



French-language Service Plan

2008-2009

Name of Public Institution:

South West Nova District Health Authority

Message from the CEO:

South West Health is fortunate to be home to the second largest Acadian and francophone population in Nova Scotia. Over the past two years we have undertaken a number of initiatives to better serve our Acadian and francophone population and we count ourselves fortunate that more than 20% of our staffing complement is French speaking. We often hear our employees switching automatically to French when they encounter a neighbour or patient who is Acadian or francophone.

The development of this French Language Service plan provides us with the opportunity to review the work we have done to date as well as to set goals for the future. We look forward to receiving feedback on this plan from our Acadian and francophone population.

Staff Communication Process for French-language population:

Excerpt from Interpreter Services Policy:

South West Health serves communities with diverse race, language and ethnic backgrounds. We strive to create a respectful environment that responds to the cultural, racial and spiritual needs of our patients and clients.

Non-English speaking patients/clients face linguistic and cultural barriers to care. Language barriers may also prevent health care providers from delivering appropriate health services to patients.

Whenever possible, South West Health will provide services in the patient/client's language of choice using professional health interpreters.

The policy offers services/resources available for managing requests for both verbal and written translation in French and other languages.

French-language services offered now:

Positions advertised as “Bilingualism is preferred”

- Public Health Services positions based in Meteghan.
- Eight Addiction Services staffing positions (1 health promotion, 1 secretarial support, 4 outpatient therapy and 2 inpatient counseling/nursing).
- All clinical positions within Mental Health Services (includes RN’s, LPN’s, Social Workers, Psychologists, Community Support Workers, Secretaries, Ward Clerk, Occupational Therapist).

French speaking employees

- 23% of our employees are French speaking and as a result this allows communication needs to be met on a regular and informal basis. Some examples follow:
 - 47% of ICU staff speak French
 - 38% of renal dialysis staff speak French
 - Public Health employees located in each county are able to speak French and some staff members are able to perform a written translation function when required. In particular, all employees in the Meteghan office are French speaking.
 - Seven employees within the Addictions Services program are French speaking.
 - Eight employees within the Mental Health program are French speaking.
 - The district director of nursing, a pharmacist, a nurse practitioner, community health centre coordinator, pre-operative assessment nurse, three diabetes education centre staff are French speaking and in supportive care services one social worker and the manager are French speaking.
 - Regional oncology unit has three bilingual staff to support francophone patients.
 - Two bilingual staff in palliative care.

Staff supported to take French courses

- Beginners French Courses for Government Employees (*numbers supplied by Office of Acadian Affairs*). *Staff includes: nursing, pharmacy, nurse practitioner, mental health services, addiction services, public health, administration, health records, clinical resource, food & nutrition services, etc.*
 - Winter 2007 – 19 staff (beginner 1)
 - Spring 2007 – 8 staff (beginner 2)
 - Summer 2007 – 10 staff (1 intermediate, 1 beginner-1, 2 beginner-2 and 7 beginner-3)
 - Fall 2007 – 10 staff (5 intermediate-1, 2 beginner-2 and 3 beginner-4)
- A public health employee was supported to take both conversational French and French Immersion, this was a cost sharing arrangement between the individual and the district.
- Another Public Health staff in addition to completing the Beginner Level 4 course at Universite Ste. Anne is currently enrolled in the Intermediate conversational French course from Universite Ste. Anne.

Patient Services Directory

Since summer 2006, South West Health's patient services directory has been printed one side in English and the opposite in French. Translation was facilitated by the Office of Acadian Affairs.

Visual Medical Translators

Medical Visual language Translators allows instant two-way communication between patient and health care provider using pictures and universally accepted symbols and other images to request and receive key information about cause, symptom, and treatment of the medical condition. Medical Visual Language Communications Tools are located in each hospital emergency department as well as in the regional hospital Shift Coordinator's office.

Improving Access to Health Services and Information for the Francophone Population Initiative (2006)

The initiative was a partnership between the Capital District Health Authority (CDHA), Annapolis Valley District Health Authority (AVDHA), South Shore District Health Authority (SSDHA) and the South West Nova District Health Authority (SWNDHA). The goal of this federally funded project was to improve the provision of French Language Services in Healthcare, specifically focused on patient materials, signage and other aspects of patient - healthcare practitioner communications.

