

PRACTICE # 3

The Pavillon Omer Deslauriers : A Francophone Unit at Bendale Acres (Ontario)

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ABOUT THE FACT SHEET

This fact sheet is part of the Directory of Innovative Practices in Health and Social Services in Official Language Minority Contexts (available at: https://www.grefops.ca/directory_innovative_practices.html)

This Directory is a complementary resource to the Self-assessment Tool for Organizational and Community Resources for the Active Offer and Continuity of Social and Health Services also developed by GReFoPS¹. It presents initiatives most often implemented at the local level, which meet a community need and are perceived as innovative by the various stakeholders involved in their implementation. The practices were identified, analyzed and classified according to an evaluation framework developed by the Health Council of Canada as well as the definitions of the Public Health Agency of Canada. These two sources allowed us to distinguish between emerging practices, promising practices and leading practices. Some of these practices were suggested by the Société Santé en français and the provincial, territorial and regional French language health networks, or other partners.

The reader is referred to the [Introduction and Method](#) document for information about the authors and collaborators, background on the project, the methodology used to create the fact sheets, and definitions of the following concepts:

- Leading Practice, Promising Practice, Emerging Practice
- Quality of evidence, impact, applicability, transferability
- Service coordination, service integration, liaison
- Active offer

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¹ The self-assessment Tool is available in English and French and can be accessed at the following Web address:
https://www.grefops.ca/selfassessment_tool.html (English version)
https://www.grefops.ca/outil_autoevaluation.html (French version)

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This practice contributes to improving:

- Your organization's values and principles. Values: innovation, cultural and linguistic diversity, offering services in the user's preferred language.
- Active offer and coordination tools within an organization.

The organization implementing this practice:

Bendale Acres, Scarborough, Ontario

The information contained in this fact sheet was primarily acquired from a telephone interview conducted on July 10, 2017, with Margaret Aerola, Executive Director of Bendale Acres. It was complemented by documentary research, and these sources are cited as references. Updates were completed in February 2021 in collaboration with the former Residence's administrator, Mrs. Gina Filice, and in 2025 with the collaboration of Mrs. Gina Stringer.

Background

In Canada, the Francophone population living in a minority context is aging faster than the overall Canadian population. Bendale Acres is a long-term care facility established in 1963. Located in Scarborough, Toronto, the institution has 302 beds including 37 beds designated according to the French Language Services Act. It uses an individualized approach that supports seniors' autonomy while respecting their dignity, self-esteem, and rights.² In 1994, Bendale Acres created the Pavillon Omer Deslauriers, through a collaborative effort between the Francophone community, the City of Toronto and other partners. The pavilion serves Francophone seniors in the area and provides linguistically and culturally appropriate healthcare services to seniors from their admission, and throughout their stay.

Objectives

The objective was to create a Francophone section in a predominantly Anglophone setting, to provide long-term care in residents preferred official language. As a result, the unit allows Francophone seniors to access long-term care and end-of-life services in French, by way of bilingual staff using their full linguistic potential for the benefit of users and residents.

Furthermore, Bendale Acres' general objectives are to improve: 1) access to linguistically and culturally appropriate healthcare and services; 2) residents' quality of life; 3) health outcomes among residents; and 4) satisfaction for residents and their families.

² Bendale Acres website. Retrieved from: <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter/long-term-care-homes/bendale-acres>, accessed on July 14, 2017, and January 2025

Features of the practice

Bendale Acres' philosophy is grounded in an interprofessional approach to linguistically and culturally adapted healthcare for seniors from admission and throughout their stay. The Pavillon Omer Deslauriers is a 37-bed site, in a predominantly Anglophone institution of 302 beds. The following features are an integral part of the practice:

- In this 37-bed pavilion, a majority of employees are bilingual.
- Recreational, musical, and artistic activities or special events, as well as spiritual and religious support and care, are carried out in an environment that fosters the use of French.
- In 2013, it was determined that when a vacancy occurs at the Pavillon Omer Deslauriers, Ontario Health at Home gives priority to Francophone seniors who are eligible for long-term care and who apply to Bendale Acres.³

Pavillon Omer Deslauriers staff believe that communicating in one's mother tongue is required to assess the complaints and suffering of individuals who have dementia, establish an accurate diagnosis and design a treatment plan centered on their needs and expectations.⁴

Challenges

According to the interviews, the primary challenge for Bendale Acres is identifying and locating individuals from the Francophone minority within the Greater Toronto Area. They have become invisible, not only because of social, economic and structural circumstances, but also because they had, in the past, to face discrimination in their access and use of health and social services. This discrimination, strongly felt by some members of the Francophone minority community, has triggered a kind of refusal on their part to ask for and use French language services.

Also, according to the More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022⁵, long-term care beds need to be allocated in priority to hospitalized people who do not need acute hospital care and are awaiting long-term care (LTC). As a result, beds on the unit have been allocated to individuals who do not speak French. This has reduced the ability of the unit to accentuate the French culture on the unit.

