

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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Jacinthe Savard
Sébastien Savard
Solange Van Kemenade
Josée Benoit
Corrina Buhay
Sara Youbi
Lucy-Ann Kubina



Groupe de recherche sur la
formation et les pratiques en santé
et service social en contexte
francophone minoritaire



uOttawa

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)

The *Directory of Innovative Practices* (formerly the Handbook of Innovative Practices on the Integration of Official Language Minority Health and Social Services) is a complementary resource to the *Organizational and Community Resources Self-Assessment Tool for Active Offer and Social and Health Services Continuity*¹. It presents initiatives that have been put in place, most often at the local level, that respond to a community need and are perceived as innovative by the various actors involved in their implementation. The practices were identified, analyzed and classified according to an evaluation framework developed by the Health Council of Canada. This framework 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, a description of the methodology used to create the fact sheets, 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:

- 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 fact sheet 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. The fact sheet was updated in February 2021 in collaboration with Ms. Laferrière.

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*.² 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*³, 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)⁴ 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. As of March 31, 2021, the Health Human Resources Strategy has been integrated into the eQUITY Link⁵ site to provide a more user-friendly location for users while giving them access to a variety of resources to meet their needs.

² 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. Retrieved from : <http://francosantesud.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sommaire-Projet-Strategies-RH.pdf>

³ 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. Retrieved from: <http://santefrancais.ca/wp-content/uploads/fr-cadrerh-3.pdf>

⁴ Health Human Resources Strategy. Accessed on February 15, 2018. Retrieved from: [HHRstrategy.ca](http://www.strategierhs.ca) The French version is available at <http://www.strategierhs.ca/>

⁵ eQUITY Link is a resource site for health providers to build linguistic competency within diverse health systems (<https://equity-link.ca>).

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.

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. 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.

Analysis⁶

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.

⁶ This analysis is based on criteria defined in the *Innovative Practices Evaluation Framework* designed by the Health Council of Canada, Retrieved from : https://healthcouncilcanada.ca/files/IP_Framework_Eng_final_1.pdf and outlined in the Introduction and method document.

Emerging, promising or leading: A promising practice

Quality of evidence: Research substantiated the existing needs and practice implementation.⁷ 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. An evaluation questionnaire included in the platform collects data on user satisfaction and the impact of their use.

Impact: As of February 2021, evaluation data from the evaluation questionnaire included with the online platform indicates that the platform's resources are applicable (38.46%) or completely applicable (61.54%) to users. Users feel better informed about the challenges and factors that influence the recruitment and retention of bilingual human resources (100%), as well as practices for recruiting, managing and retaining bilingual staff (100%). Users feel ready to apply their new knowledge (84%) and would recommend using HHRstrategy.ca or StrategieRHS.ca (100%).

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. As of February 2021, the two platforms (HHRstrategy.ca and StrategieRHS.ca) had 200 users from every province and territory in Canada, as well as internationally.

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.

⁷ 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.*