



COMMUNITY HEALTH &  
SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK

RÉSEAU COMMUNAUTAIRE DE  
SANTÉ ET DE SERVICES SOCIAUX

# Annual Report

2020-2021





**Community Health &  
Social Services Network  
Annual Report  
2020-2021**

Our mission is to support English-speaking communities in Quebec to develop programs and services addressing the social determinants of health through knowledge sharing, collaboration, and training.

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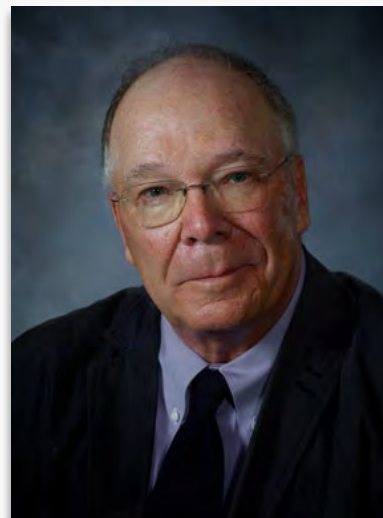
# Letter from the President

For a second year, CHSSN and its partner networks and organizations have risen to the ongoing challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year was a scramble to adjust our networking and service delivery model to the new reality of social distancing and other emergency public health measures. The networks became true frontline service providers, recognized by public health leaders as a critical connecting point for vital information dissemination and as a primary resource to manage the isolation and stress imposed on the population by the pandemic.

That role was extended into 2020-2021 and as a result, the networks and the partnerships they've built with the public system are stronger than ever. Our 20th anniversary year showed unquestionably that CHSSN programming remains critical for the vitality of English-speaking Quebec.

CHSSN also made great strides in 2020-2021 towards the sustainability of successful programs like our Senior Wellness Centres, ERCC, and youth employment programming. In all these cases, CHSSN provided the model, the innovative thinking, the community networking, and the collaborative partnerships to address critical issues like seniors' isolation and youth out-migration. In the process, we connected with new populations like "young seniors" aged 65-80, and adolescent Quebecers.

We also made bold moves into new areas of action with a particular focus on mental health for English-speakers of all ages, including families and children (0-17). Additionally, we extended and strengthened our collaboration links with new province-wide partners as well as Montreal-based communities.

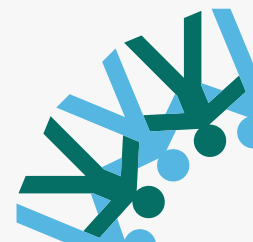


Our relationships with key partners and funders like Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, and the Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec have deepened, reinforced by successful collaboration and positive program evaluations. 2020-2021 also saw CHSSN prepare the transfer of management responsibility for mature pilot projects like ERCC to trusted partners, so that we remain focused on our core business of developing innovative responses to the health and wellness needs of English-speaking communities across the province.

We were particularly gratified that Christian Dubé, the Minister of Health and Social Services, recognized CHSSN's leadership and importance as a partner with the public health system by opening our Adaptation Conference in February 2021. The Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, was similarly supportive at the Bright Beginnings conference, also in February.

So once again this year, I want to praise the dedication and accomplishment of our staff in a second pandemic year at CHSSN, and recognize the commitment and wise counsel of our volunteer leadership.

**Ron Creary**  
President of the Board



# Letter from the Executive Director

If responding to COVID-19 felt like a 200 metre sprint last year, it turned into more of a marathon this year with indications that it might become an ultramarathon for the foreseeable future.

But as the President of the Board has observed, CHSSN continues to rise to the COVID-19 challenge with our capacity for innovation and program excellence undiminished by the pressures of the pandemic, on top of the deeper demographic and public health challenges that our communities face.

Of particular note this year in the life of CHSSN is the game-changing support of \$2.7 million over three years received from the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise (SRQEA) for Senior Wellness Centres. Health Canada's early and essential support of this innovative network has fostered a long-term commitment from the SRQEA that will allow these networks to expand and flourish.

The SRQEA has also recognized our ability to create life-enhancing collaboration links for its community networks with a new 3-year, \$500,000 "Broadening Support and Representation" grant to partner with organizations and institutions with service offerings or expertise of province-wide interest like our Harbour, Mental Health Estrie, the Jewish General Hospital Foundation and the One Voice Network.

