

CHSSN

Community Health And Social Services Network
Réseau communautaire de santé et de services sociaux

In Sept-Îles Being
Present is the Most
Important Thing **p.4**

Identifying Language
Skills for Better
Care **p.8**

Partners for Better Care

IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES MAKES LIFE BETTER
FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES
AND FAMILIES ACROSS QUEBEC



Partnering and Adapting for More Equitable Access

CHSSN works in partnership with volunteer community organizations and with government agencies at the federal, provincial, and local levels to find innovative solutions that provide more equitable access to health and social services for English-speaking Canadians in all regions of Quebec.

In the 1988 Official Languages Act, the government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney committed Canada to “enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development.” Successive governments have invested in Official Language minority communities with the latest commitment being the *Roadmap for Canada’s Official Languages 2013-2018: Education, Immigration, Communities*.

CHSSN has worked since 2000 with Health Canada to develop investment priorities and funding channels for better access to health and social services in English that are evidence-based and fully accountable for budgets and program effectiveness. Using research, networking and capacity-building, we support local leaders and have developed “enabling frameworks” with the Government of Quebec that fully respect provincial jurisdiction in health care.

The working partnerships that have been created between English-speaking communities and Quebec’s Ministry of Health and Social Services and its regional agencies are the most effective guarantee of sustainable gains in access to health and social services in English.

Adaptation of existing health and social services has proven to be one of the most effective ways to create more equitable access. This magazine reports on a sample of adaptation projects across Quebec that were developed through partnerships between local community and health and social services leaders.

Photo: Meng Jia



Sept-Îles

“Just being present is the most important thing.”
p. 4



Thetford Mines

It’s in our hearts to provide the best services possible to the English-speaking community.
p. 6



Estrie

Innovative online videos help patients prepare for hospital procedures.
p. 8

Photos: (opposite page top L to R) Vanessa Boyce, (bottom) Talia Dezso





Kim Morin and Danielle Lanyi

“Stand Up!” for Healthy Independence

A study by CSSS-Gatineau revealed that approximately 2800 seniors over the age of 65 who are living at home sustained injuries due to a fall in 2008.

One in five of those accidents resulted in hospitalization. The CHSSN’s community partner, Connexions Resource Center, in collaboration with CSSS-Gatineau sought to reduce falls among seniors, helping them to live independently with peace of mind.

With the support from the CHSSN’s Adaptation Program, a series of workshops called Stand Up! were offered to English-speaking seniors to increase body balance and muscle strength as well as secure a safe home environment by adapting furniture placement.

“Providing a framework that helps seniors make small life changes can make all the difference in preventing a life-altering fall,” says Kim Morin, Coordinator for Rehabilitation and External Geriatrics Services at CSSS Gatineau, who helped spearhead the project.

The free, twice-weekly, three month course was offered in 2011 at a private seniors’ residence in Aylmer. Due to high demand, it ran again the following year at another residence. The courses were facilitated by a bilingual physiotherapist and benefitted many seniors.

Sue Gowan who took part in the program recalls, “The sessions became so popular that seniors were asking to join the class well after we’d started!” Participants rated the projects very highly in the formal evaluation of the program.

Kim says the partnership with Danielle Lanyi, Executive Director of Connexions Resource Center, was indispensable in recruiting seniors, extending the CSSS’s reach deep into the community.

“We know the incredible power of word-of-mouth in our region,” says Danielle. “We reached out to churches, social clubs and seniors’ residences across Gatineau to ensure people heard about this great initiative.”

Photos: Talia Dezsó

Helping Outaouais Seniors Manage Diabetes for Healthier Living

On a sunny summer day one July, over fifty seniors showed up for an information session on health and social services held at the local *Centre de santé et de services sociaux* (CSSS) in Buckingham. “The incredible turnout showed that people want to take responsibility for their health, but they need knowledge and resources to make changes,” says Danielle Lanyi, Executive Director of Connexions Resource Center, formerly known as the Outaouais Health and Social Services Network. One of the issues that was clearly identified at that meeting was the number of seniors coping with diabetes and their need for information and support.

