

Practice #2: A Francophone household at Summerset Manor (Prince Edward Island)

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This practice contributes to improving:

- your organization's values and principles – innovation and offer of services in the user's official language of choice
- the active offer and coordination tools within an organization
- the creation of linkages with community resources

The organization implementing this practice: Summerset Manor, Prince Edward Island

The information provided herein was collected primarily through a telephone interview with Élise Arsenault, French Services Analyst and Director of the PEI French Health Network (PEIFHN), on July 10, 2017. It was supplemented by documentary research as indicated in the references cited.

Background

In 2010, a research project into long-term care was conducted by the PEIFHN. It was found that the majority of facilities providing these services had limited capacity to do so in French. Summerset Manor is an exception in this regard in that this facility has a significant number of Francophone clients and the staff recognize the linguistic and cultural needs of these clients. Based on the study, a number of recommendations were made for improving services in French at long-term care homes.¹ Health PEI announced its commitment to adopt these recommendations.

Following up on this needs assessment, an action-oriented study led by Société Santé en français, the PEI French Health Network, the Conseil Communauté en santé du Manitoba, the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities and the Centre de recherche sur le vieillissement² bolstered the partnership leading to the establishment of a 26-bed bilingual neighbourhood on January 11, 2013, at Summerset Manor in Summerside, Prince County, Prince Edward Island.

Objectives

The purpose of this initiative to create a French wing at Summerset Manor, in a majority Anglophone environment, is to deliver long-term care in the official language of the user's choice. The elderly resident users feel comfortable requesting services in French, and an adequate number of professionals are available to provide all services in French including intake services.

¹ McQuaid, S. (2010). *Soins de longue durée en français*. Final report submitted to the PEI French Health Network. Consulted on August 14, 2017, at: <http://santeipe.ca/wp-content/uploads/Rapport-final-Soins-de-longue-dure%CC%81e-en-franc%CC%A7ais.pdf>

² Forges, E., Couturier, Y., & Deroche, F. (2014). Rapport : *Conditions favorables à l'établissement des services de santé pour les personnes aînées francophones*. Available at: <https://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/Les-conditions-favorables---l---tablissement-de-services-de-sant---pour-les-a--n--s-francophones-FR.pdf>, retrieved on July 10, 2017.

Features of the practice

Summerset Manor³ in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, is an 82-bed public residential and long-term care facility organized into six households (or wings), two of which (representing 26 beds) are bilingual. The nurses and other health care professionals move among the various households within each neighbourhood.

The management of Summerset Manor have made every effort to foster a warm, welcoming environment within this bilingual neighbourhood at the facility by placing the needs of the residents and their families at the centre of their actions.

The following characteristics form an integral part of the practice:⁴

- Mobilization of the Francophone community inspiring the project.
- Values upheld by the project steering committee and facility management prioritizing:
 - engagement of the Francophone residents and their families
 - the contribution from volunteers in the Francophone community
 - recognition of the importance of the Acadian culture
 - access to bilingual documentation (including information, materials and signage)
 - recruitment of bilingual employees and delivery of French training to existing employees.
- Designation of bilingual positions: in April 2017, based on the sources consulted, 60% of the staff in the two households spoke French.
- Systematic identification of the linguistic variable among both residents and staff.
- Acadian culture kit developed by Collège de l'Île, Prince Edward Island's French-language community college, and made available to the staff.
- Resident satisfaction survey including questions on language of choice and administered in both official languages.

Challenges

Three main challenges have been identified. The first relates to the reaction of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), which opposed the designation of bilingual positions (*combined service workers, support service workers*) at Summerset Manor⁵. In an arbitration decision in 2014, the court considered the linguistic issue and approved the designation of these positions as bilingual. A second challenge has been identified within the community and takes the form of a certain hesitation and lack of understanding made evident at times concerning the establishment of a bilingual neighbourhood, which some Anglophones perceive as unfavourable toward them. As a result, Francophones occasionally hesitate to make use of French within their own community for fear of stigmatization. Finally, the recruitment of bilingual human resources remains a challenge, since there is only one Francophone post-secondary educational institution on the Island that offers programs in French in health care, this being Collège de l'Île. Due to this lack of easy access, students in immersion programs or at Francophone schools often continue

3 Prince Edward Island. *Summerset Manor*. Consulted on June 18, 2017, at: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pei/summerset-manor>

4 Forgues *et al.*, 2014, op. cit. and interview data.

5 Arbitration decision concerning Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779 and Health PEI on November 24, 2014.

their studies in English or at French-language educational institutions outside of the province, thereby exacerbating the shortage of bilingual professionals in the province.

Analysis⁶

Why is this practice considered innovative?

This practice meets a local need originating in the desire of the Acadian and Francophone community to create a Francophone space in response to a significant need among that community's elderly members. The establishment of a Francophone household at a majority Anglophone long-term care facility is perceived by community stakeholders as an innovative way to meet the needs of Francophone seniors where local conditions do not support the establishment of entirely Francophone care facilities. Bringing employees and residents together in a Francophone space helps to foster a spirit of community and cultural exchange.

Emerging, promising or leading: A leading practice

- **Quality of evidence:** The establishment of a bilingual neighbourhood at Summerset Manor was evidence-informed based on the needs of Francophone seniors. Through an action-oriented study, conditions favourable to the adoption of this practice were documented. Internal evaluations have confirmed the satisfaction of residents and their families.
- **Impact:** Based on the outcomes, this practice has had positive impact on the satisfaction of Francophone seniors and their families concerning the services provided. Residents at the facility report being very satisfied with this Francophone space, which they perceive as both an extension of the community in which they grew up and, most importantly, a place where they truly feel at home.⁷ Offering services in their preferred language appears to be associated with increased user safety and higher service quality for minority official language communities.⁸
- **Applicability:** This practice has been implemented in at least one other majority Anglophone province (at the *Pavillon Omer Deslauriers* at Bendale Acres in Ontario; see practice 3 in this document) and is being replicated elsewhere in Prince Edward Island: in April 2017, Beach Grove Home in Charlottetown began setting up a bilingual household within its walls based on the model implemented at Summerset Manor. According to the contact person consulted, another initiative at a third care facility in Prince Edward Island is also possible in the near future. The use of this approach appears most appropriate in geographic areas with a certain concentration of Francophones but where their numbers are insufficient to support the operation of entirely Francophone facilities.
- **Transferability:** Similar outcomes have been observed at other facilities where Francophone households have been established.

⁶ This analysis is based on the criteria of the *Innovative Practices Evaluation Framework* of the Health Council of Canada, available at http://healthcouncilcanada.ca/tree/IP_Framework_FR_FINAL.pdf and set out in Appendix 1.

⁷ CBC News (June 14, 2018). *Better health expected with French seniors' unit*. Consulted on June 18, 2017, at: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/better-health-expected-with-french-seniors-unit-1.2679259>

⁸ Bowen, S. (2015). *Impact des barrières linguistiques sur la sécurité des patients et la qualité des soins*. Final report prepared for Société Santé en français. Retrieved from: http://www.savoir-sante.ca/fr/content_page/download/255/429/21?method=view