Renewed financial support (\$425,000 per year for three years) from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), this time through its Healthy Early Years (HEY) program, gave our families and children project "Bright Beginnings" a substantial boost. This remarkably successful start-up was made possible by the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation and PHAC's support, which will extend its benefits to more communities and localities.

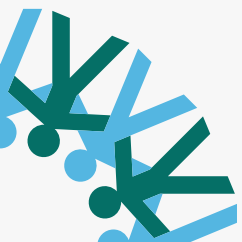


CHSSN was also proud to "hand over the keys" for the SRQEA funded ERCC community development initiative to the Regional Development Network (RDN). Similarly, CHSSN has transferred responsibility for the youth employment program supported by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec (SAJ) to the RDN. SAJ will, however, continue direct collaboration with CHSSN with a new innovation project (2021-2024) aimed at improving access to mental health services for English-speaking youth.


All in all, our 20th anniversary has been a year of notable success. The pandemic challenged us, but CHSSN and its partners overcame these challenges. Our move online for most of our collaboration work and service delivery has without question enhanced accessibility and effectiveness. To take just one example, the long-standing Community Health Education Program (CHEP) transitioned quickly to online delivery with greater participation and a widening range of topics that have encouraged us to learn from the experience of COVID-19.

The next 20 years for CHSSN are set to be even more exciting and effective than the first. 2020-2021 was a strong indicator of the truth of that statement. It has been my privilege to be a part of that journey.

Sincerely,  
**Jennifer Johnson**  
Executive Director





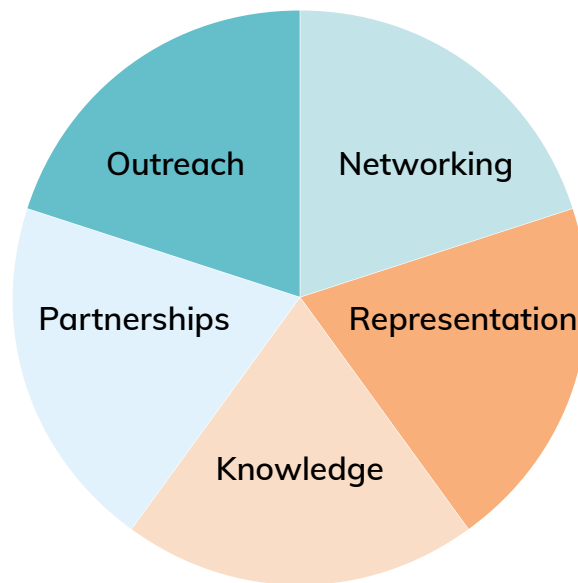


**Networking and  
Partnership Initiative  
(NPI) - Networking with  
partners to Improve  
access across Quebec**

Through funding from Health Canada under the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023, we continue to support the implementation and development of the 23 Networking and Partnership Initiatives across the province.

NPIs aim to improve access to English-language health and social services. They do this by collaborating with health and social service providers and health partners and adopting the five key strategies depicted in the image below.

### NPI ACTIVITY COMPONENTS



As part of the requirements by Health Canada, the CHSSN collects data on the NPI program in order to demonstrate its success in obtaining important outcomes. A few highlights are below.

**88.2%**

of professionals surveyed felt supported by the NPI

**95.41%**

of partners surveyed felt supported by the NPI

**580+**

partnerships developed or maintained by NPIs

**120+**

knowledge products developed by NPIs

## NPI Satellites

14 satellite initiatives also continue to develop. Satellites are part of the regional NPIs but focus on a local geography with local health and social service partners.

They're particularly successful in reaching out to an underserved English-speaking population.

## NPI Development Initiatives

3 NPI development initiatives are underway in the Greater Montreal area. These development initiatives aim to explore the feasibility of establishing an NPI or satellite NPI in the future.

They include:

- The African Canadian Development and Prevention Network (ACDPN) in l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
- The NDG Seniors Citizens Council in the Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
- The East Island Network for English Language Services (REISA) in CIUSS Montréal-Nord.

