

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **North East LHIN Celebrates St. Jean Baptiste Day** *More health service providers with French language designations continue to enhance access to care in French for Northeastern Ontario's Francophones*

June 24, 2013 – Today is St. Jean Baptiste Day – a day that celebrates Francophone identity, culture, history and achievements. In celebration of Northeastern Ontario's cultural diversity and the more than 22% of the people who are Francophone, the NE LHIN works with partners to ensure fellow Northerners have equal access to health care services in the official language of their choice.

Enhancing the quality and accessibility of French language services in Northeastern Ontario is expanding thanks to the recent designation of five health service providers across the region.

There are 40 health service providers in the region, across all sectors, that are officially designated under the French Language Services Act to provide services in French. Another 63 providers are working towards the planning and delivery of French language services.

The following providers recently obtained their official designation under the French Language Services Act (FLSA):

- Centre de santé communautaire de Témiskaming
- Centre de santé communautaire de Kapuskasing et région
- Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury
- Centre de santé communautaire de Nipissing Ouest
- Nipissing Mental Health Housing & Support Services

As partners in the local health care system, these providers offer French language services that are essential to the quality and accessibility of health care for Francophone patients. The NE LHIN is committed to equity and respect for cultural diversity in Francophone communities and to follow the requirements of the French Language Services Act.

"Language and culture play a vital role in the delivery of health care services. Fellow Northerners need to be able to express themselves in the language of their choice, especially when they are not feeling well and are trying to explain their symptoms to a health care professional," said Louise Paquette, NE LHIN CEO.

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Guy Lauzon (middle) is able to receive services in the official language of his choice thanks to the recent designation of Nipissing Mental Health Housing & Support Services. **(Left to right)** Lise Anne Boissoneault, Outreach Officer, NE LHIN; Mary Davis, Executive Director, Nipissing Mental Health Housing & Support Services, Guy Lauzon, Maxine Gareau, Mental Health Worker and Lisa Robinson, Program Manager at Nipissing Mental Health Housing & Support Services.

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"The voluntary actions of these agencies demonstrates an active approach to providing health care that meets, and is sensitive to the cultural and linguistic needs of francophones," said Diane Quintas, Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario, Acting Executive Director. "Equal access to health care services means better health for the francophone population."

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is a time to celebrate our francophone culture and all that we have achieved in the Province of Ontario," said MPP Rick Bartolucci. "As MPP for Sudbury, I am proud of the provision of French language services available in our community and I congratulate the above mentioned health care providers for obtaining their official designation."

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### **Background**

- The French Language Services Act (1986) (FLSA) guarantees an individual's right to receive services, including publicly funded health care services, in French from Government of Ontario ministries and agencies in 25 designated areas. To read the FLS Act [click here](#)
- Further to engagements with hundreds of Francophones across the region, French language services have been identified as an important priority in the NE LHIN Strategic Plan. The main themes that arose during the engagements are reflected in the goals and actions and involve issues related to:
  - A need for more focus on a culturally and linguistically sensitive local health care system
  - Challenges to receiving services in French across the continuum of care
  - The shortage of French-speaking health human resources
- The NE LHIN's continued partnership with the Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario will help identify and meet the health care needs of Francophones in the North East.

**For more information, please contact:** Katerine Moyer, Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator, 705-840-2215, [katerine.moyer@lhins.on.ca](mailto:katerine.moyer@lhins.on.ca)