

A New Chapter for French Language Health Services



2019-2020 Annual Report

French Language
Health Services Network
of Eastern Ontario

Living Healthy Lives in French



At the dawn of this new decade, we find ourselves in a rapidly changing environment. And so, we have opted to begin this new chapter – for the Réseau and for the health care system – by launching an updated branding that better reflects our community's diversity and dynamism.

This is the spirit in which we invite you to explore our *2019-2020 Annual Report*.

Happy browsing!



A Word from the Chair of the Board of Directors

As the health care system carries on with the transformation undertaken in 2019, the French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario (the *Réseau*) has been proactive. Guided by its thought leadership, the Réseau is positioning itself in a constantly evolving environment. Throughout the year, we have worked with the Ontario government, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Francophone Affairs, the provincial Ontario Health agency, Ontario Health Teams and the *Regroupement des Entités de planification des services de santé en français* to ensure Francophones' needs are considered in the health care system reform.

With the support of the other health planning entities, we made specific proposals to the Ontario government, in particular on the *Connecting Care Act, 2019* and the regulation on French language health planning entities.

Although this feedback gave rise to positive exchanges with the most senior officials, most of the recommendations put forward by the *Regroupement des Entités* were not included in the legislation.

In a letter to entity boards, however, the Minister of Health suggested using administrative tools to respond to the issues and priorities raised by the *Regroupement des Entités*. It is in this spirit that we have offered to collaborate with the government and proposed that a working group be quickly set up.

In essence, we want to make sure that the planning entities are recognized as key interlocutors for all stakeholders in the health care system. We also want them to have a strong mandate and to have at their disposal the necessary means to carry out this work. All this so that Francophones can live healthy lives in French.

In conclusion, none of this would have been possible without the support and commitment of the members of our Board of Directors; I thank them most sincerely for giving me the privilege of presiding as Board Chair. I would also like to salute the extraordinary work of our President-CEO and her team of professionals.

Finally, as I write these lines, our community – like the entire planet – has been struck by an unprecedented health crisis. More than ever we realize the importance of having access to quality health services. I also applaud all the health care workers who ensure our collective safety. My special thoughts go out to the frontline workers and military personnel who are risking their health and even their lives to care for Ontarians. On behalf of the Réseau, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Alain-Michel Sékula

MBA, CMC, Colonel (Honorary) FAC-CAF



A Word from the President-Chief Executive Officer

Throughout all of 2019-2020, the health care system has been characterized by structural reforms and a major integration of health services. The Réseau has demonstrated a great capacity to adapt to change and has seized opportunities for improving access to French language health services.

The Réseau's activities were based primarily on the priorities set out in its 2016-2021 Strategic Plan: French language health services planning, collection and analysis of evidence-based data, designation, and community engagement.

Actively collaborating with our regional, provincial and national partners has enabled us to be at the forefront of the health care transformation while actively maintaining our contacts with elected officials, senior civil servants and Francophone organizations. Thanks to OZi, planning authorities and decision makers have access to evidence-based data on French language services across the entire province. This information has allowed health care system stakeholders to determine their French language health services capacity and to develop appropriate provincial strategies. The information also helps service providers meet their obligations under Ontario's *French Language Services Act*.

At the regional level, we remain vigilant and ensure that the conditions for the provision of quality health services in French remain in place. This is the reason we provide support to health service providers throughout the designation process. We also make it easier to follow-up on the implementation of local French language services strategies by sharing evidence-based data.

Everyday we act upstream so that Francophones have access to the health services they need. This day-to-day work is carried out by staff who, through their diligence and dedication, embody our organizational values: collaboration, excellence, inclusion, respect and perseverance.

This report is the result of our achievements and evidence of our team's commitment to striving to improve the active offer of French language services along the entire health care continuum.

Jacinthe Desaulniers



Relationship with the Community

In 2019-2020, the Réseau continued to develop closer ties with the Francophone community through a number of initiatives in Eastern and Southeastern Ontario.

As part of the health care system transformation, we supported the Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine by organizing a broad consultation among the Francophone population. Arranged in collaboration with the *Regroupement des Entités de planification des services de santé en français*, this regional focus group was held simultaneously across **16 sites** in Ontario, including **Ottawa, Casselman** and **Kingston**. Overall, **250 Francophone stakeholders and participants** had an opportunity to comment on the conclusions of the first interim report *Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain* (January 2019). Their feedback was reflected in the Council's second report, *A healthy Ontario: Building a sustainable health care system* (June 2019).

