

Practice #1: Implementation Guide for the Actionmarguerite Language Mandate

February 2019

Extracted from : Handbook of
Innovative Practices in the
field of Social and Health
Services Integration in an
Official Minority Language
Context

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This practice contributes to improving:

- Your organization's values and principles: Innovation and service offer in the user's preferred official language.

The organization implementing this practice: Actionmarguerite, Manitoba

The information contained in this file was obtained via a telephone interview conducted on July 10, 2017, with Marielle Lafond, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Resident Services for Actionmarguerite, and from the report authored by Forgues, Couturier & Deroche (2014), as cited in the references.¹ It was complemented by additional documentary research and these sources are cited as references.

Background

Actionmarguerite is a community enterprise that provides health and social services to French-speaking seniors in Winnipeg. It belongs to the Catholic Health Corporation of Manitoba (CHCM) and is funded by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA).² Actionmarguerite manages five institutions: Actionmarguerite St-Vital (formerly Foyer Valade), Actionmarguerite St-Boniface (formerly Taché Centre), a day centre and two locations providing supportive housing. Foyer Valade, created in 1988, has 154 beds for Francophone seniors with diminishing autonomy and requiring long-term care. It holds a provincial designation as a Francophone institution.³ The Taché Centre (provincially designated as a bilingual institution), established in 1935, is one of the largest bilingual long-term-care institutions, providing services to Francophone seniors.⁴ The Taché Centre has 299 beds and its clients have complex medical conditions (such as dementia and other health problems).⁵ Both residences were founded by the Sisters of Charity of Montreal.

As an organization fully committed to improving services for the Francophone population in a geographical area that is predominantly Anglophone, it participated in several studies aimed at understanding how to better promote the active offer of integrated French-language services for this population.⁶

¹ Forgues, E., Couturier, Y., & Deroche, F. (2014). Rapport : *Conditions favorables à l'établissement des services de santé pour les personnes âgées francophones*. Available at: <https://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/Les-conditions-favorables----l-----tablissement-de-services-de-sant---pour-les-a--s-francophones-FR.pdf>, retrieved on July 10, 2017.

² Actionmarguerite (n.a.) Accessed on July 6, 2017, at: www.actionmarguerite.ca/fr/about-us/

³ Forgues et al., op.cit.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Actionmarguerite (n.a.) Accessed on June 12, 2017, at: <http://www.actionmarguerite.ca/fr/about-us/homes/>

⁶ See following documents:

- De Moissac, D., Giasson, F., Roch-Gagné, M. (2015). Accès aux services sociaux et de santé en français : l'expérience des Franco-Manitobains *Minorités linguistiques et société*, 6, 42-65. Retrieved from: <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/minling/2015-n6-minling02077/1033189ar.pdf>.
- Éthier, S. & Belzile, L. (2012). *Améliorer l'accès des personnes âgées à St-Boniface et à St-Vital aux services de santé en français. Objectif 3: Recension des pratiques exemplaires dans l'offre de services de santé pour les aînés*. Rapport pour le

Objectives

The *Implementation Guide for the Actionmarguerite Language Mandate* is part of a larger project led in collaboration with the Société Santé en français (SSF), the Conseil Communauté en santé du Manitoba (CCS) and several other partners, and intends to “draw from existing resources in the healthcare system, determine and implement the best measures to improve access to French-language services for Francophone seniors living in Saint-Boniface and Saint-Vital [translation]”.⁷

Since Actionmarguerite already has the mandate to provide services in French to Manitoba’s Francophone seniors who require long-term care, the guide’s objective is to facilitate the mandate’s fulfillment, with the ultimate goal of improving French-language service quality.

Features of the practice

Between 2011 and 2013, in collaboration with the SSF, the Conseil Communauté en santé du Manitoba and other partners, Actionmarguerite took part in a project that led to a better understanding of the current state of affairs regarding services provided to Francophone seniors. This first step was followed by actions to improve the situation and finally, by transferring knowledge so that other organizations may benefit from the experience acquired along the process. Participation in this project echoes the value that Actionmarguerite places on innovation in terms of providing services in the user’s preferred official language. The *Implementation Guide for the Actionmarguerite Language Mandate*, a bilingual guide intended for managers, was developed as part of this initiative.

