newcomers to ensure its vitality and sustainability.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- Directory of French Language services in Southwestern Ontario
- Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West

www.guidealto.com/repso2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to French Language Health Services
- Few qualified bilingual human resources in the region

Identified regional opportunities

- Region newly designated under the *French Language Services Act*
- Providers highly motivated to implement health and wellness services
- Accès Franco-Santé Project (based on London model) planned for 2025
- Momentum to continue dialogue to raise awareness of active demand and offer of services in French among community and service providers

REPORT



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LONDON REGIONAL PROFILE



3 consultation meetings
64 community members and service providers
126 respondents to the active demand survey

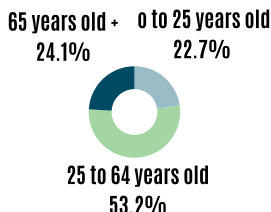
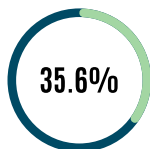
*Statistics based on mother tongue, Census 2021

Middlesex-London

Francophone
Population*

% Francophone
Immigrant
Population*

% Francophone
Population by Age Group*



WHAT WE HEARD

It is essential to strengthen collaboration between local providers in order to develop coherent active offer initiatives while raising awareness among Francophone communities of their language rights and the importance of requesting services in French.

The London area, designated under the *French Language Services Act*, is home to a dynamic and growing immigrant Francophone community, whose vitality is reflected in a diversity of organizations, community initiatives and a sustained commitment to equitable access to French-language services.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- Directory of French Language services in Southwestern Ontario
- Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West

www.guidealto.com/repso2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand
- Difficulty in identifying bilingual professionals

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to French-language health services
- Fragmented French-language services in the region
- Difficulty in offering specialized services in French

Identified regional opportunities

- London is a newly designated Welcoming Francophone Community, playing a crucial role in integrating newcomers and supporting ethnocultural vitality
- Accès Franco-Santé London has proven successful, and steps are being taken to create a future Francophone community health center in London
- A diversity of community organizations and associations to promote the linguistic rights of community members
- Numerous round tables offer networking opportunities for service providers

REPORT



CAMBRIDGE AND SURROUNDING AREAS REGIONAL PROFILE



3 consultation meetings

25 community members consulted

14 service providers consulted

30 respondents to the active demand survey

*Statistics based on Inclusive Definition of Francophones, Census 2021

Waterloo Wellington

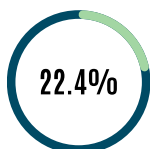
Francophone
Population*

% Francophone
Immigrant
Population*

% Francophone
Population by Age Group*



13 450



65 years old + 18.9%
0 to 25 years old 26.6%



25 to 64 years old 54.5%



WHAT WE HEARD

Increasing awareness among health service providers combined with more mobilization of local community stakeholders can bolster the offer of existing French-language services and reinforce the efficiency and sustainability of current and future initiatives.

Although not located in a designated area, the Francophone community of Waterloo Wellington is growing, driven in particular by the settlement of Francophone young families and immigrants, which contributes to energizing the aging Francophone population and increasing the demand for services in French.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- Directory of French Language services Hamilton Niagara Waterloo
- Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West

www.guidealto.com/rephnw2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand
- Need to travel outside the region to receive services in French
- Decline of community mobilization

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Few providers and programs identified for FLS
- Insufficient awareness of active offer
- Lack of coordination between different organizations' initiatives
- Few qualified bilingual human resources in the region

Identified regional opportunities

- Young families and seniors have a keen interest in receiving services in French
- Initiatives to support Francophone seniors are particularly sought after in the region
- There is growing community interest in obtaining official designation for the City of Cambridge
- Identified suppliers are active and collaborate with Entity 2 to reach the Francophone community
- Municipalities are interested in supporting the Francophone community
- Initiatives led by local players are underway to raise the profile of Francophone resources

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WINDSOR-ESSEX REGIONAL PROFILE



