

Interpretation

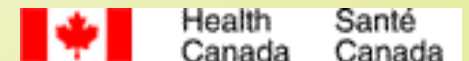
to improve access to English-language health and social services

Presented at the Science Colloquium on the Health of Canada's Official Language Minority Communities



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Objectives

- Document the current situation
- Make recommendations on English-language interpretation services

Methods

- ▶ Literature review
- ▶ Logic model
- ▶ Surveys, focus groups, interviews:

Access Program Respondents (agencies)	5/5	(100%)
Access Program Respondents (establishments)	49/68	(72%)
Community networks (IRP members)	19/20	(95%)
Pools of interpreters	3/4	(75%)
English-language interpreters	4/12	(33%)
Members of the ESC	38	
(Service providers)		

Legislative and regulatory framework in Quebec

- ▶ Under the *Act respecting health services and social services*, English-speaking persons ...

“... have the right to receive health and social services in the English language, in keeping with the organizational structure and human, material and financial resources of the establishments providing such services and to the extent determined by an access program ...”

- ▶ this right is upheld in the Act to modify the organization and governance of the health and social services network, in particular by abolishing the regional agencies
- ▶ The Charter of the French Language prohibits active offer in English; English-speakers have to request service in their language
- ▶ Access programs are the mechanism through which this legislative guarantee is administered

Access programs

- ▶ Indicates
 - ▶ the means by which (how)
 - ▶ the service for which (what)
 - ▶ the facility in which (where)
- ▶ there is an obligation to make services accessible in English
- ▶ Interpretation is one means of making the services accessible ...

What the access programs specify

- ▶ Interpretation as a means of access in English (10 regions)
 - ▶ Typically by bilingual staff
 - ▶ 6 regions mention formal interpretation services
- ▶ Availability of health system navigation agents or attendants (3 regions)
- ▶ Lack of resources for translation
- ▶ Referral to Montréal (2 regions)
- ▶ List of bilingual staff (5 regions)

- ▶ Little or no data (costs, usage, quality)

Pool of formal interpreters

- ▶ Montréal (also serves Montérégie, Lanaudière, Laurentians, Laval, Outaouais, Estrie, central Quebec, Mauricie)
- ▶ Estrie (also serves Montérégie and Mauricie)
- ▶ Outaouais
- ▶ Québec City

Formal interpretation services

- Provided by community organizations (except Montréal)
- Independent, variable management:
 - Employment criteria
 - Training
 - Pay rates
 - Quality of services
- Multilingual services
- Institutions are billed based on usage

Formal English-language interpretation

- ▶ Available but seldom used (litigation)
 - ▶ “We get by”
- ▶ Done in person (seldom by telephone or remotely)
- ▶ Not known to members of the English-speaking community (ESC)

Who does English-language interpretation?

- ▶ Informal interpreters:
 - ▶ Family members
 - ▶ Staff
 - ▶ Designated agents or attendants

Family members

“you can ask me for directions in English, but medical terms is another ball game.”

“Its left up to me to find someone” (to interpret).

“Personally the hardest thing I ever had to do was to tell my husband that he had terminal cancer.”

“My son comes with me, but I don't really like him coming to my gynecology appointments.”

Bilingual staff

- Lack of policies and procedures
- Assessment of language skills
 - Not current practice
 - No standardized instruments
 - Risk of overestimating one's own language skills
- No training in interpretation (technical, ethical, role, etc.)

Designated attendants

- Models exist in 3 regions
 - Côte Nord
 - Bas St-Laurent
 - Abitibi-Témiscamingue
- Models resulting from initiatives by community organizations
- Available to members of the ESC and Aboriginal communities (2 regions)

Education

- ▶ A few establishments undertake activities to promote awareness
 - ▶ Relationship between linguistic access and quality of services
- ▶ It is left up to community organizations to provide ESC members with information about interpretation services
- ▶ ESC members are left to work things out on their own
- ▶ ESC members do not request interpretation services

Recommendations

- ▶ Accurate, reliable data
- ▶ Don't ask the family to serve as interpreters
- ▶ Designated interpreters (formal or informal):
 - ▶ Standardized tools for evaluating language skills
 - ▶ Training (technical, ethical and interpreter's role)
- ▶ Development of a centralized pool of interpreters
- ▶ Guidelines on the efficient use of resources, taking regional diversity into account
- ▶ Build awareness
 - ▶ When and how should an interpreter be brought in?

Thank you