CSSS Papineau responded to the community’s need by offering a comprehensive diabetic program

in English. With the collaboration of Connexions and the Papineau Health and Social Services Network, whose mandate it is to provide information on services for the area’s English-speaking community, twenty seniors were recruited for the six weekly sessions on diabetes with advice in English on healthy eating, stress management and lifestyle changes provided by doctors, nutritionists and physiotherapists.

“If someone is diabetic and is unilingual English in our community, where do they end up?” asks Connie Butler, the facilitator and coordinator of the program. “Many have no family doctor but they still need care. The response from participating seniors has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Marie-Pier Macameau, Community Organizer at the CSSS Papineau, is identified by many as a key



Marie-Pier Macameau

supporter of the project. She attributes its success to partnership and collaboration. “Connexions Resource Center, the Papineau Health and Social Services Network and the CSSS all work at different levels, but through regular contact over the years and by implementing a solid plan of action, we offered a program that’s brought real change to the lives of our seniors,” she explains.

Shirley Plouffe was a participant in the program and agrees. “They gave me concrete tools to keep me and my husband healthy for a long time.”



“There are barriers for people who come in speaking only English... you really see it when you work in the system.”

“Just being present is the most important thing.”

When you ask Jody Lessard, Executive Director of the North Shore Community Association about Sharon Tardif-Shecanapish, a big smile creases her face.

“When Sharon arrived at the hospital, it was like someone sent us our own angel!”

Sharon provides accompaniment services for English-speaking patients at the *Centre hospitalier régional de Sept-Îles* and often meets her clients at the front entrance of the hospital under a big sign offering translation in English, Innu, and Naskapi. But translation is just a small part of the support she offers patients and their families.

The idea for an accompaniment service for English-speaking clients of the hospital first came from then hospital director Martin Beaumont several years ago. The concept received enthusiastic support from the English services access committee of the local *Agence*, but, as Jody explained, “We knew we needed the right person to make a success of this. It takes a certain kind of warm, welcoming personality, someone with a real commitment to patients, or a service like this won’t get used.”

They looked for several months, then one day the hospital director fell into conversation with Sharon at the local rink where their kids play hockey together. He knew she spoke French, English, Naskapi and Innu fluently and he thought



Sharon Tardif-Shecanapish



Sept-Îles harbour



Jody Lessard



Pascal Paradis

she had the right people skills to do the job.

“My first thought was, ‘What are you talking about?’” remembers Sharon. “I’d never worked in a hospital or in health care and my own perception was that people could already get services in English in Sept-Îles.” A week later, she agreed to try it out.

Jody says she’s glad they took the time to find Sharon. “She’s perfectly cut out for this job. People have immediate confidence in Sharon, especially seniors. She knows how to put people at ease and help them through very stressful situations.”

Photos: Vanessa Boyce

One of those people is Jane Cox. Jane is originally from Aylmer Sound and still lives on the coast in Tête-à-la-Baleine. People from the Lower North Shore as well as patients from Schefferville and Fermont come to Sept-Îles for secondary level health care.

“Sharon makes a visit to the hospital a lot easier,” she says. “She doesn’t just translate for you with the doctors and nurses; she makes sure you understand about your treatment and your medication and what comes next. She’ll arrange to have you met at the airport and look out for you all the way through your time in Sept-Îles.”

“There are barriers for people who come in speaking only English,” says Sharon. “I didn’t understand that before, but you really see it when you work in the system.”

There’s so much demand for her services that many doctors and patients schedule their appointments so she can be present. “We need one and a half Sharons at this point!” laughs Jody. “Health Canada funding through CHSSN’s Adaptation Program had a real impact here.”

The *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Côte-Nord* is also pleased with the results of the accompaniment service for English-speaking patients.

“Sharon Tardif’s presence at the CSSS has been very positive for our English-speaking clients. We really appreciate the services she provides to people who otherwise might have difficulty understanding information related to their health care needs,” says Pascal Paradis at the *Agence* in Baie-Comeau.

Sharon says she loves her work and is now studying part-time to be a social worker. “What I’ve learned is that the most important thing you can do for people is just be present—it’s like magic when patients and their families know someone is there for them.”