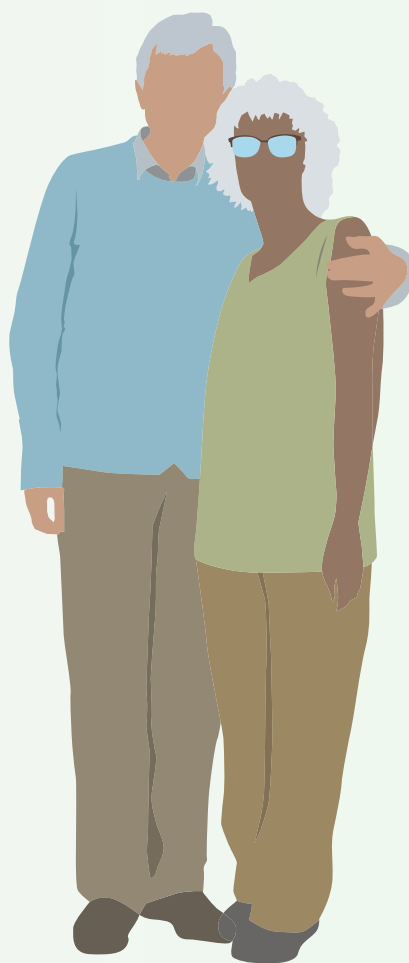
With a view to supporting the provision of French language health services in a system undergoing transformation, the Réseau's corporate members committee met three times this year. This committee allows the Réseau to work more closely with health service providers on the entire service continuum.

On November 13, 2019, the Réseau held the second edition of the **Salon Santé Kingston**. With “Innovative Solutions for Serving Francophone Patients: A Design Thinking Day” as its theme, this bilingual interactive event focused on providing support to health and social service professionals looking to improve French language services in their organization. In all over 40 managers, frontline workers and members of the South East’s Francophone community took part. Another of the event’s objectives was to take stock of French language health services in the region, ten years after the City of Kingston was designated under the *French Language Services Act*. The Salon Santé Kingston 2019 was much appreciated by participants: **87%** of them rated the event as “excellent” or “very good”.



Finally, we are preparing to launch our most important community engagement initiative. Over the coming months, Francophones will be asked to share their care experiences, namely through an online questionnaire. Such continuous information collection will give us a better understanding of how you receive services “on the ground” and allow us to integrate your feedback into our advice to the health care system.

As of the end of 2019-2020, the Réseau can count on the support of 962 individual members, a 9% increase over last year. We also salute our 73 corporate members. Thank you for your commitment to French language services.



OZi / Evidence-Based Data

As of the end of this second year of province-wide data collection, 1428 health service providers have been called upon to complete a *French Language Services Report* using the OZi portal. We would like to point out the extremely high response rate – over **95%** – despite the ongoing system reorganization. Thank you to all the partners – the Ministry of Health, LHINs, planning entities and service providers – who made this initiative possible.

OZi makes it possible to collect and analyze essential information with a view to inform the health care system transformation on all issues related to French language services. Not only do the data enable us to equip new health care stakeholders – such as Ontario Health Teams and the provincial Ontario Health agency – but they are also of interest to other ministries, especially the Ministry of Long-Term Care and the Office of the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Finally, the Réseau continues to fulfill its mandate as the resource network for the *Société Santé en français* (SSF) for the national strategy on evidence-based data. We are collaborating with the other SSF-member French language health networks to stimulate the implementation of OZi across Canada. Thanks to major funding from Health Canada, we have carried out a study of the environment and needs in six provinces and territories. We have also improved the architecture and functionalities of the portal to make it more adaptable to these different environments. And we have developed an application concept for referring Francophones to existing French language health services. We are continuing this work with our partners so that other minority Francophone communities can benefit from the impacts of OZi.



French Language Health Services Planning

As a French language health planning entity, the Réseau maintained its advisory role with local health authorities, the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health Teams and health service providers.

In the Champlain region, we prepared a **report on access to long-term care in French**. This initiative grew out of the consultations the Réseau conducted in the fall of 2018 in Pembroke, Ottawa, Clarence Creek and Cornwall. Using data collected through OZi, this document provides a regional picture of French language services capacity in long-term care. These observations are all the more relevant as we know that this sector is the one which – according to the data in OZi – has the lowest French language services capacity across the province.

Our report on long-term care also contains recommendations for improving the provision of French language services, promoting the creation of Francophone living environments and establishing a framework to officially recognize the “Francophone character” of certain organizations. We have already shared these recommendations with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and have initiated collaborative work to implement them.