Niagara

Chatham-Kent

Hamilton

REGIONAL
PLENARY

6 consultation meetings

95 community members consulted

15 service providers consulted

47 respondents to the active demand survey

*Statistics based on mother tongue, Census 2021

Windsor-Essex

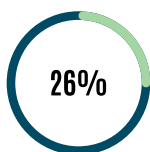
Francophone
Population*

% Francophone
Immigrant Population*

% Francophone
Population by Age Group*

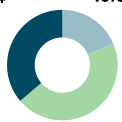


12 890



26%

65 years old +
36.2%



0 to 25 years old
18.6%

25 to 64 years old
45.2%



WHAT WE HEARD

It is vital to raise awareness among Francophone newcomers of their language rights and encourage them to ask for services in French. It is also important to strengthen collaboration between providers to facilitate access and ensure coordination of services offered.

The Windsor-Essex region is largely designated under the French Language Services Act. The oldest permanent Francophone community in Ontario, it remains vibrant and dynamic thanks to a growing number of young immigrant families, contributing to its renewal and the cultural enrichment of the region.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- *Directory of French Language services in Southwestern Ontario*
- *Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West*

www.guidealto.com/repso2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand
- Difficulties navigating health services, especially for newcomers

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to health services in French
- Difficulty in promoting bilingual employment opportunities

Regional opportunities identified

- The Francophone Immigrant Population is young and actively seeking employment
- Several community initiatives and round tables support and increase French Language services
- Several health service providers are identified (i.e. mandated to offer services in French) and made aware of community needs
- As a hub, the Windsor-Essex-Kent Francophone Community Centre facilitates consultation between providers and key partners and the advancement of health care and well-being

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Health



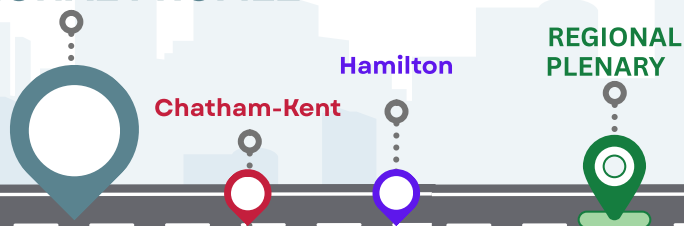
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NIAGARA REGIONAL PROFILE



3 consultation meetings

53 community members consulted

13 service providers consulted

32 respondents to the active demand survey

*Statistics based on Inclusive Definition of Francophones, Census 2021

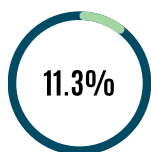
Niagara

Francophone
Population*

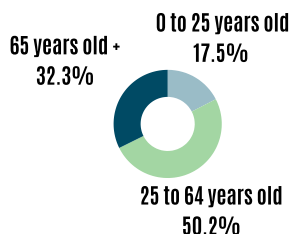


13 450

% Francophone
Immigrant
Population*



% Francophone
Population by Age Group*



WHAT WE HEARD

It is essential to mobilize local clubs and associations to promote linguistic rights and demand for services in French. It is also important to support providers in increasing the visibility and accessibility of services to the population.

With two cities designated under the *French Language Services Act*, the Niagara region features an active and engaged Francophone community. This vitality is directly linked to the strong local mobilization and the support of well-established community organizations, contributing to the cohesion and dynamism of the Francophone milieu.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- [Directory of French Language services Hamilton Niagara Waterloo](#)
- [Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West](#)

[www.guidealto.com/rephnw2024\(French\)](http://www.guidealto.com/rephnw2024(French))
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Long wait times
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand
- Difficulty identifying bilingual professionals

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Confusion between French services and the initiatives of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to health services in French

Identified regional opportunities

- Strong cohesion between numerous French-speaking community organizations strengthened vitality through various joint initiatives and round tables
- Designated and identified providers are committed to the community and the delivery of services in French
- The opening in 2025 of the new and redeveloped Foyer Richelieu with 128 long term care beds and the new Hospice Niagara's Maison Walker with 10 hospice beds represents a major step forward in improving access to services in French in the region

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CHATHAM-KENT REGIONAL PROFILE



Hamilton

REGIONAL
PLENARY



- 1 consultation meeting
- 7 service providers consulted
- 12 respondents to the active demand survey