Suzanne Aubre and Alice Renaud



Pauline Davidson



Identifying Language Skills for Better Care

“I’m so proud of the whole project”, says Alice Renaud, her eyes sparkling with satisfaction. “Now we have a system that really works to give more services in English and it’s going to have a lasting impact.”

Alice is a founding member of MCDC in Thetford Mines and a long-time activist for more equitable access in English to health and social services in the Chaudière-Appalaches region. The “system” is a simple pictogram, a yellow conversation bubble that hospital and other health and social services staff and

volunteers who are able and willing to speak English have affixed to their identification cards. Patients and staff can turn to any of these individuals when they need some translation help.

“It’s a great idea that worked really well in the Gaspé for CASA,” explains Suzanne Aubre, Executive Director of MCDC. “It’s completely voluntary—bilingualism isn’t required in the recruitment or hiring process but when new staff pick up their I.D., they’re asked if they can speak English and if they’re prepared to use those skills at work.”

Suzanne approached the manager of English access

at the *Agence de santé et des services sociaux de Chaudière-Appalaches*, Caroline Picard, and suggested that she look into the program.

“It’s in our hearts to provide the best health services possible to our English-speaking population,” explains Caroline. “The beauty of the project is in its simplicity and the results were immediate and very positive.”

“The political will of the *Agence* made all the difference,” says Suzanne Aubre. “Daniel Paré, the Director General, decided that this was a good idea for all the CSSSs and for other key public establishments and its now in place across the entire Chaudière-

Photos: Vanessa Boyce

Appalaches region. And because a trusted community partner could provide a turn-key solution with money from the CHSSN Adaptation Program, it was easy to implement.”

Over time, the little yellow pictogram has become the first thing many English patients look for when they seek help from the health system.

“I’ve only had my I.D. for a month,” says Pauline Davidson, an MCDC member who volunteers at the CSSS Thetford seniors day centre. “Already some staff are asking me, ‘What’s the little yellow symbol for?’ It gets people talking about it and that’s good for everybody.”



Top to bottom: Thetford landscape, MCDC mug, Thetford street, Pauline Davidson with her volunteer card



Feeding a Hunger for Information

There's a long tradition in the Estrie region of local health authorities supporting better access to services in English.

Jean-Guillaume Marquis, Director of Patient Experience at the *Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke* (CHUS) says that the hospital's innovative online videos to help patients prepare for various procedures were just a continuation of that tradition.

"We were already using some video elements on our website in French, so we evaluated what would be most useful for our English patients," explained Marquis. He identified maternity

services as one area with high demand and created a web page called "I'm having a baby" that includes a video-based visit to the CHUS maternity unit.

Catherine Lombardo teaches prenatal classes for the Lennoxville and District Women's Centre. "There's a real hunger for information. You can get lots of general knowledge about child birth from many sources but you need this kind of resource to learn what awaits you at the hospital where you plan to have your baby."

Photo: CHUS

Photos: Vanessa Boyce

"The web page and video are great resources — our challenge is to make sure that people know about this information."

The Executive Director of the Women's Centre, Terry Moore, points out that distance and other constraints mean that this video is the only contact some mothers in the Estrie will have with the maternity unit before they arrive for the birth of their child. "The web page and video are great resources—our challenge is to make sure that people know about this information."

Jean-Guillaume Marquis agrees that creating and adapting information is just a first step. He identifies close partnership with the community as a necessary

element in any successful "health literacy" campaign and says that the Adaptation Program of CHSSN is a "*fabuleux coup de pouce*", allowing health information resources in English to go further and faster than would otherwise be possible.

Shannon Keenan is the Health and Social Services Coordinator with the Townshippers' Association. She works closely with the CHUS and the *Agence de santé et des services sociaux de l'Estrie* on access to English language health and social services.

"Definitely, money helps!" she says. "The CHSSN program has put these efforts on the radar—for the next round of adaptation projects, all the local CSSSs have applied for a project, even those with very small minority populations."