The following items were translated and are now available in French:

- Infection Control and Prevention brochures (Clostridium difficile: Information for Patients; MRSA: Information for Hospital Patient Contacts; MRSA: Information for Patients with MRSA; VRE: Information for Hospital Patient Contacts; and VRE: Information for Patient & Family)
- Medical Ethic Support for Patients & Families brochure
- Diagnostic Imaging Patient Guides (0036 Barium EnemaSW.doc; 0043 UpperGIX SW.doc; 1053 After Breast Biopsy SW.doc; IVP X-ray.doc; Myelogram.doc; and Nuclear Medicine Examination.doc)
- Pre-Operative Assessment Brochures (When your child needs anaesthesia; A Patient Guide to Day Surgery; A Patient Guide to Surgery – Same Day Admission; The Tonsillectomy and Adenoidectomy Journey; A Pt. Guide to Surgery –Hints for Parents & Children; and 1050 Same Day Surgery Admission SW.doc)
- Posters (District Privacy Poster; and District Vision, Mission and Values Poster)
- Stroke Signs and Symptoms Magnets
- Clare Community Health Board Wellness Fund Materials (Application Form; Application Criteria Form; Wellness Fund Form part II – Approval & LOA; Wellness Form Part III – Interim Report; Wellness Form Part IV – Final Report; and Wellness Form Part V – Evaluation)
- Addiction Services brochures (Nicotine Addiction Treatment; We Can Help; Residential Education and Treatment Programs; and We Can Help)
- Mental Health brochures (3 brochures, one for each county)
- Other items (Translation of closed circuit messages; Prenatal Clinic brochure; Palliative Care brochure; Cancer Services brochure; General Info brochure (describes hospitals & programs))

Bonjour Program

Human Resources conducts orientation for all new staff, volunteers and students to the district every second Monday. As part of the orientation, a brief introduction to the "Bonjour" program is provided. The explanation is given that staff are not being asked to serve as translators, but to help contribute to a more friendly and welcoming environment for our Acadian/Francophone clients. Orientation participants are asked if they consider themselves sufficiently bilingual, and those who respond positively are presented with a "Bonjour" button and encouraged to wear it.

South West Health Website (www.swndha.nshealth.ca)

- The translated version of the Patient Services directory is available from the District's website.
- Documents translated through the Improving Access to Health Services and Information for the Francophone Population Initiative are available from the district's website.
- Links on the "Patient Info" page have been made to the Directory of French Speaking Primary Health Care Providers.

French Patient/Client Education Materials

- The primary health care program purchased copies of '*Do I Need To See the Doctor*' (*Faut-il voir un infirmier/un médecin?*) in both English and French. This resource gives parents valuable tips for treating common minor health issues as well as pointing out the signs that a trip to the emergency department or family doctor is needed.
- Stroke Program offers copies of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia supplies and information in French for stroke survivors.
- Rehabilitation services offer a French version of the Bone Health exercise video (offered from rehab services at all three hospitals) entitled "*Mes os, j'en prends soin!*".
- The renal dialysis unit offers various resources (brochures, videos and Living With Kidney Disease binder) entitled "*Vivre à sa façon*".
- Materials and resources on diabetes are available from the YRH Diabetes Education Centre. Presentations in French on "Kids with Diabetes" have been offered to and in some cases have been conducted for Yarmouth/Clare area schools. Presentations in French on diabetes are scheduled for Réseau Santé and Université Ste. Anne to be held in the Spring.
- Public Health Services offers health related resources in French that support the school-based program along with *Breastfeeding Basics book (L'essentiel sur l'allaitement)*; *the Sex? (Le sexe?) Book*; the Parent Health Education series "Loving Care" for families with children aged 0-3 years is currently being translated in French; one of the Public Health Services staff in Meteghan is assisting with the translation of this resource; *Bien Grandir (Growing Up OK)* a resource for boys and girls regarding puberty; *Parlons de Sexe (Talk Sex)* resource for parents of preschool and young school aged children.
- Other tools that have been created and/or translated in French include the school audit tool (*l'outil d'état*), the Health Promoting School (*Ecole en Sante*) logo, the Health Promoting School presentation for community members and school staff and all minutes/agendas associated with the schools in the Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) board have been translated in French

- The Nova Scotia “Cervical Cancer Prevention Program” information is being translated in French. There are posters promoting pap testing that have been translated in French that are available for Well Women Clinics.
- Patient education materials on MRSA, VRE and C. Diff. are available on each inpatient unit.

