

Practice #5: *The Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector and the Health Human Resources Strategy (Pan-Canadian)*

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Practice #5: The Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector and the Health Human Resources Strategy (Pan-Canadian)

This practice contributes to improving:

- An organization's resources: hiring, retaining and training bilingual health personnel.

The organization implementing this practice: The French Health Network of Central Southwestern Ontario.

The information contained in this file was mainly acquired from a telephone interview conducted on February 20, 2018, with Geneviève Laferrière, Project Coordinator for the French Health Network of Central Southwestern Ontario. It was complemented by documentary research, and these sources are cited as references.

Background

Between 2011 and 2013, the French Health Network of Central Southwestern Ontario conducted a study called *Stratégies ressources humaines pour soutenir le continuum de soins pour les populations francophones du Centre, Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario*.¹ This study, based on the analysis of data from several surveys and interviews with health organizations in central southwestern Ontario (Toronto and surrounding area), showed that recruiting bilingual human resources in the health sector posed a major challenge for the development of French-language health services. The *Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector*², developed by the French Health Network of Central Southwestern Ontario in its capacity as a Société Santé en français resource network, aimed at tackling this concern. Subsequently, an online resource, the Health Human Resources Strategy (HHRstrategy.ca)³ was created to enhance the capacity of managers within Anglophone organizations to plan human resources strategies to better serve Francophone and Acadian users living in a minority situation.

Objectives

This practice intends to support managers and health organizations in their efforts to recruit and retain bilingual human resources able to ensure the efficient delivery of French language health services.

¹ Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario. (2013). *Stratégies ressources humaines pour soutenir le continuum de soins pour les populations francophones du Centre, Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario*. Accessed on February 20, 2018, at: <http://francosantesud.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sommaire-Projet-Strategies-RH.pdf>

² Société Santé en français and Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario. (2015). *Cadre de référence pour le recrutement et la rétention des ressources humaines bilingues en santé*. Accessed on February 20, 2018, at: <http://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/fr-cadrerh-3.pdf>

³ Health Human Resources Strategy. Accessed on February 15, 2018, at: HHRstrategy.ca
The French version is available at <http://www.strategierhs.ca/>

Features of the practice

As a first step, the development of the *Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector*, which is evidence-based, helped document the situation. The framework relied on thorough data collection, a review of the literature at national and international levels, as well as a review of Canadian best practices.

Derived from the framework, the online resource HHRstrategy.ca proposes practical tools to support managers and health organizations in their efforts to recruit and retain bilingual human resources to ensure the efficient delivery of French-language health services.

This interactive online resource contains various downloadable educational tools and resources to inform managers about promising practices related to the recruitment and retention of bilingual staff. Registration is free. Members of the Canadian College of Health Leaders receive credits when they complete all modules included in the online resource HHRstrategy.ca.⁴ The learning modules are aligned with LEADS Canada's *LEADS in a Caring Environment Leadership Capabilities Framework*.

Challenges

One of the main challenges for organizations providing services in French relates to recruiting and retaining health professionals who have the required linguistic competencies to offer these services. In response to this need, the initiative, part of the national strategy adopted by the Société Santé en français, is called *Stratégie d'accueil, de recrutement et de rétention des professionnels bilingues dans les communautés*. It intends to develop and experiment innovative strategies for recruiting and retaining health professionals in official language minority communities.

Ironically, one of the major challenges for promoters of this initiative is to make it known to managers. Nevertheless, the number of users of this online resource increases gradually and continuously. While the recent implementation of this resource, in November 2017, was met with a few technical glitches and learning difficulties (adjusting to the system), etc., an ongoing improvement process has allowed for these challenges to be dealt with.

Analysis⁵

Why is this practice considered innovative?

This practice meets a need expressed by managers for the recruitment and retention of bilingual human resources. It is considered innovative by its target group, namely, managers from Anglophone health organizations.

4 Ibid.

5 This analysis is based on criteria defined 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 also outlined in Appendix 1.

Emerging, promising or leading: A promising practice

- **Quality of evidence:** Research substantiated the existing needs and practice implementation.⁶ The process described in the Health Human Resources Strategy was evaluated by numerous entities and its online resource HHRstrategy.ca was assessed by various types of users in its beta format. A review conducted by expert advisors followed this step and led to the current product. In addition, the content was validated by LEADS Canada and the Canadian College of Health Leaders. The evaluation planned for 2018 will provide relevant information on the impact of the online resource and whether it achieved its objectives.

Impact: The Health Human Resources Strategy and its online resource HHRstrategy.ca should have positive impacts on the healthcare system by preparing organizations to design practices that foster the hiring and retention of bilingual health professionals. The evaluation planned for 2018 will help confirm this data.

- **Applicability:** The practice reached a great number of partner institutions within Ontario's Local Health Integration Networks. The Health Human Resources Strategy was presented in different Canadian provinces and territories. HHRstrategy.ca currently (as of February 2018) has 70 users and their number is constantly growing.
- **Transferability:** The *Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Bilingual Human Resources in the Health Sector* as well as the *Health Human Resources Strategy* were designed with a pan-Canadian perspective, thus enhancing the potential for transferability. These resources inspired Bangor University, in Wales, to draw from the framework when designing the university's strategy on bilingualism, which further confirms this potential for transferability.

6 Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario, 2013, op. cit.; Société Santé en français and Réseau franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario, 2015, op. cit.