Asked what the payback is for the CHUS, Jean-Guillaume Marquis shrugs, smiles, and says, "We're all focused on better patient experiences—these videos just help us do our job."

¹ www.chus.qc.ca/en/patients-visitors/im-having-a-baby/

Shannon Keenan

Jean-Guillaume Marquis





Jim Carter and Jennifer Johnson

A Global Model that Builds Respect and Gets Results

The partnership model at the heart of CHSSN’s approach to improving access to health and social service comes from the World Health Organization and has been used successfully in dozens of countries.

“The key is to bring all the partners around the table, establish shared goals, and then find ways to encourage steps forward with

small investments in key initiatives,” explains Jim Carter, Senior Policy Advisor at CHSSN. “The community needs to be there, but it’s essential to give the public partner a stake in creating sustainable progress.”

“When we started,” says Jennifer Johnson, the Executive Director of CHSSN, “the *Agences de santé et des services sociaux* and the public institutions were sometimes a bit wary of working with the English-speaking community in their territories. But now they speak proudly of the progress that has been achieved with their community partners in better access and improved health outcomes.”

Jim says it’s all about building a framework of respect—respect that goes in both directions with the community recognizing the authority and challenges of local health administrators and the public system respecting the community’s input and its ability to partner with the public system to serve citizens better.

“For 2013–2018, CHSSN and its networks intend to deepen these partnerships,” says Jennifer. “The collaboration and trust that we see in many adaptation projects can be extended across a range of services to bring more equitable access to English-speaking people in all regions of Quebec.”

Photos: (above) Alessandra Salturi, (opposite) Tala Dezso



Innovation and Sustainability

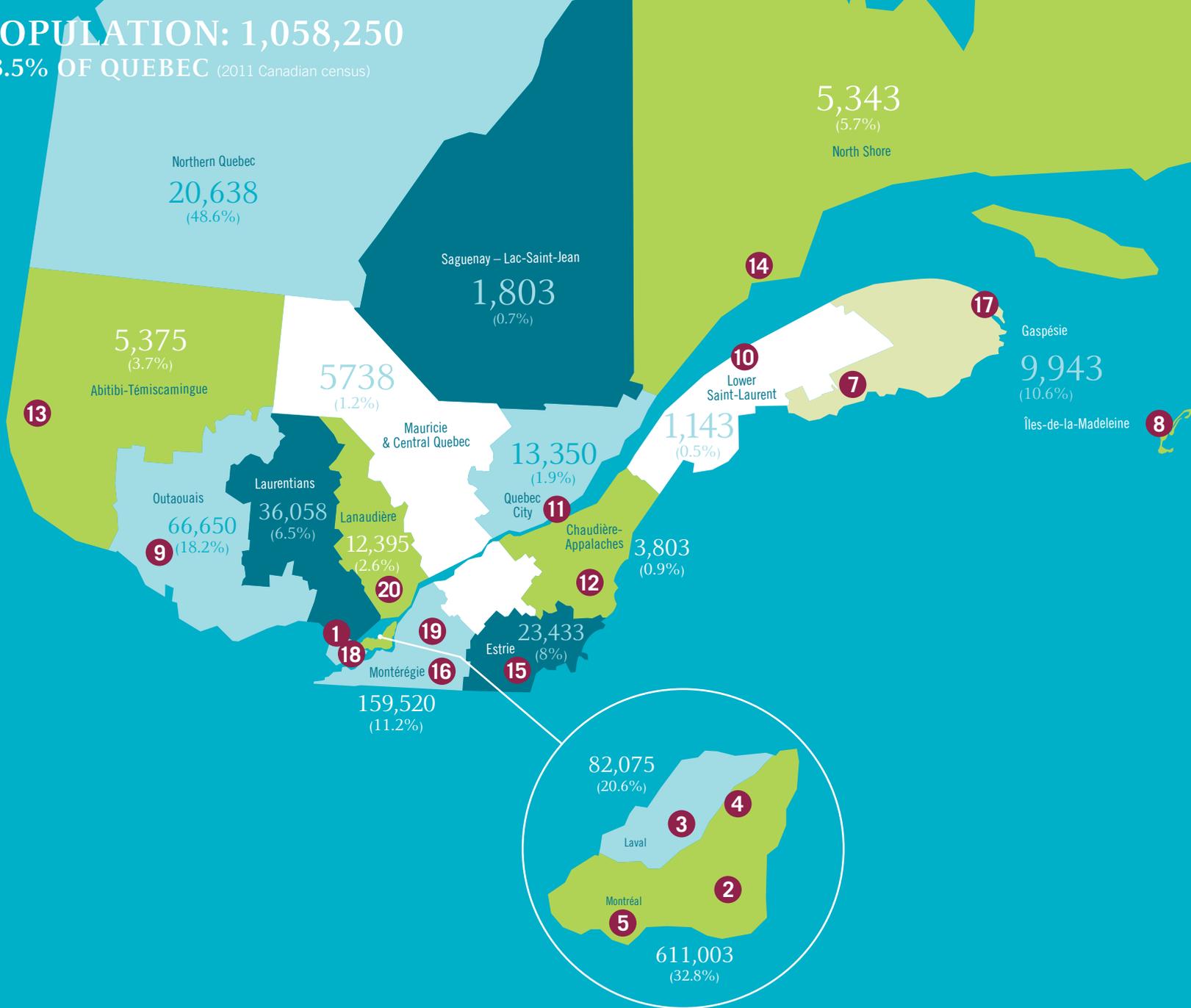
The CHSSN approach to enhancing community vitality has been recognized by local, provincial, and federal authorities as innovative, effective, and sustainable. We never seek to create parallel systems of service and care, but find ways to adapt and enhance existing services for more equitable access in English.