Other initiatives of note

- Public Health Services has staff members who participated in Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and with Réseau Santé.
- Main signage in the regional hospital was translated during the hospital redevelopment project.
- Some of the district recruitment materials were translated for a job fair held in Montreal in February, 2007. This translation was done with support from the Office of Acadian Affairs.
- Addiction Services offers both promotional and clinical materials in French (examples: “Knowledge and Skills for Life” (*Les Connaissances et Habiletés Pour la Vie*) material and delivery in French within CSAP schools).
- Library Services searches, on request from health care providers, for reputable, high quality patient education and consumer health materials in French and other languages. These searches can be treated as RUSH with turn around a maximum of 1 hour.
- The Family Friendly Breastfeeding pledge has been translated in French and is posted throughout the SWNDHA Public Health Services offices and community partners offices.
- “Breastfeeding Welcome” sign has been translated in French; these are posted in the SWNDHA Public Health Services offices.
- The Friendly Feeding Line (Marraines d’allaitement maternel) is now offered in Clare. The peer volunteers from the Clare communities are bilingual.
- Five schools in the CSAP were provided an interactive information session on the provincial school food and nutrition policy for parents, staff and community members. Four of these sessions were in French and were done in conjunction with the Public Health nutritionist and other Public Health Services staff, education and other community agencies as part of Écoles en santé.
- The SWNDHA Youth Health Centre working group includes representatives for the Clare and Argyle area.
- A partnership has been established with the local French radio station (CIFA) to broadcast youth engagement issues.
- Two representatives attended the Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec in Montreal on February 21, 2008 to recruit French and bilingual physicians. Recruitment materials were translated for distribution at the job fair. There were approximately 350 residents at the job fair.
- Mental Health Services recently obtained a French version of the mini mental health test and bilingual staff can administer this as required.
- The Canadian Mental Health Association recently purchased a large number of books dealing with various Mental Health issues which are in French. These books are available at the libraries in Yarmouth, Digby and Shelburne.

- Mental Health Services job postings will indicate that being bilingual will be an asset in the hope of drawing more French speaking staff to the area.
- Mental Health Services in Clare is supported by two bilingual staff who can deliver services to the francophone community.
- Our oncology unit manager is a member of “*La Société Santé en français*” and she attended the 4th annual conference in Edmonton. Many of the sessions focused on health human resources.
- The regional oncology unit also offers a number of patient education publications, including a French consent form for treatment.
- The Yarmouth Hospital Foundation is in the process of developing a French version of their website.

Goals, Objectives and Measures

Corporate Objective 1. *Strengthening the policy, regulatory and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act.*

- Internal policies related to providing services in French were developed (07-08)
- Through the committee reviewing the Cultural Competence Guidelines on the Delivery of Primary Health Care in Nova Scotia, recommendations (including francophone services) will be submitted to the district health authority senior management team in the summer of 2008 for consideration and integration into the district’s business plan for 2009-2010. (08-09).

Specific measures which were taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008:

- Communicate with staff regarding the newly approved Interpreter Services Policy.
 - As part of this policy, a list of staff willing to provide a translation function (verbal and written) was compiled.
 - As per the policy, the list is available through the district Human Resources department and through the District Duty Officer on call.
 - Interpreter Services policy is included as part of the orientation sessions for new staff members.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009:

- Maintain list of staff willing to translate (written and verbal) in emergency situations.
- Interpreter Services policy will continue to be communicated with new staff as part of the district’s orientation program.
- The Interpreter Services policy will be shared with physicians as a resource in case they require support to serve the francophone community.

Corporate Objective 2. *Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community.*

- Review programs and services to determine priorities for French-language services.

