

S'unir pour mieux agir



Joining forces for Active Offer of Integrated Health Services to **Seniors** in Official Language Minority Communities.

Position Paper¹



Background

"As Canada's population ages and chronic disease rates increase, Canadians need access to more health care services outside the traditional settings such as physicians' offices and hospitals. Across Canada, all jurisdictions are putting in place new approaches to enhance access to vital health care and support services at home and in the community, and reduce reliance on more expensive hospital infrastructure."²

But what about active offer of health and social services in French³ for Francophone seniors? As of the 2016 Census, of the roughly 1 million Francophones living in Francophone minority communities, **200,465 were age 65 or older.**⁴

Shared responsibility

"Active offer relies on shared accountability at several levels and requires partners to exercise appropriate leadership with respect to health services in French."⁵ That is why we want to encourage the various stakeholders in the system to:

1. **Develop a common vision** to ensure the delivery of integrated health services that are safe, of high quality, and culturally and linguistically appropriate;
2. **Mobilize key stakeholders**, including the Anglophone and Francophone partners, to meet the specific needs of the aging community;
3. **Promote collaborative leadership** in planning French-language care and services for Francophone seniors in French-language minority communities.

Key messages

Here are some practical solutions that need to be considered in order to improve access to health and social services in French for Francophone seniors in Canada:

- Expand the availability of **bilingual human resources** both through staff recruitment and retention policies and through in-house training and internships.
- Emphasize the **risks that a lack of access to integrated, high-quality care and services** in French poses to Francophone seniors' health and safety.
- Promote a **collaborative approach** that makes the best use of everyone's particular strengths and expertise to achieve a shared objective focused on individual wellness and community development.
- Engage Francophone seniors in solutions tailored to their needs at **every stage of the aging process**.
- Demonstrate the **economic benefits** of meeting Francophone seniors' needs.

¹ This position paper was prepared in collaboration with the 75 participants at a seminar held in Ottawa in November 2018. This seminar was organized by the Fédération des aînés et aînées francophones du Canada (the federation representing Francophone seniors across Canada). It was held in French, and its title can be translated as "Joining Forces for More Effective Action: A Seminar To Promote Active Offer of Integrated Health Services to Seniors in Official Language Minority Communities". For more information (in French), see *S'unir pour mieux agir: Séminaire pour promouvoir l'offre active de services intégrés aux personnes âgées des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire* at this address: www.santefrancais.ca/seniors-seminar-2018.

² Canada, Government of Canada. *A Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health Priorities*, [online] July 21, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/principles-shared-health-priorities.html> (French page consulted on August 21, 2018).

³ In concrete terms, active offer takes the form of a range of health services available in French and offered proactively, which means that services are clearly advertised, visible and easily accessible at all times without placing the responsibility of requesting services on the clients." (Société Santé en français. *Active Offer of French-Language Health Services for Francophone and Acadian Minority Communities in Canada - Joint Position Statement on Active Offer*, 2017, p. 6.)

⁴ CANADA, STATISTICS CANADA. *Profile of Official Language Communities in Canada, 2016 Census*, [online] April 10, 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/principles-shared-health-priorities.html> (French page consulted on December 10, 2018).

⁵ Société Santé en français. *Active Offer of French-Language Health Services for Francophone and Acadian Minority Communities in Canada - Joint Position Statement on Active Offer*, 2017, p. 6.

