

French-language Services Plan

2020–2021

Health and Wellness



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Department of Health and Wellness
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Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre : « Plan de services en français 2020-2021 »

Message from the Acting Deputy Minister

Bonjour!

As Acting Deputy Minister of the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, I am pleased to present our French-Language Services (FLS) Plan for 2020-2021.

DHW continues to encourage the advancement of French-language services (FLS), both internally and externally, through such things as the voluntary participation of staff in French language training, and through initiatives to encourage recruitment and retention of francophone health professionals.

DHW continues to work closely with Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, as well as the French-language services coordinators at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK, to ensure that the needs and priorities of Acadian and francophone communities are being considered.

DHW's vision "Healthy Nova Scotians" and its mission "To lead a quality, equitable and sustainable health care system that inspires and promotes the health and well-being of all people in Nova Scotia" include working to ensure that Acadians and francophones across Nova Scotia have access to healthcare services in French.

Jeannine Lagassé, Acting Deputy Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

What we're doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

This plan outlines the efforts of the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) to provide and promote appropriate health services in French. DHW will continue to encourage the Acadian and francophone community to utilize the services, which will, in turn, contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community.

DHW works to engage and include the Acadian and francophone community in some of its priority initiatives. This year, the president of Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse was contacted as part of consultations on the development of a continuing care strategy for Nova Scotia. Réseau Santé's input has helped give DHW an overview of Acadian and francophone communities and their concerns, which will be taken into account as the new strategy is developed.

Similarly, DHW expects to gain a more in-depth understanding of the health needs and challenges of the youngest members of the Acadian and francophone community as a result of two surveys launched in January 2020 by Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, the Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the Centre provincial de ressources préscolaires and the Centre La Pirouette. These surveys, intended for parents of children aged 0 to 6 who speak French or will be speaking it, as well as for early childhood professionals, will provide a better knowledge of the types of services and activities they need.

The three French-language services coordinators from DHW, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre work collaboratively to share information in support of French-language services throughout the health sector. The roles and responsibilities for DHW and the health authorities are defined in the *Health Authorities Act* (HAA).

French-language services coordinator:

DHW's French-language services coordinator (FLSC) is Harold Rennie, who can be reached at Harold.Rennie@novascotia.ca and 902-424-6011. The coordinator is situated in the Corporate Policy, Planning and Process Branch.

Services we offer in French

- HealthLink 811 services are available in French through French-speaking nurses as well as an on-demand third-party translation service. The HealthLink 811 website also includes health fact sheets in French.
- The website for La règle de 5 Réseau d'aide pour la dépendance au jeu is the French version of the website Take 5, the Gambling Support Network. The program includes a help line available in English, French and other languages. <https://gamblingsupportnetwork.ca/fr/what-does-it-mean-take-5>
- The document *Living Well, Continuing Care Services* is available in French under the title *Bien vivre, services de soins continus*. It provides an overview of continuing care services in Nova Scotia (found at <https://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/living-wel-%20continuing-care-services-fr.pdf>). DHW's public website also has fact sheets on this topic.
- Acadians and francophones in Nova Scotia can access a comprehensive description of insured health services in the province in their own language, through the annual report of the *Canada Health Act*. Nova Scotia, like other jurisdictions, provides information to Health Canada for the annual report, and this information is available on-line in both French and English.

How we communicate with the public in French

DHW's French Written Correspondence and Verbal Communication Policy, updated in July 2018, is still in effect. The correspondence team and French-language services coordinator work together to ensure that correspondence that is received in French is responded to in the same language, as the policy requires.

Verbal requests to communicate in French will be accommodated to the extent possible. DHW maintains a list of staff able to respond to verbal requests for information. In rare instances, where no staff are available to respond to a verbal request, the request is logged and responded to in a timely manner.

What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2019–20

The following describes key accomplishments against actions identified in the 2019-2020 French-language services plan:

- **Support compliance with the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations**
 - DHW published a French-language services plan that identified key areas of focus in enhancing French-language services in the province.
 - The coordinator participated in the French-language Services Coordinating Committee under the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF). DHW participation ensured information sharing of DHW initiatives for French-language services and of similar

initiatives in other departments and the health authorities, as well as alignment with the activities and expectations of the OAAF.