## COVID-19

Illustrated in the 2020 spring edition of CHSSN's newsletter Netlink, the NPIs quickly adapted by responding to community needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the support included:

- Ensuring English-speakers received information related to COVID-19
- Delivery of essential supplies to shut-in seniors
- Offering information sessions and support online
- An increased role in acting as a source of information and referral



NetLink Newsletter



Another important strategy for coping with the social distancing requirements of COVID-19 was the creation of a digital training program. Our CHSSN staff moved all of its training online, and these events were hugely successful with over 550 participants. Here is a list of some of the most important events:

4 resource videos/webinars held and posted on a YouTube channel:

- Principles of Collaborative Leadership
- Values-based Leadership
- Stages to Partnership Development
- Community Development and the Collective Planning Cycle

NPI Training/Network Development Workshops:

- Grant writing/work plan development (11 workshops held)
- Community mobilization (6 workshops held)
- CHSSN resource orientation session (4 workshops held)
- Volunteer and team safety (2 workshops held)
- Leading online (series of 3 workshops held 2 times)
- Midterm results



The Community Health and Social Services Network's 2020 Webinar Series

## Presentation 1 – Collaborative Leadership



## Community Health Education Program (CHEP)

Over 850 participants attended the 6 CHEP video conferences, 5 of which focused on the pandemic:

- Coping with Arthritis during Self-Isolation
- Taking Care of Your Mental Health & Emotional Resilience
- Eating Well during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Moving Well during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Managing Risk and Uncertainty in Life
- Straight Talk about End-of-Life Options.

In addition, over 200 individuals viewed recorded presentations of past CHEP sessions.

NPI networks invited communities to attend CHEP video conferences from their homes through a ZOOM platform, rather than meeting as groups at the community organization, given the COVID-19 restrictions.



## NPI Special Mental Health Initiatives

NPI organizations undertook mental health initiatives which included:

- Researching services for children with mental health challenges
- A “Still We Rise” initiative to support the mental health of Black community staff
- A “Mothers Like Us” initiative to address self-esteem
- COVID-19 Wellness Kits for families and seniors
- A Regional Portrait of Mental Health in the Gaspé
- Partnering to support services & resources to youth
- Youth-directed workshops addressing issues such as anxiety and depression
- Mental wellness initiatives for youth

### Suicide Prevention strategies

We continue to support and participate in suicide prevention strategies with the AQPS and the RQCPS. Our CHSSN staff member Russ Kueber became a spokesperson for the event this year by being part of a video campaign in English.



*Russ talking about “How to get help in a crisis”*



*CHSSN Community Forum for Mental Health*

### Montreal Community Forum March 2021 - Mental Health and COVID-19

CHSSN and the Montreal NPI Collective held an online Forum to explore Mental Health and COVID-19 in Montreal’s English-speaking community. The Forum brought together government, the health sector, researchers, community, and lived/living experience leaders from across the city – over 100 in attendance.

# Adaptation of Health and Social Services

Our initiative to adapt health and social services is supported by an investment from Health Canada and is accomplished in close partnership with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS).

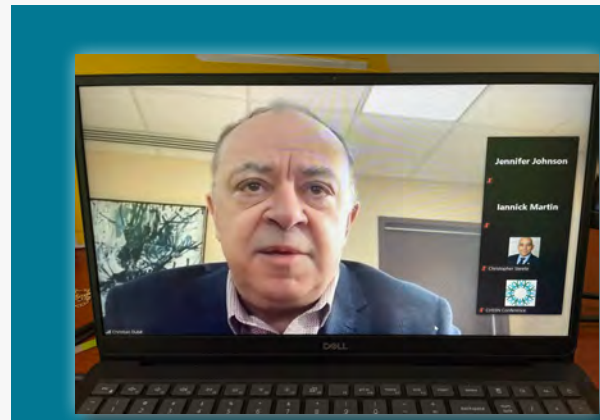


The collaboration and partnership between the health and social services system and local community networks continued in 2020-2021 with common efforts to ensure equitable access to services in English during the pandemic. Collaboration continued to improve access to services while taking into account the regional realities of English-speaking communities. There was also an effort to understand the new needs created due to COVID-19 and the digital shift at this time.

A series of virtual conferences “Building Together 2020-2021” was launched on February 24, 2021, and co-hosted by the MSSS’s Secrétariat à l’accès aux services en langue anglaise et aux communautés ethnoculturelles. The Ministre de la Santé et des Services sociaux Christian Dubé opened the virtual conference with words of praise for the collaboration of CI(U)SSS, the MSSS, and CHSSN for the benefit of the English-speaking population of Quebec.

The conference went virtual but the objectives remained the same: highlight several Adaptation projects carried out; consider best practices; encourage networking opportunities to share experiences; and provide training tools, knowledge, supporting CI(U)SSS and NPIs to ensure successful implementation of local projects.