**Statistics based on mother tongue, Census 2021*

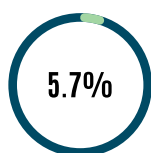
Chatham-Kent

Francophone
Population*

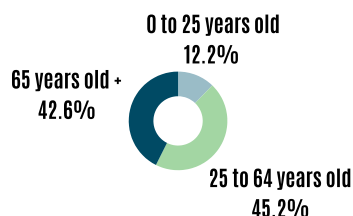


2 725

% Francophone
Immigrant Population*



% Francophone
Population by Age Group*



WHAT WE HEARD

It is essential to promote interregional collaboration in order to pool resources and improve access to services in French, while developing tailor-made solutions that meet the specific needs of a small Francophone community.

The Francophone population in Chatham-Kent is predominantly older. The low proportion of Francophone immigrants poses significant challenges in terms of demographic renewal and the long-term sustainability of French-language services.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- *Directory of French Language services in Southwestern Ontario*
- *Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West*

www.guidealto.com/repso2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand
- Need to travel outside the region to receive services in French

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Scarcity of local services and resources
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to health services in French
- Few qualified bilingual human resources in the region

Identified regional opportunities

- The proposed update of the the *French Language Services Act* should see to the entire municipality of Chatham-Kent becoming designated
- Partnership opportunities should be explored with service providers and organizations in the Windsor and London areas to share resources, establish mobile solutions or collaborative points of service
- The Centre communautaire de Chatham-Kent La Girouette actively supports the development of the Francophone community by offering a variety of activities

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Health



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HAMILTON AND SURROUNDING AREAS REGIONAL PROFILE

REGIONAL
PLENARY

4 consultation meetings

35 community members consulted

5 service providers consulted

44 respondents to the active demand survey

*Statistics based on Inclusive Definition of Francophones, Census 2021

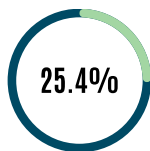
Hamilton, Burlington and Brant

Francophone
Population*



13 450

% Francophone
Immigrant
Population*



25.4%

% Francophone
Population by Age Group*

65 years old + 22.9% 0 to 25 years old 23.3%



25 to 64 years old
53.8%



WHAT WE HEARD

It is essential to clarify the concept of active offer and to strengthen providers' capacity so that they can offer services in French adapted to the specific needs of a diverse and growing Francophone community.

The Francophone population of the City of Hamilton, designated under the *French Language Services Act*, is growing and characterized by great diversity, including both international students and recent immigrant families, which contributes to enriching the social fabric and increasing the demand for services in French adapted to diverse cultural realities.

Explore this community's French-language resources and health and wellness services

- *Directory of French Language services Hamilton Niagara Waterloo*
- *Directory of Health Teams and Service Providers - Ontario Health West*

www.guidealto.com/rephnw2024 (French)
www.cppbsud-ouest.ca/4/Services/

Identified barriers to services in French

BY FRANCOPHONES FOR ACTIVE DEMAND

- Lack of awareness of linguistic rights
- Lack of awareness of existing services
- Long wait times
- Lack of French-language services discourages active demand

BY SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ACTIVE OFFER

- Lack of awareness of responsibilities and legal requirements regarding active offer
- Lack of coordination and support to improve access to health services in French
- Confusion between French Language services and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives

Identified regional opportunities

- A well-established designated organization offers health services in French in Hamilton
- Initiatives are emerging in Hamilton and spreading to neighbouring areas (Brant, Brantford and Haldimand-Norfolk), facilitating access to services and sharing of best practices
- Hamilton is a designated Welcoming Francophone Community, playing a crucial role in integrating newcomers and supporting ethnocultural vitality
- The Francophone immigrant population represents a significant pool of qualified bilingual human resources

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REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL PLENARY DAY



The Regional Plenary, held in London, Ontario on October 29, 2024, brought together 164 participants from various sectors and regions, uniting their voices around a common ambition: to strengthen the active offer, use and demand for French Language Health Services. This mobilizing event highlighted the realities faced by Francophone communities and provided an opportunity to explore together concrete solutions for building a more inclusive future.