In the South East, we conducted a major literature review and impact analysis for our **report on improving access to primary care in the City of Kingston**. This work enabled us to point out the lack of evidence-based data on primary care in French in the area and highlighted the lack of primary care providers designated under Ontario’s *French Language Services Act*. Once we complete our analysis, we will propose a primary care strategy for Kingston’s Francophone population to the South East LHIN.

In the context of the health care system transformation, we were involved in the creation of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs). At the provincial level, we provided the Ministry of Health with a series of recommendations promoting the application of a Francophone lens to OHT evaluation. In collaboration with the RISE platform and our various Francophone partners, we helped organize a provincial webinar on mobilizing our Francophone communities and improving care for these communities. At the local level, we supported all the OHTs in our region with respect to their provision of French language services, for instance, by sitting on various committees and providing evidence-based data on the French language services capacity of different stakeholders.

Finally, we participated in provincial consultations on modernizing public health and emergency health services. In addition to sharing our recommendations with the Ministry of Health and special advisor Jim Pine, we supported our local partners, in particular Ottawa Public Health, with their local consultation efforts.



Designation

Through all of 2019-2020, the Réseau continued to focus on designation as a way of promoting an active and permanent offer of quality French language health services. The Réseau's designation committee evaluated 12 requests for designation and statements of compliance.

Eight of them were recommended to the Ministry of Health by the Réseau's Board of Directors, including the designation requests submitted by the **Renfrew Victoria Hospital** and **Amethyst Women's Addiction Centre**. These two new requests will increase the provision of French language health services in Renfrew County and in the mental health and addictions sector. To all the service providers that submitted a designation request or a statement of compliance, thank you for your commitment to the Francophone community.

In the interests of continuous improvement, the Réseau did an assessment of its support services for health service providers required to submit a designation request or statement of compliance. In the fall of 2019, we conducted a satisfaction survey of the 57 service providers in the Champlain and South East regions with which we work. The response rate for this consultation was almost 49%.

Overall, the agencies said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support services provided by the Réseau. **The average satisfaction rate ranged between 72% and 88%**, depending on the care sector, with the hospital sector being the most satisfied. Similarly, 79% of respondents said they would recommend this service to other health service providers. According to the respondents, the Réseau was accessible and proactive and provided organizations with the information they needed to complete a designation plan.

In the coming year, the Réseau will work to improve its understanding of the realities and needs of providers in the various sectors, especially community support services and mental health and addiction services. We will also develop standardized support tools to foster a better understanding of the designation process and its steps, expectations for service providers and best practices.

In closing, we would like to thank all respondents. Your feedback is important and allows us to optimize our work on designation. For this reason, we expect to make this evaluation a recurrent practice.



Governance

The Réseau continues to practise thought leadership with health care system stakeholders and takes an active part in the ongoing transformation. The year 2019-2020 was marked by important discussions on this topic within the *Regroupement des Entités de planification des services de santé en français de l'Ontario*.

