

## Did you know?

Nearly 2 million Canadians live in Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

75% of Francophones living in OLMCs find it important to receive services in French, BUT only 40% have used French with health care professionals.

(Gagnon-Arpin et al., 2014)

Health care professionals tend to overestimate clients' proficiency in the clients' second language, particularly in the area of reading skills. (Bowen, 2011)

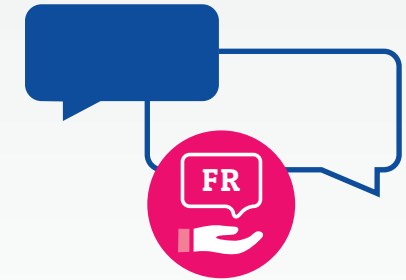
*Studies have shown that certain factors such as pain, vulnerability and stress have significant impact on the ability of service recipients to express themselves adequately in their second language regardless of how well they may speak French and English in other circumstances.*

(Source: [www.cnfs.net](http://www.cnfs.net))

## Additional resources

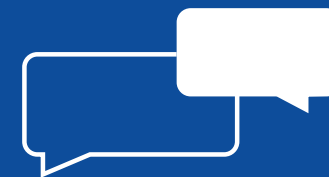
- **Franco-Doc**  
Project to identify and support Francophile medical students  
<https://afmc.ca/en/priorities/franco-doc>
- **Med Interpret**  
English-to-French medical interpretation app <http://www.accueilfrancophone.com/med-interpret>
- **Médecins francophones**  
Organization offering French-language training to health care professionals  
<https://www.medecinsfrancophones.ca/>
- **Toolbox for the Active Offer**  
Website promoting the active offer of health care services in the patient's language <http://www.offreactive.com/>
- **Société Santé en français**  
National organization promoting broader access to quality French health services  
<https://www.santefrancais.ca/>
- **Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut**  
Network dedicated to improving access to health care in French for Nunavut Francophones [www.resefan.ca](http://www.resefan.ca)
- **Health NU**  
App for new members of the health care workforce in Nunavut

## The importance of receiving health care in your language



by Réseau Santé en français au Nunavut

[www.resefan.ca](http://www.resefan.ca)



## Why offer services in all official languages?

“Language barriers have been demonstrated to have adverse effects on access to health care, quality of care, rights of patients, patient and provider satisfaction and, most importantly, on patient health outcomes.”<sup>1</sup>

Health care agencies delivering services in all official languages thereby contribute to breaking down language barriers.

## What is active offer?

Active offer is a **proactive** health care services model in the minority official language. It focuses on quality, safety, ethics and equity in the provision of health care.

“In concrete terms, active offer means proactively offering access to comprehensive French health care services, **meaning that they are clearly promoted, visible and readily accessible** at all times without making the clients responsible for requesting these services.”<sup>2</sup>

### Examples of active offer in an institutional setting

- Making telephone greetings and voicemail messages multilingual
- Posting signage in all official languages
- Providing “Je parle français” (I speak French) pins to employees who speak French
- Translating printed documents for simultaneous multilingual distribution
- Noting language information during patient intake
- Displaying notices confirming the availability of services in all official languages

### How to support active offer

- Hire, develop and train bilingual employees.
- Maintain an inventory of employee skills, including language skills.

### Active offer in a professional setting

- Use a multilingual greeting, e.g., “Hi, Bonjour, Ullakut.”
- Proactively ask patients for their preferred language of communication.
- Interact with patients in their language.
- Offer interpretation services.
- Provide documentation to patients in their language.
- Use a multilingual greeting and voicemail message on your direct phone line.

### Tips for supporting active offer

- Do NOT worry that your French/Inuktitut “isn’t good enough.” A little effort goes a long way, and your patients will appreciate it.
- Take advantage of training and development opportunities in the language in which you want to improve your skills.
- Participate in cultural and leisure activities in the language in which you want to improve your skills.



1. Sarah Bowen, (2001) Barrières linguistiques dans l'accès aux soins de santé, *Santé Canada*, pX

2. Société Santé en français et les réseaux de santé en français, L'énoncé de position commune, p6, [https://www.savoir-sante.ca/fr/content\\_page/download/352/427/21?method=view](https://www.savoir-sante.ca/fr/content_page/download/352/427/21?method=view)