PROGRAM OF THE DAY

Specially designed to encourage active listening, reflection and commitment, the day's program featured inspiring speeches from regional and provincial partners, interactive sessions with sketches, panel discussion, reflection activities and networking opportunities. This diversity of activities enabled participants - whether community members, health and wellness professionals, managers or partners - to confront their perspectives and better understand the systemic challenges linked to equitable access to services in French.

In addition to identifying key issues, the Plenary encouraged the identification of lasting courses of action at both personal and collective levels, while highlighting the resources and tools needed to advance active offer. It also served as a catalyst for a shared commitment to a more just, equitable and accessible health system for all.



Regional Plenary, London, October 29, 2024



Organizers, Special Guests and Key Partners -
Regional Plenary, London, October 29, 2024

"The shared vision and the presence of committed partners demonstrate that we are moving towards a more inclusive system for Francophones."

Participant in the Regional Plenary

Watch the video: A Look Back on the Outreach Tour (English subtitles)



REGIONAL PLENARY - ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Strategically assigned to one of 17 tables, participants shared their perspectives and explored solutions to the challenges of accessing French-language services throughout the day. These discussions, conducted in a spirit of collaboration, strengthened links between partners, stimulated commitment and laid concrete foundations for a more dynamic offer and demand of French-language services. The interactive session, which was particularly appreciated, took place in a lively and humorous atmosphere where many were able to recognize themselves in the scenarios presented.

What challenges/issues related to access to health and wellness services in French do you identify in the sketches presented during the interactive session?

Collective reflection activity



Identified challenges and issues

Participants discussed and identified the issues and challenges they perceived after each of the three sketches.

17 tables
164 participants



Interactive session with sketches
illustrating challenges with access to
services

Identified issues and challenges related to access to services in French

Issues of access to health services in French

- Shortage of staff providing services in French
- Services in French are ineffective or non-existent in several regions
- Cost of interpretation services not covered or insufficiently funded

Issues of quality of care and medical risks

- Wrong diagnosis and inappropriate medication due to lack of understanding
- Self-medication due to lack of clear instructions or lack of access to care in French
- Patient poorly informed about medical follow-up and treatments to follow with

Communication and linguistic comprehension issues

- Lack of clear signage to direct patients to services in French
- Loss of key information between doctors, pharmacists and Francophone patients, thus compromising the quality of care
- Confusion due to literal interpretations not appropriate in medical context

Emotional and psychological challenges for the Francophone patient

- Loss of confidence in the health system
- Discouragement from requesting services in French
- Negative impact on mental health and feelings of exclusion or abandonment

Organizational and structural challenges

- Lack of procedures to guarantee the active offer of services in French
- Lack of staff awareness of the cultural and linguistic realities of Francophones
- Lack of French-language training for medical staff

Equity and patient rights challenges

- Perceived injustice with regards of unequal services offered in English and French
- Failure to respect patients' linguistic rights
- Lack of an effective mechanism for reporting deficiencies and filing complaints

REGIONAL PLENARY - DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO IDENTIFY DESIRED IMPROVEMENTS

The contributions of the seven special guests, the strategic partners and the four panelists enabled participants to deepen their understanding and enrich their thoughts. Their words not only inspired but also strengthened the mobilization of partners in the Ontario West Region. Together, we explored avenues for improvement and identified approaches to collaboration at all levels - local, regional, provincial and federal.

What improvements in terms of services in French would you like to see in the health and wellness systems?

Collective reflection activity



Desired improvements

Participants discussed and identified improvements they would like to see in the health and wellness system.

17 tables

164 participants



Table discussion- Regional Plenary,
London,
October 29, 2024

Identification of desired improvements

1- Structuring, financing and accessibility of services in French

- Ensure that identified organizations fall under the *French Language Services Act* and fund them accordingly
- Introduce greater flexibility in designated services, with consideration of the number of Francophone patients
- Create Francophone health centers or mobile services to compensate for the lack of services in the region

2- Strengthening human resources and recognition of skills

- Encourage the recruitment of bilingual staff and improve their accessibility
- Increase French-language training and cultural awareness programs for all health and wellness professionals
- Offer incentives to bilingual staff

"Active offer of service in a person's language of comfort should be nonnegotiable (mandatory) for health care interactions."

