

More than one million Canadians report French as their first official language spoken and live in a minority setting.

Quality health care depends on clear communication between health care professionals and patients. **Yet access to services in French remains a challenge**, which sometimes places Francophones at considerable risk.

"I speak English, so I can navigate the system, but my children speak only French, so I have to interpret for them."



"There's a major need for mental-health services in French!"

"Yes, thank you for working to improve French at the hospital. It's important."

— Comments received in a survey on the health needs of Francophones in Nunavut, conducted in fall 2018 [translated from French].



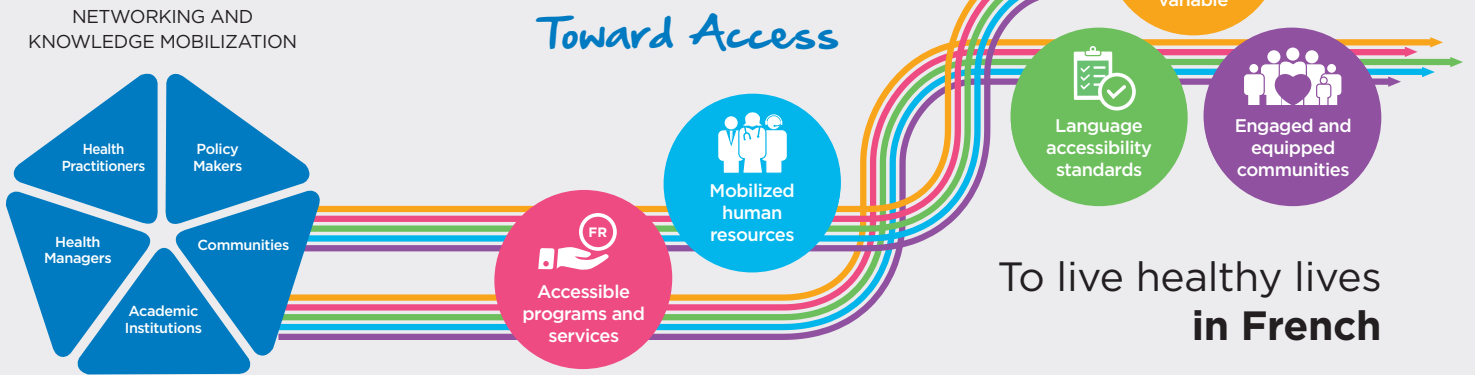
Examples of **risks** of language barriers in **health care**

<p>Increased risks of misdiagnosis</p>		<p>Poorer patient understanding of and adherence to prescribed treatment</p>	<p>Poorer management of chronic disease</p>	<p>Less participation in health promotion and prevention activities</p>
<p>Barriers to initial access to health services and delayed presentation for care</p>	<p>Failure to obtain informed consent and to protect patient confidentiality</p>	<p>Lower patient satisfaction</p>		<p>Less effective pain management</p>

From: Bowen, S. (2015), *The Impact of Language Barriers on Patient Safety and Quality of Care*, Ottawa, Ontario: Société Santé en français.

Société Santé en français and the **16 French-language Health Networks** of Canada enhance community capacities and health systems.

Healthbound 18 | 23 Toward Access



Results for communities

Accessible programs and services

DIRECTORY OF FRENCH-SPEAKING HEALTH AND SOCIAL-SERVICE PROFESSIONALS IN IQALUIT ●

The Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut (RÉSEFAN - Nunavut French-language health network) has published a directory providing names and contact information of professionals providing health and social services in French in Iqaluit.



Integration of the linguistic variable

HEALTH CARD ●

A first in Canada!

In Prince Edward Island, health cards now record the holder's language, which helps in compiling meaningful data on the utilization of health services by language.

Mobilized human resources

Café de Paris ●

An informal space where employees can acquire or maintain basic French language skills, interact orally in French and obtain tools and resources to enable them to offer services in both official languages. The model, developed in New Brunswick, was implemented in Nunavut in 2019.



HEALTH NU ●

RÉSEFAN has had the Health NU application adapted and translated into French. This application helps newly arrived health professionals and interns in Nunavut to get oriented and makes them better equipped to understand the realities of life in this territory. The French version of Health NU also includes a presentation on the territory's Francophone community. This initiative received support from the Government of Nunavut.



NEW HIRES WILL FACILITATE HEALTH SERVICES IN FRENCH IN THE NWT ●

The Government of the Northwest Territories (NWT) provides a bilingual mental health helpline service to its citizens through an agreement with the Ottawa Distress Centre. To enhance the health services offered in French in the NWT, it recently hired a medical interpreter, based at Stanton Territorial Hospital. The territorial government is currently working to systematize the offer of front-line services in French in Yellowknife's health clinics, through the creation of new bilingual clinical assistant positions and is also partnering with La Fédération francoténoise to improve the active offer training with a specific focus on health and social services.