Informed of a potential reduce access to beds in LTC homes that serve individuals of a particular culture since the application of the Act, the Ministry of Long-Term Care is proposing to implement a Long-Term Care Homes Cultural time-limited Pilot Project to evaluate a "LTC placement model that would enable placement co-ordinators to prioritize LTC applicants within the crisis waiting list who are of a particular religious, ethnic, or linguistic origin to [selected LTC homes] identified as being primarily engaged in serving the interests of persons of a particular ethnic, religious and/or linguistic origin."⁶



3 Entité 4. (2013). *Les aînés francophones ont maintenant un accès prioritaire aux soins de longue durée du Pavillon Omer Deslauriers à Scarborough*. Communiqué. Retrieved from: <https://entite4.ca/wp-content/uploads/Communiqu%C3%A9-de-presse-Bendale-Acres-FR.pdf>

4 The Pavillon Omer Deslauriers Team. (n.a.), Promotional video. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUP9c-soH68&feature=youtu.be>

5 [More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022, S.O. 2022, c. 16 - Bill 7 | ontario.ca](#)

6 [Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 246/22 \(Regulation\) under the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 \(FLTCA\) to enable a Long-Term Care \(LTC\) Homes Cultural Pilot Project.](#)

Analysis

Why is this practice considered innovative?

This practice meets a community need, and various stakeholders perceive it as innovative. Testimonials from residents, their family members as well as staff regarding the creation of the Pavillon Omer Deslauriers are very positive; they see this initiative as a way to ensure better services for Francophone seniors. Furthermore, this initiative is well-known in the Société Santé en français networks, who consider it a good practice. It inspired the development of the *Guide for Planning and Providing Francophone Long-Term Care Services* produced by the French Health Network of Central Southwestern Ontario.⁷

Emerging, promising or leading: A leading practice

Quality of evidence: The Francophone unit at Bendale Acres was reviewed as an example for the development of a long-term care planning and delivery model.⁸ Based on the evaluation and available testimonials, there is considerable appreciation on the part of actors involved in this initiative, including health and social service providers, health professionals and users.

Impact: Available testimonials and the interviews conducted indicate that this practice has positive impacts on the residents' satisfaction and quality of life. Literature shows that the offer of services in one's preferred language is associated to greater user safety and an improved quality of services for official language minority communities.⁹

Applicability: Francophone areas or floors in long term care homes with predominantly Anglophone residents were also identified in Prince Edward Island (see practice # 2).

According to the *Guide for Planning and Providing Francophone Long-Term Care Services*¹⁰, six attributes must be present for this model of care to be successful:

- Leadership and planning
- Community involvement and collaboration
- Communication and promotion
- Seniors friendly environment
- Bilingual human resources
- Person-centred approach

Transferability: Results from identified initiatives all point in the same direction of positive impacts on the residents' satisfaction and quality of life. It appears that these results are transferable to diverse contexts. Indeed, the model for culturally designated homes or units also exists for other cultural groups as reported in the *Needs Study: Long-Term Care Homes in the Northeastern Ontario Region*¹¹ and in the above-mentioned Pilot project.

7 Réseau Franco-santé du Sud de l'Ontario (2017). Guide de planification et de prestation de soins de longue durée en français : Leçons tirées du Pavillon Omer Deslauriers de Bendale Acres et d'autres services de santé en français pour aînés au Canada. Report accessed on February 13, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://francosantesud.ca/wp-content/uploads/Guide-de-planification-et-de-prestation-des-sld-francais-Final-2.pdf>

8 *Ibid.* Drawing from the review of the Pavillon Omer Deslauriers model and other best practices, this guide proposes a model for planning and delivering long-term care that has six attributes: 1) leadership and planning; 2) community engagement; 3) communication and promotion; 4) environment; 5) bilingual human resources; 6) person-centered approach. The guide also outlines ten steps to implement a Francophone cluster in a long-term care facility, as well as five things frontline staff can do to improve access to French-language services.

9 de Moissac, D., & Bowen, S. (2019). Impact of language barriers on quality of care and patient safety for official language minority Francophones in Canada. *Journal of Patient Experience*, 6(1), 24-32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2374373518769008>. Reaume, M., Peixoto, C., Pugliese, M., Tanuseputro, P., Batista, R., Kendall, C. E., Landry, J.-R., Prud'Homme, D., Chomiene, M.-H., Farrell, B., & Bjerre, L. M. (2024). The impact of patient-facility language discordance on potentially inappropriate prescribing of antipsychotics in long-term care home in Ontario, Canada: A retrospective population health cohort study. *BMC Geriatrics*, 24 (889). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-024-05446-8>

10 https://francosantesud.ca/wp-content/uploads/7110_rfsso_francophone-long-term_care_services-FINAL1-1.pdf

11 Réseau du mieux-être francophone du nord de l'Ontario. (2017, December). Needs Study: Long-Term Care Homes in the Northeastern Ontario Region. https://reseaudumieuxetre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Report-LTC-Northeastern-Ontario_28-03-18-1-1.pdf