— Participant in the Regional Plenary

3 - Awareness and visibility of services in French

- Improve signage and communication of services in French
- Inform users about their linguistic rights and encourage them to ask for services in French
- Encourage the community to use and promote services in French

4- Collaboration, innovation and process improvement

- Strengthen collaboration between organizations to pool resources
- Simplify the designation process and the monitoring of services offered in French
- Harnessing technology to improve the accessibility of services in French

"Progress can take time, but let's not let perfectionism get in the way. We can start somewhere to intentionally be involved in Active Offer."

— Participant in the Regional Plenary

REPORT



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de planification des services de santé en français pour les régions de
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REGIONAL PLenary - CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACTIONS

IDENTIFICATION OF A PERSONAL COMMITMENTS TO INCREASING ACCESS TO SERVICES IN FRENCH

The plenary session offered participants a key moment for reflection, prompting them to individually question their own role in improving access to services in French. This exercise led to concrete commitments and an awareness of the importance of each gesture. The summary of the day strengthened the sense of belonging among the various key partners, and encouraged them to continue the contributions, collaborations and dialogues initiated to continue the work begun at the plenary session.

What contributions or actions could you make to support services in French?

Reflection activity Individual responses



Contribution and actions

Participants reflected and identified their contributions and actions to support the proposed improvements.

164 participants



Participant - Regional Plenary,
London, October 29, 2024

Members, champions and representatives of the Francophone community

- Ask for services in French to strengthen the active offer in organizations
- Raise awareness among our families and friends of the importance of services in French
- Accept and value services in French when they are offered
- Use processes in place to file complaints and have our rights recognized

“Inform that I am Francophone.

Ask for services in French in advance so that the hospital knows my needs.
— Francophone participant in the Regional Plenary (translated citation)

Managers, practitioners and professionals

- Actively promote active offer within organizations and encourage colleagues to do the same
- Make active offer training mandatory upon hiring, by integrating it into the new employee orientation process and continuing professional training
- Implement communication strategies to make services more visible
- Ensure that clients' language preferences are recorded on file
- Design an internal language skills directory for staff

“Create partnerships with other organizations to expand the provision of services in French.” — Francophone participant in the Regional Plenary (translated citation)

Key partners, funders and government decision-makers

- Promote careers in the health sector and mobilize young people
- Establish intersectoral partnerships to strengthen the provision of services in French to ensure coherent planning and avoid duplication
- Support organizations in planning and implementing services in French
- Foster the sharing of best practices between service providers and Francophone organizations

“Ensure that Francophone customers are well understood in their cultural diversity.” — Francophone participant in the Regional Plenary (translated citation)

REPORT



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REGIONAL PLENARY - TOOLS AND RESOURCES REQUIRED

IDENTIFICATION OF NECESSARY TOOLS AND RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF THE EFFORT

By identifying the needs of representatives of French-speaking community members, representatives of service providers in the health and wellness sectors, as well as representatives of key partners and decision-makers, it becomes possible to better identify the support required to strengthen access to French-language services in Western Ontario. This understanding can help focus and direct efforts and optimize resource allocation. For key partners, funders and decision-makers, this information provides insight into the priorities to be supported for a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable service offer.

What resources or tools would you need to achieve the desired improvements?

Reflection activity Individual responses



Tools and Resources

Participants reflected on and identified the tools and resources they need to make improvements to French-language services.