Specific measures which were taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008:

- Review Réseau Santé's most recent report, particularly recommendations for improving French-language health services.
- Determine initiatives that the district will implement within current resources.
- Consultation with Community Health Boards, staff and Réseau Sante has been initiated to seek input on our French Language Service Plan. Some initiatives noted in this plan for 2008-2009 are a result of those consultations.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009:

- The district will release an updated Health Status Report, the report will be translated to share with our francophone communities and partners.
- Develop a formal consultation plan with partners, Community Health Boards, staff, Réseau Sante, etc. to solicit feedback on our planning.
- We will link the French Language Services Planning to the Cultural Competence Steering Committee and invite a member of Réseau Sante to join the committee. This will formalize the link between Réseau Sante and the district on an ongoing basis.
- A presentation regarding the Youth Health Center for the Clare Community Health Board is scheduled Spring 2008.

Corporate Objective 3. *Communicating, sharing information and promoting services available in French.*

- Public information is available in both French and English.
- Employees and the public are more aware of the availability to provide French-language services.

Specific measures which were taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008:

- The surgical program's pain management brochure has been translated.
- Addiction Services plans to continue to develop the team's French language capacity, continue to develop substance use and gambling school policies with CSAP; expand direct promotional and therapeutic work in CSAP schools; and continue to build relationships with the Acadian and francophone media.
- Addiction Services also plans to improve the provision of promotional and treatment services to the Université Ste. Anne population particularly in the areas of gambling, nicotine and substance use.
- Continue to promote the "Bonjour" campaign that identifies French speaking staff.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009:

- The Bonjour Program is also publicized on the district website along with excerpts from the interpreter services policy.
- The regional oncology nurse manager is part of a committee organized by Cancer Care Nova Scotia and the New Brunswick Cancer Network, to review Medication Info Sheets (MIS). The agency partnership is supported by the Cancer Programs in PEI and

NFLd/Labrador and will contribute to the consistency of patient education across Atlantic Canada and will be available in both English and French.

- As an incentive to staff who have agreed to act as translators in an emergency situation, a letter of commendation will be placed on their file indicating their willingness to support our francophone population is above and beyond the call of duty. This will be actioned by Human Resources.
- Reminder communications will be sent to staff in April and September to ask them to consider submitting their name forward as an emergency translator and to remind them of the Bonjour program. The communications department will action the release of a memo concerning emergency translators and Human Resources will action the release of the reminder communication regarding the Bonjour program.

Corporate Objective 4. *Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority areas.*

- Develop plans and strategies for French-language service delivery as part of the annual planning process. (07-08, 08-09)
- Establish a vision for French Language Services provision which is responsive to the needs of our communities/patients/clients. (08-09)

Specific measures which were taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2007-2008:

- Examine the level of services in French and the capacity for offering services, identify the priority areas and monitor progress.
- Maintain the French-language capacity study of staff.
- Public Health positions based in Meteghan will become “Bilingualism is required” (currently they are “Bilingualism is preferred”).
- We will ask for financial support as part of our business plan to ensure staff with an interest, can be supported to take French-language courses.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009:

- A funding request was submitted in the 2008-2009 business plan to hire a 0.5 FTE Cultural Competence Coordinator – South West Health is providing leadership to an Advisory Committee who is currently reviewing the provincial guidelines on cultural competence to make recommendations to the district for implementation. The system wide implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these guidelines will require additional resources, as the district currently has no internal resources to support this work. This individual would also be engaged in the aboriginal health transition fund project that is currently underway in the South West Health and Annapolis Valley Health districts.
- The Friendly Feeding Line registration form will be translated into French. Some Friendly Feeding Line peer breastfeeding volunteer training materials may also be available in French.
- Add to job postings “Bilingualism is considered an asset”...therefore, if two equal candidates compete for a position and one was bilingual, the bilingual candidate would be

chosen as the successful candidate. This will be brought forward through the Cultural Competence Steering Committee recommendations.

- We would like to offer staff serving francophone communities opportunities to attend Immersion programs at Universite Ste. Anne.

Contributing to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and francophone community

Our plan recognizes the need to meet the needs of our Acadian and francophone population. By providing the opportunity for Acadians and francophones to obtain services in French from our hospitals and community programs, we are contributing to the development of this community and the preservation of the French language.

Respectfully submitted,



Blaise MacNeil
CEO