“This Guide recalls the legal background surrounding the concept of language of service. It includes key documents that frame language of service at the levels of the province, the WRHA, and Actionmarguerite. It defines managers’ responsibilities to ensure that Francophone clients are served in their preferred language. These responsibilities involve information and awareness-raising among employees about language of service, designation of bilingual positions, hiring of bilingual employees, the offer of linguistic training and communication with employees and clients” [translation].⁸

Thanks to the presence of the SSF and the concerted efforts of several actors, diverse local initiatives were coordinated in a more structured manner to better understand and respond to Francophone seniors’ needs.

Conseil communauté en santé du Manitoba, Université de Winnipeg. Retrieved from: https://santeenfrancais.com/sites/ccsmanitoba.ca/files/publications/rapport_objectif_3_-_pratiques_exemplaires_-_version_finale_-_bilingue_0.pdf

- Forgues, E., Couturier, Y. & Deroche, F. (2014). Rapport : *Conditions favorables à l'établissement des services de santé pour les personnes âgées francophones*. Retrieved from: <https://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/Les-conditions-favorables-à-l'établissement-de-services-de-santé-pour-les-aînés-francophones-FR.pdf>
- Savard, S., De Moissac, D., Benoit, J., Ba, H., Zellama, F., Giasson, F., Drolet, M. (2017). Recruitment and retention of bilingual health and social service professionals in francophone minority communities in Winnipeg and Ottawa (Chapter 9). In Drolet, Bouchard et Savard (Eds.), *Accessibility and Active offer: Health Care and Social Services in Linguistic Minority Communities* (pp. 229-253). Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

⁷ Forgues et al., 2014, op.cit. p. 35.

⁸ Forgues et al., 2014, op.cit. pp. 38-39.

Challenges

Two main challenges were raised during the interview with the resource person. First, several employees trained in healthcare were educated in international universities. Their credentials are an asset for the institution but require equivalencies and constant upgrades for these immigrant staff and the institution itself. Second, the difficulty in recruiting bilingual employees may jeopardize programs and services delivered in French. Furthermore, it is important to note that in Manitoba, training for physicians is provided in English only.⁹

Analysis¹⁰

Why is this practice considered innovative?

This collaborative approach to the identification of the Francophone population's needs and the implementation of an action plan is perceived as innovative in a context where traditionally, "in Manitoba, the active offer approach to French-language services is more reactive" and seldom manifests itself (Éthier and Belzile, 2012, p. 2)¹¹.

While users' families and caregivers feel the need to maintain links with the *Francophonie* to ensure their senior's well-being, they also testify to the importance of communication in French between care providers and their parents. For that reason and despite the struggle to recruit bilingual staff, Actionmarguerite wished to meet this need more effectively, reflecting the value that the organization places on innovation in the offer of French-language services.

Emerging, promising or leading: A promising practice

- **Quality of evidence:** An action research conducted by the Réseau de services de santé en français de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, in partnership with the Conseil Communauté en santé du Manitoba, the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and the Research Centre on Aging, highlights favourable conditions for the implementation of initiatives stemming from this collaboration, including some factors specific to the context in Manitoba.¹² The most likely effect is a greater awareness among Actionmarguerite managers about the importance of investing the necessary efforts to implement the organization's linguistic mandate. Actionmarguerite's 2017-2018 Annual Report¹³ mentions the creation of a new Staff Development and French Language Services Coordinator position to support the organization's capacity to develop, promote and support the active offer of French-language services.

9 The Université de St-Boniface, a Francophone university, trains personal care workers, practical nurses, registered nurses and social workers.

10 This analysis is based on criteria established in the *Innovative Practices Evaluation Framework* designed by the Health Council of Canada, available at: https://healthcouncilcanada.ca/files/IP_Framework_Eng_final_1.pdf and also outlined in Appendix 1.

11 Éthier & Belzile, 2012, op.cit. p. 2.

16 Forgues et al., 2014, op.cit. p. 49-76.

17 Actionmarguerite. (2018). Rapport annuel 2017-2018 - *Accès aux soins et services continus centré sur les aînés fragilisés au Manitoba*. Rapport à la Corporation catholique de la santé du Manitoba. Accessed at: <http://www.actionmarguerite.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Annual-Report-2017-18-EN-Final.pdf>

- **Impact:** Results from cited research show that this practice can have positive impacts on the healthcare system's performance, bilingual staff, and ultimately, on the health and welfare of Francophone seniors and their families.
- **Applicability:** To our knowledge, the practice is currently implemented in a single organization, but could be applied in other long-term care and end-of-life facilities in a variety of official language minority communities.
- **Transferability:** Although we have not yet gathered data in this regard, it is conceivable that similar results may be observed in other organizations that choose to implement such a practice.