Table discussion - Regional
Plenary, London,
October 29, 2024

Members and leaders of the Francophone community

Networking, awareness raising and resource sharing

- Raise awareness of the demand for services in French to increase availability of services
- Develop a directory of organizations and service providers to improve patient referral
- Implement a complaint process in the event language rights in organizations are not respected

Managers, practitioners and professionals

Organizational support, recurring funding and assistance with the implementation of services

- Support the engagement and retention of bilingual staff despite low use of services in French
- Allocate additional recurring funding to ensure skills development and achievement of designation under the *French Language Services Act*
- Adapt and improve reference material for direct application
- Help organizations to promote their services in French

“Shared vision, committed partners. The need for health partners to develop together a strategic plan to address the shortage of health professionals and workforce.” – Francophone participant in the Regional Plenary (translated citation)

Key partners and government decision-makers

Mobilization of key actors and structuring of local, regional and provincial approaches

- Position the Planning Entities as essential references for the implementation of services in French
- Secure commitment of Ontario Health's French Language Services Leads to ensure continuity of effort
- Develop a clear policy, strategic funding and access to information framework
- Raise awareness and improve working conditions for health and wellness professionals



CONCLUSION, FINDINGS, ALIGNMENT AND NEXT STEPS

CONCLUSION

The Regional Plenary was a resounding success, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders and initiating strategic discussions on improving services in French. Constructive criticism highlighted opportunities to refine future initiatives with particular emphasis on regional contextualization, concept clarity and balancing of theory and action. By capitalizing on these learnings, we can consolidate gains and maximize the impact of collective efforts.



Regional Plenary - London, October 29, 2024

Key findings for all Francophone communities in the Ontario West Region

Insufficient human and financial resources:

- In almost all regions, participants highlighted a significant shortage of bilingual health and wellness professionals, as well as a lack of adequate funding. This lack of support reduces providers' ability to offer tailored services and contributes to regional disparities.

Lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities:

- Participants noted a significant lack of awareness among Francophone communities of their language rights, and among providers of their legal responsibilities and requirements.

Fragmentation of regional efforts:

- Initiatives in French often lack coordination between the various regions and levels of government, which hinders their effectiveness. According to community participants, this is a major obstacle.

Lack of interorganizational collaboration:

- Although several partnership tables are already in place, participants expressed the importance of strengthening collaboration between providers, decision-makers and communities to maximize the use of resources, facilitate navigation and access to services.

Alignment with provincial strategies

The Plenary's findings are in line with several major provincial orientations for French-language health services. This alignment paves the way for numerous collaboration opportunities at a regional level.

- **Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario** - Improving direct French-language health care services and service navigation [Rapport Santé 2024](#) *French report only*
- **French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario/ Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario** - Supporting the monitoring of commitments to ensure effective implementation of language policies [Annual Report 2023-2024](#)
- **Ontario Health** - Improving access to services and encouraging interregional collaboration between providers and decision-makers [Strategic Priorities and Business Plan](#)
- **Montfort Hospital** - Investing in continuing education and implementing incentives to recruit and retain a bilingual workforce in Ontario [Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#)

Next steps

As many participants from the Tour and the Regional Plenary pointed out, implementing strategies to improve access to health services in French involves many challenges, from both an offer and demand perspectives. In light of the findings gathered during the Regional Tour, Entities 1 and 2 will formulate recommendations for concrete actions and follow-up mechanisms to be implemented in 2025-2026. The goal is to capitalize on discussions already underway, support initiatives currently in place and support new collective initiatives aimed at improving the offer of health services in French in the various areas of Ontario West Region, in collaboration with all concerned stakeholders.





COMMUNAUTÉ DE PRATIQUE POUR PROFESSIONNELS BILINGUES

Our Community of Practice is dedicated to creating a collaborative space for bilingual practitioners, managers and students who offer services in French in the health and wellness fields.

Our objectives:

- Promote bilingual professional networking
- Improve their ability to provide quality services in French
- Facilitate access to resources
- Contribute to implementing strategies to improve access for Francophone populations

Meetings - Online networking - Sharing of resources and opportunities
(training, events, job postings, bilingual work tools)



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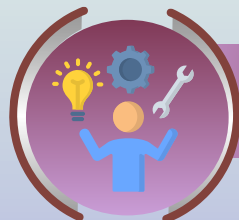
Free memberships



*Healthcare Providers
Community of Practice for
French-Language Services*



Capacity Building



Tools and Resources



Networking and
Knowledge Sharing

A dedicated network of healthcare providers committed to supporting and advancing access to quality care actively offered in French.

A collaborative space to enhance French-language health services in Ontario West

**Ready to make a difference?
Join the CoP today.**

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