- **Raise awareness of French-language services at all levels and enhance the role of the French-language services coordinator**
 - French courses were promoted within DHW, both through e-mails and through personal contact between the coordinator and individual employees. Over four semesters in 2019, eleven employees took a total of 17 courses. (The number of registrations for the winter 2020 semester was not available at the time this plan was prepared.)
 - The French-language services function is aligned with other planning functions at DHW. Through regular contact with program areas, the FLSC promoted awareness of French-language services and established linkages to DHW's core activities.

- **Support French-language services in the province by actions related to DHW's core activities**
 - DHW disseminated news releases in French related to public safety, public health, or impact on French-language populations. These included information about the coronavirus, manganese guidelines for drinking water, Emergency Health Services, long service awards, a new long-term care home in Meteghan, the continuing care assistant bursary program, back to school vaccinations, flu shots, the rotavirus vaccine, and a ban on flavoured e-cigarettes.
 - DHW translated social media content related to public safety, public health, or impact on French-language populations, such as back to school content, flu campaign, vaping flavour ban and public awareness, continuing care assistant bursary program, and information on the rotavirus vaccine, back to school vaccinations, and organ and tissue donation legislation.
 - A manager of Health Workforce Planning represented DHW on a working group organized by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education to support the recruitment of French-speaking health professionals.

- **Enhance materials available to French-speaking Nova Scotians, in print and online**
 - DHW translated new material (brochure and poster) on tick safety, available on our website.
 - DHW redeveloped the website for the Gambling Support Network, and these changes will be applied to both the English and French versions.
 - DHW created brochures and bookmarks in both French and English to promote Tobacco Free Nova Scotia (TFNS), and also promoted TFNS through French media for the first time. The English website also includes an offer to help in French.

- **Support the community in its development, through consultations, collaboration and partnerships**
 - The coordinator continued to be an *ex officio* member of the board of Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse, meeting with its staff and with other board members, and attending quarterly board meetings.
 - As in past years, the coordinator attended the AGM of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.
 - DHW continued to work collaboratively with coordinators at the Nova Scotia Health Authority and the IWK Health Centre to share information in support of French-language services throughout the health sector.

- **Maintain and nurture dialogue with the community and gain input, feedback and recommendations**
 - DHW sought input from Réseau Santé about health-related issues in the Acadian and francophone community as part of the development of a continuing care strategy.
 - DHW monitored several surveys in French conducted by outside groups whose results are expected to enhance the health profile of Nova Scotia Acadians and francophones.

How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2020–21

The following objectives are taken from the government’s strategic plan for French-language services.

Objective 1: Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks

- **Goal 1.1: Support compliance with the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations**
 - **Planned measures:**
 - DHW will publish a French-language services plan.
 - DHW will continue to participate in the French-language services coordinating committee.
 - Senior leadership will continue to encourage and promote relevant training, such as French courses, Acadie at a Glance and Health Care in French at a Glance.
- **Goal 1.2: Investigate expanded access to MSI services in French**
 - **Planned measure:** The FLSC will work with the MSI administrator to explore options to apply for health cards in French.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs to the public

- **Goal 2.1: Continue to support French-language services in the province by establishing actions related to DHW’s core activities**
 - **Planned measures:**
 - Improvements will be made to existing translations, such as the French URL for the TFNS website, which will be changed to make it more user-friendly.
 - DHW will continue to encourage recruitment and support of French-speaking health professionals through collaboration with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse.
 - DHW will encourage the use of translation services by circulating information about when and how to prepare materials for translation.

Objective 3: Maintain ongoing dialogue and engagement with the Acadian and francophone community

- **Goal 3.1: Increase availability of relevant information about health human resources trends in the Acadian and francophone community, in order to support the community in its development, and to support future engagement**
 - **Planned measures:**
 - DHW will collaborate with Nova Scotia regulated health professions to capture the language capacity of regulatory bodies’ members.
 - The coordinator will maintain an open dialogue with representatives of the community through such actions as participating in meetings of Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse and attending the AGM of the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse.