



# Benchmark study on bilingual services in Canadian hospitals

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For  Health Canada Santé  
Canada Canada



## **ICRML**

Institut canadien  
de recherche  
sur les minorités  
linguistiques

## **CIRLM**

Canadian Institute  
for Research  
on Linguistic  
Minorities

The **Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities** is an independent, non-profit research organization established with funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage. Its role is to lead, bring together and partner with researchers, community agencies and government bodies to promote greater awareness of the situation of Canada's official language minorities and a clearer understanding of the priority issues that concern them.

The Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities acknowledges the support of the Government of Canada.

**Canada** 

# Context of the study

We have produced three studies for Health Canada:

- Benchmark study on bilingual services in Canadian healthcare institutions
  - 7,000 healthcare institutions (some including the language in which the services were provided)
- Profile of Canadian hospital health indicators
  - 4 types of hospitals, health regions and Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) health indicators
- Profile of bilingual services in Canadian hospitals
  - 599 CIHI hospitals across Canada (profile of bilingual services for some hospitals)

# Objectives

- In our study, our aim was to determine whether Canadian hospitals:
  - provide services in both official languages;
  - have official languages coordinators or service officers;
  - have designated bilingual positions or bilingual employees;
  - have a policy or action plan for providing services in both official languages;
  - use resources to provide services in both official languages;
  - use interpretation services.

# Methodology

- Data collection over a 3-month period
- Telephone calls to targeted hospitals:
  - hospital websites or healthcare networks;
  - laws or regulations;
  - hospitals located in areas where there is an official language minority community.
- Findings based on responses collected during our calls

# Response results: Atlantic Canada

Indicators	New Brunswick 31.7% francophone (238,085) (French mother tongue only - 2011)	Newfound- land and Labrador (2,490 - 0.5%)	Prince Edward Island (5,260 – 3.8%)	Nova Scotia (31,580 – 3.4%)
<b>Official languages coordinator</b>	2 for the province (1 for each network) (networks that responded)	None (1 response)	Only one for Health PEI (the ones that responded)	57% answered yes (7 responses)
<b>Services in both official languages</b>	Yes, depending on the legal context ( <u>field work would be needed</u> )	Hire an interpreter	Availability of bilingual staff; interpretation services (telephone)	57% have bilingual services (more or less official); 57% provide interpretation services (in person, telephone) and 43% in-house
<b>List of bilingual employees</b>	No system in place to determine numbers (in progress for the Horizon network)	Don't know	Don't know	57% have a list of bilingual employees (estimate)
<b>Policy, action plan</b>	<i>Official Languages Act</i> ; action plan for the networks	None	Health PEI (language of interpretation and Signage Policy)	1 yes and 1 referred to the Health Authority; the province has a French-language Services Plan
<b>Resources to provide services in both languages</b>	Horizon: Active offer to managers Vitalité: Active offer to new employees	Bilingual signage	Bilingual staff; translation services	43% have bilingual signage; 43% have a “Bonjour” program (lapel pin)

# Response results: Quebec

Indicators	Quebec 7.7% anglophone (606,075)
<b>Official languages coordinator</b>	79% referred to respondents for access to English-language services (24 responses).
<b>Services in both official languages</b>	In the middle of a restructuring process when we called, but according to the data, half of the hospitals may provide them to varying degrees. Interpretation services mentioned by 2 hospitals and for 42%, depends on availability of bilingual staff.
<b>List of bilingual employees</b>	17% have the number of bilingual employees; the rest don't know.
<b>Policy, action plan</b>	67% referred mainly to the <i>English-language health and social services access program</i> and 17% to the <i>Act Respecting Health Services and Social Services</i> .
<b>Resources to provide services in both languages</b>	29% mentioned a list of bilingual employees or employees with a lapel pin; 50% provide language training for employees; 29% translate selected documents.

# Response results: Ontario

Indicators	Ontario 3.9% francophone (499,000)
<b>Official languages coordinator</b>	38% answered yes, and 21% said that it was an HR responsibility (24 responses and 9 responses that services are not provided in both languages)
<b>Services in both official languages</b>	58% said selected services only, 21% all services, and the rest mentioned interpretation services (telephone, and some in-house).
<b>List of bilingual employees</b>	58% have an estimate of the number of bilingual employees.
<b>Policy, action plan</b>	83% have a policy (i.e., a hospital policy) or follow the LHIN's policy. 79% have an action plan to improve the provision of services in both official languages.
<b>Resources to provide services in both languages</b>	21% have a list of bilingual employees; 42% hire bilingual employees; 21% have bilingual signage; 17% provide language training; 17% ask patients their language preference during registration.



# Response results: Western Canada

Indicators	Manitoba 3.6% (42,895)	Saskatchewan 1.6% (16,695)	Alberta 1.9% (69,520)	British Columbia 1.3% (57,885)
<b>Official languages coordinator</b>	All but one have a coordinator (7 responses)	No (3 responses)	Only 1 (5 responses)	No (3 responses)
<b>Services in both official languages</b>	All services for only one, selected services for the rest; 29% have interpretation services (in person), and 29% in-house	No (interpretation services - telephone and in-house)	1 selected services, and the rest have interpretation services (telephone and in person)	No (interpretation services - in person, telephone and videoconference)
<b>List of bilingual employees</b>	86% have a list of bilingual employees (estimate)	Don't know	Only 1 has a list of bilingual employees	Don't know
<b>Policy, action plan</b>	All said they follow the RHA policy; all but one have an action plan	No	No	No
<b>Resources to provide services in both languages</b>	86% have bilingual signage; 57% provide language training; 43% hire bilingual staff	None mentioned	Only one mentioned translation of documents	None mentioned

# Response results: Territories

Indicators	Yukon 4.3% (1,460)	Northwest Territories 2.6% (1,080)	Nunavut 1.4% (435)
<b>Official languages coordinator</b>	Yes (1 contact)	Yes (1 response)	Nunavut's only hospital provides services in English only.
<b>Services in both official languages</b>	Selected services, depending on bilingual employees; interpretation services (telephone and in person)	Active offer began recently (June 2016); interpretation services (telephone and in person)	
<b>List of bilingual employees</b>	Has a list of bilingual employees	Has a list of bilingual employees (estimate)	
<b>Policy, action plan</b>	Referred to the <i>Languages Act</i> ; working on an action plan	Yes	
<b>Resources to provide services in both languages</b>	List of bilingual employees	Education and training of staff on active offer	

# Conclusion

- It's a start.
- Remember, the aim was to determine whether services are offered in the minority language and the extent to which they are actually available.
- Key findings:
  - hospitals do not have all the tools they need to provide the services.
  - some hospitals do not have policies or directives.
  - many do not know the number or percentage of bilingual employees.

# Conclusion (continued)

## ○ Pertinent questions:

- Are the resources being used sufficient to meet OLMC needs, to better understand the gaps between the needs and the resources used to serve the linguistic minority?
- To what extent are the policies in place followed?
- To what extent are interpretation services used, and to what extent do they meet users' needs?

# Thank you!



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