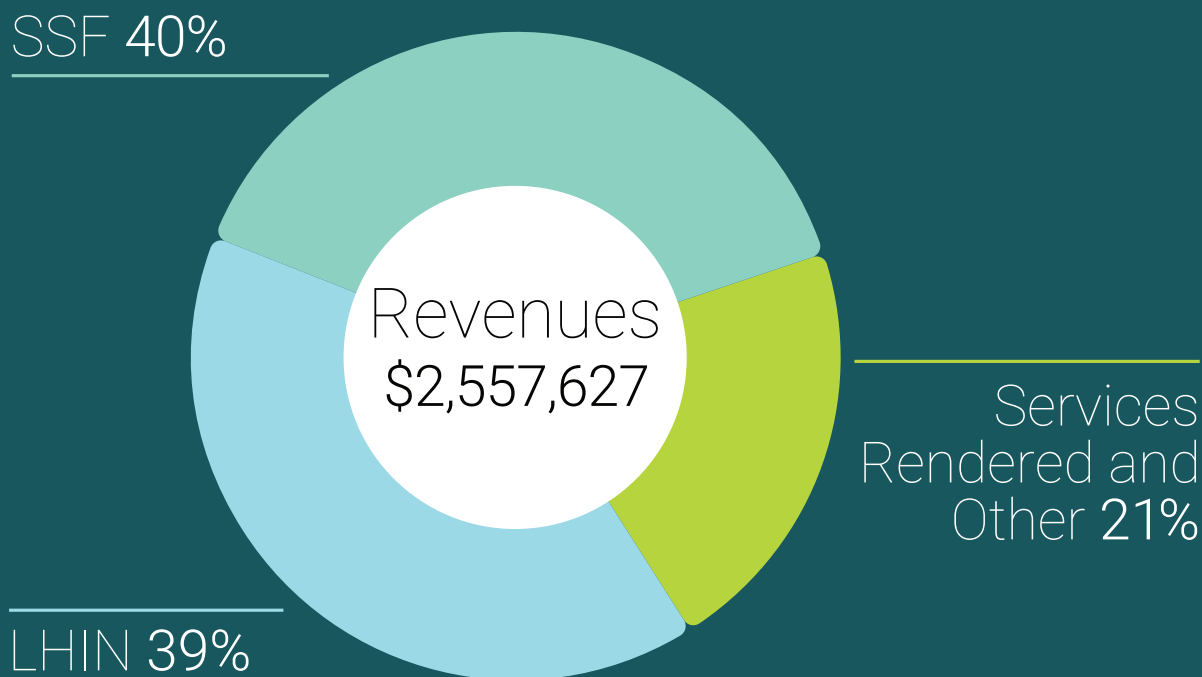
Catalyzed first by the adoption of the *Connecting Care Act, 2019* and subsequently by the Proposal for a new regulation: Ontario Regulation made under the Connecting Care Act, 2019 – Engagement with the Francophone Community under section 44 of the Act), these strategic reflections informed our dialogue with the Ministry of Health, particularly with regard to the legislation presented by the Ontario government.

The members of the *Regroupement* adopted a common position on the mandate of the planning entities; in our view, the entities should have the responsibility of **advising all health care system stakeholders** (including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the provincial Ontario Health agency and Ontario Health Teams) on matters related to French language services. The entities should also be able to intervene at the provincial, regional and local levels.

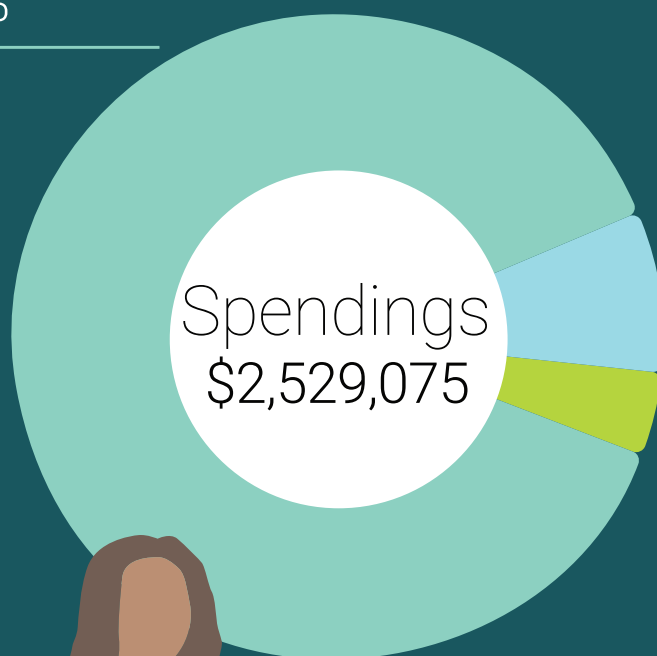
Although the recommendations and changes put forward by the entities have not been explicitly included in the legislation, we are continuing our collaboration with the provincial government to find administrative solutions that address our concerns.

Finally, as 2019-2020 comes to an end, we can clearly see the relevance of creating, in April 2018, a not-for-profit organization focused on developing IT solutions for collecting and managing data on French language services. The Réseau can thus concentrate on its regional mandate of community engagement and French language health services planning, while benefiting from the data collected by OZi. At the same time, the NPO 10551040 Canada Institut – whose scope and mission go beyond Eastern and Southeastern Ontario – is busy developing and exporting OZi to the other provinces and territories.

In conclusion, many of our achievements in 2019-2020 would not have been possible without the support of our financial partners: Health Canada and the *Société Santé en français* (SSF), the Ministry of Health and the Champlain and South East LHINs.



Salaries
and Fees
88%



Spendings
\$2,529,075

Operations
8%

Community
Engagement
4%



Complete financial statements
will be presented during the
Annual General Meeting 2020.

French Language Health Services Network of Eastern Ontario

Living Healthy Lives in French



www.rssfe.on.ca

Become a Réseau member!

Yes, French language health services are important to me.



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**Ontario
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