The virtual “Building Together” conference series will continue in the next year to reinforce and sensitize about issues faced by English-speaking communities in accessing services in English, and how to address them through the Adaptation program. For more information about this project, [the Adaptation project guide 2018-2023 is now available highlighting local projects on the website.](#)



Minister Christian Dubé opened CHSSN's Building Together webinar series in February 2021



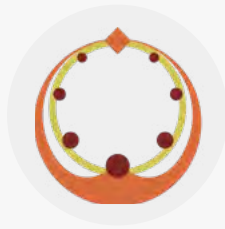
CHSSN Adaptation Initiative Report



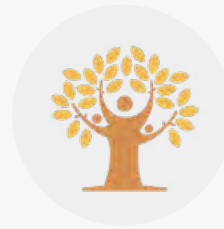
**The Adaptation Mental Health Initiative continued with 8 projects aiming to develop tools and strategies to support programming in schools such as:**

- Educational workshops
- Mental health support groups
- Training staff and volunteers on coping strategies to reduce stress and anxiety
- Promoting and disseminating translated materials to support mental health awareness campaign

The mental health projects continued this year, since the needs in this field were exacerbated by the pandemic.



ACDPN collaborated and supported AJOI and Head and Hands in their mental health support services in the West island and the NDG neighborhood of Montreal



NDGSCC was able to advocate community mental health for a vulnerable older adult population (50+) living mainly in the NDG area of Montreal.



CASA produced a Mental Health Task Force case study that will provide the Mental Health Advisory Council with an important tool to share as a best practice in mobilizing partners and improving access to mental health services in the English language across Quebec.



Townshippers Association supported and collaborated with Mental Health Estrie in the extension of mental health support groups and educational workshops to the Lac Brome area.

### Provincial organizations that undertook similar mental health programs include:

- **ELAN** programming support in schools to reduce stigmatization of mental health and to encourage students to access mental health support and services.
- **REVIVRE** translation of virtual workshops into English and the translation of the new REVIVRE Website
- **Montreal Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association** in preparing an awareness campaign across Quebec titled “You got this/ Keep in mind.”
- **Jewish General Foundation** in supporting mental health training in organizations for volunteers and staff serving seniors.



# Enhancing Knowledge of Health Status and Well-Being

Our Knowledge Development program is designed to establish an evidence base and improve our understanding of the health status and well-being of English-speaking Quebecers. It also aims to develop working relationships with key research partners.

## Collecting data for deeper insight

This year we produced two key baseline reports:

### 1) Time Series Report

This report analyzes the results of 15 years of data produced through the perception surveys CHSSN has been doing every 5 years since 2005. It's the first time anyone looked at changes regarding English speakers' perceptions of access to health and social services over time. This survey had between 2,600 and 3,000 respondents in each sample, and many questions remained the same over time.

### 2) Gender Analysis Report

We also conducted a Gender Analysis of socio-demographic data by region. This report produced powerful data illustrating challenges specific to gender.

Both of these reports are available on the CHSSN website.

## INSPQ finalizes new study on youth

Our provincial partner, the INSPQ, faced unique challenges this year due to the pandemic. Despite these hardships, they were able to finalize a rich study using a previously untapped data base on Quebec's youth.

The study is entitled "Health Profile of Quebec High School Students by Linguistic Community: a Closer Look at the Mental Well-Being and the Social Adaptation Problems" and was examined by external peer review. Official publication of the report will be made on the INSPQ's website after the embargo at the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. Regional data from CADRISQ allowed local indicators to be calculated.

## CHSSN: Patient Navigator project

We also finalized a comprehensive evaluation of the Patient Navigator project. This evaluation will be used with partners to promote the long-term sustainability of the project.