CHSSN has helped build capacity in our communities, allowing them to better care for seniors, to equip young people to become productive citizens, and to encourage an informed, healthy population, all by investing in cost-effective, sustainable programming that reinforces resilience and community spirit.

Our experience has convinced us that Quebec’s health and social services system is ready to partner with us at the provincial, regional, and local levels and we look forward to the next generation of adaptation projects that enhance the vitality of our communities.

Quebec's English-Speaking Communities

POPULATION: 1,058,250
13.5% OF QUEBEC (2011 Canadian census)



Local Partners in CHSSN's Networking & Partnership Initiative (NPI)

- 1 Deux-Montagnes**
4 Korner's Family Resource Centre
- 2 Côte-des-Neiges**
African Canadian Development & Prevention Network (ACDPN)
- 3 Laval**
AGAPE – The Youth & Parents AGAPE Association Inc.
- 4 Saint-Léonard**
Canadian-Italian Community Services of Quebec (REISA)
- 5 Montréal**
Catholic Community Services (CCS)
- 6 Saint-Paul's River**
Coasters Association (LNSCH)
- 7 New Carlisle**
Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)
- 8 Grosse-Île**
Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (C.A.M.I.–MINA)
- 9 Gatineau**
English Network of Resources in Community Health (ENRICH–OHSSN)
- 10 Métis-sur-Mer**
Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence
- 11 Québec City**
Jeffery Hale Community Partners
- 12 Thetford Mines**
Megantic English-Speaking Community Development Corp. (MCDC)
- 13 Rouyn-Noranda**
Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn-Noranda
- 14 Baie-Comeau**
North Shore Community Association (NSCA)
- 15 Sherbrooke**
Townshippers' Association
- 16 Cowansville**
Townshippers' Association
- 17 Gaspé**
Vision Gaspé Percé Now
- 18 Vaudreuil-Dorion**
Vaudreuil-Soulanges (C3S CSSS)
- 19 Saint-Lambert**
South Shore Assistance and Referral Centre (ARC)
- 20 Rawdon**
English Community Organization of Lanaudière (ECOL)



Photo : Veer

Contact Us

A key element of CHSSN's mandate is keeping open lines of communication through the member network.

On the CHSSN website, you will find:

Important news items on the Bulletin Board and a list of all CHSSN current projects;

The document centre, housing CHSSN's documents and printable resources;

Links to important health resources.

Please contact us for more information about CHSSN partnerships and programs.

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