Manual:			
Section:	French Language Services		
Sub-Section:		**Approved:**	
Document Owner:	NE LHIN Board	**Effective:**	
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Title:	French Language Health Services Policy		

1.0 DEFINITIONS:

Access to services and programs: is tied to the proportion of a defined population having an identified French language health service provider, at a reasonable distance (Source: Office of French language Health Services)

Accessibility to services and programs: is tied to the level at which the population needing services can use them. Accessibility can be geographic, economic and cultural in nature, and also be tied to organizational and service availability issues, i.e. services which are offered actively and accessible when needed and availability of French staff to offer the service (Source: Office of French Language Health Services)

Francophone as defined by the *Inclusive Definition of Francophone (IDF)*. In addition to those already included in the existing definition, i.e. Mother-Tongue (MT), the IDF includes Allophones, for whom neither French nor English is their mother tongue but:

- who speak French at home; or
- for whom French is an official language

(Source: Office of Francophone Affairs, July 2009)

Integration refers to integration across the continuum of services to create a seamless system of services.

Active Offer of French Language Services:

The *OPS Framework for Action: A Modern Ontario Public Service*, released in 2006, speaks of an "active offer" as follows:

"The OPS is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities under the French Language Services Act when Francophone members of the public are informed about available services in French, have access to these services and are satisfied with the quality of these services."

An active offer of French language services is provided in the context of planned activities that are:

- Results-oriented
- Integrated into a Ministry's overall service delivery model
- Proactive
- The result of a dialogue with the population served and ultimately reflective of their needs

- In place for the life-cycle of the service, activity or initiative.

(Source: *Practical Guide for the Active Offer of French-language Services in the Ontario Government*, Office of Francophone Affairs, April 2008)

2.0 PURPOSE:

The NE LHIN believes that the health system is to be guided by a commitment to equity and respect for diversity in communities in serving the people of Ontario and follow the requirements of the *French Language Services Act* and the legislation pertaining to the *Engagement with the Francophone Community (January 2010)* in serving Ontario's French-speaking community. This statement reflects the intent of *LHSIA 2006*.

Language and culture play an essential role in the provision of health care services. With the knowledge that approximately one quarter of the population of the NE LHIN region is French-speaking, the NE LHIN is committed to develop an integrated approach to address French language services. This means the integration of French language services within each NE LHIN priority and the inclusion of an integrated concept for the provision of French language services within the vision and the mission of the NE LHIN.

3.0 POLICY:

To advance the opportunity for the Francophone population to achieve health and wellness through equitable access to quality health services in French.

4.0 PROCEDURE:

4.1 Knowledge and Awareness

The NE LHIN Board and staff to demonstrate increased knowledge and awareness of the *French Language Services Act* requirements and the needs and concerns of the Francophones in the NE LHIN and the public about related obligations and how these are met through the following:

4.11 Responsibilities of Board and Staff

- Clear commitment in the NE LHIN vision, values, management and service delivery philosophy.
- Inclusion of the French language services component in the overall health system processes, structures and programs that are part of the NE LHIN mandate.
- Orienting/educating staff and board members on the *French Language Services Act* and requirements.
- Ensuring that staff have access to French resource materials from the NE LHIN.

4.12 Responsibilities Towards the Public

- Ensuring that health service providers, partner organizations and the general public have access to French material/information produced by the NE LHIN.

4.2 Capacity

The NE LHIN to demonstrate it has the capacity to provide an *active offer* and delivery of high quality services in French by:

- Maintaining designated French-speaking positions to ensure the availability of French language services throughout the organization.
- Ensuring Francophone staff is hired for designated positions.
- Ensuring that NE LHIN lead committees will have representation that reflects the Francophone community within the population served by the respective committee.
- Ensuring that the recommended membership of the NE LHIN Board will be such that it reflects the percentage of the Francophone population in the North East.
- Ensuring that appropriate accountability measures for French language health services are included in the Health Service Provider Accountability Agreement (H-SAA).
- Ensuring that yearly reviews and evaluations of French language services planning and monitoring activities take place.
- Making recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regarding the designation of health service providers.

4.3 Francophone Community Engagement

The NE LHIN with the assistance of the French Language Health Planning Entity will demonstrate active participation of the Francophone population in public consultations and community engagement activities by:

- Ensuring that NE LHIN-sponsored community engagement activities take into consideration the needs of the Francophone health service providers.
- Monitoring and setting targets to ensure continuous consultation with Francophone groups in each community.
- Continuing to partner and collaborate with existing Francophone key players.
- Including the Francophone population needs and priorities in the *Integrated Health Services Plan* (IHSP).
- Ensuring that the IHSP implementation plan is specific to the French language service priorities.

4.4 Integration

Integration activity for the Francophone population will respect the following:

- Inclusion/consideration of French Language Service in all NE LHIN integration activities.
- The *French Language Services Act* which outlines the right of a French-speaking individual to receive services in French.
- Maintenance or enhancement of French language services.
- Recognition and support of existing health service providers that are governed and administered in French.
- Equitable access to a full range of services for the Francophone population.
- Accountability mechanisms and evaluation processes that ensure that health service providers are delivering services according to the *French Language Services Act*.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY:

NE LHIN Board and Chief Executive Officer
French Language Health Planning Entity

6.0 EVALUATION:

6.1 Expected Results

The NE LHIN will seek:

- Equitable access and accessibility to French language services.
- Efficient and quality French language services.
- Accountability of health service providers to their community through client experience regarding French language services received.

In order to achieve expected results the NE LHIN with the assistance of the French Language Health Planning Entity will:

- Conduct community engagement activities to identify the needs of Francophone communities.
- Include the needs of the French-speaking population in the development of the IHSP.
- Develop a LHIN-level French language health services action plan to meet the identified needs.
- Monitor and evaluate NE LHIN French language services planning activities.
- Monitor and evaluate the provision of French language services delivered by Health Service Providers (HSPs) through appropriate accountability measures.

- Provide regular French language service updates to the HSPs and communities through the NE LHIN web site, NE bulletins, media release and annual report.
- Provide quarterly updates to the NE LHIN Board on French language services activities.

7.0 REFERENCES:

- *NE LHIN Internal French Language Services (FLS) Procedures, August* 2008.
- Link to the *French Language Services Act of 1986*: *French Language Services Act* (1986)
- Link to *the Local Health System Integration Act of 2006*: *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006, S.O. 2006, c. 4*
- Link to the *French Language Services Best Practice*, Government of Canada, 2010: http://www.bonjour-hello.ca/en/?nav
- Link to *Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario, 2009*: http://www.flsc.gov.on.ca/files/Special_Report.pdf
- Link to the *Local Health System Integration Act (2006) - Engagement with the Francophone Community, 2010*: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2009/elaws_src_regs_r09515_e.htm