Building partnerships to improve access for youth

## Bright Beginnings

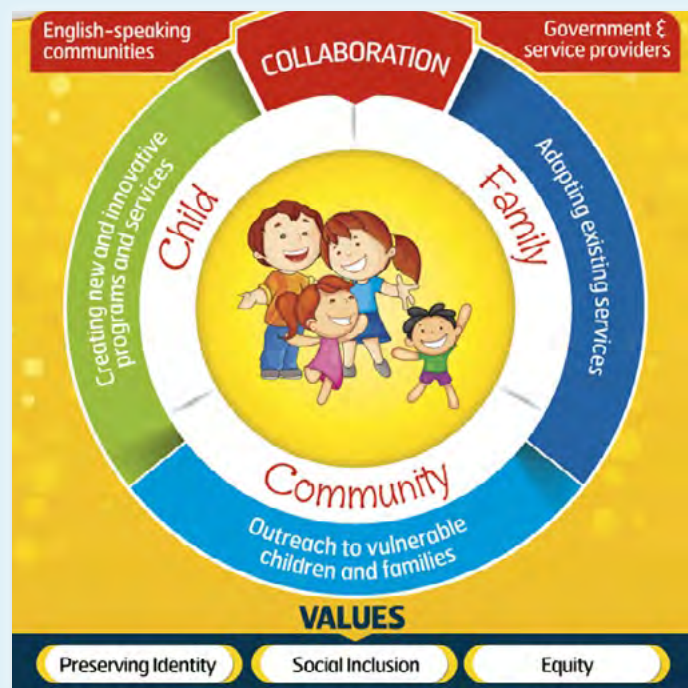
The goal of our Bright Beginnings Program that is funded by the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation, is to increase access to programs and services in English for children, youth and their families. This is done by collaborating and forming partnerships with French-speaking institutions and organizations to foster the development and adaptation of services in English.



## Supporting English-speaking Children & Families in the province of Quebec



The strategy of this goal is achieved by supporting regional community organizations (most of whom are part of our CHSSN network) in “mobilizing partners to enhance the well-being and educational success of English-speaking children and youth in Quebec”. The program’s complementary strategies aim to increase community capacity by engaging stakeholders involved in the ecosystem of children and families at the regional and provincial levels.



Our Bright Beginnings Program Model has multiple dimensions and reflects an ecosystemic approach.

## COVID-19: Adapting to Changing Circumstances

In the early stages of the pandemic, the Bright Beginnings organizations mobilized to support the families and children in their communities struggling with the COVID-19 confinement. Drawing on the partnerships they had established during the first year of the Bright Beginnings Program, as well as those with many long-standing partners, they collaborated to develop many new and innovative approaches to address the sudden and difficult situations facing families.

## COVID-19 Emergency Food Security Initiative

A one-time, extraordinary grant from the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon made it possible for us to support eight NPIs' efforts to address the sudden increase of food security needs caused by the pandemic.





## CHSSN Advocating for English-speaking Families' Needs

Last January, we hosted a meeting with Mathieu Lacombe, Minister for Families, and Christopher Skeete, Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, regarding the realities and needs of English-speaking children and families of Quebec. The minister demonstrated great interest in the community and willingness to continue discussions in this matter.

## Special Edition of English-speaking Community Magazine

Through our collaborative work with provincial early childhood partners, our team is in a position to respond to emerging trends and needs observed by the organizations in their communities. In spring of 2021, Naître et Grandir, an important provincial partner, created a special-edition magazine with content specifically tailored to English-speaking parents' interests and needs. 30,000 copies of the magazine were printed and distributed province-wide. Naître et Grandir also produced a video clip, in English to promote resources and tools to English-speaking organizations.





Developing programs to support 0-5 population and their families

## Healthy Early Years (HEY) Program

Our HEY program, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, successfully supported 28 projects in its second year of operation. The program allows NPIs to develop culturally and linguistically appropriate programs to support children (0-6) and their families who are living in conditions of risk and who may face barriers to care. Funds allow for the creation of promotion and prevention activities to encourage the positive health and well-being of OLMC children and their families.

## Community of Practice and Training

Through our community of practice, we tailored our training and knowledge transfer sessions to address the need of reaching families in the context of COVID-19. CHSSN offered knowledge exchange opportunities to enable NPI groups to share practices on their successes and learnings.



## Community Language Development Program (CLDP)

In response to a lack of access to services in speech-language pathology, we developed a program with Centre Mosaïque de Quebec to pilot a community-based language development project.

Six organizations were selected and participated in the pilot project. The project involved two types of sessions: information sessions for any interested parents, educators, community workers, professionals and others, as well as parent-child dyad workshops.

Using an evidence-based approach, the aim of the program was to increase the communities' capacity to support language development in children 0-5 years old. The pilot proved to be a success. Participant feedback was very positive and outcomes demonstrate that parents and other community members are using strategies learnt and feeling more confident to support children's language development.



Connecting youth to services

## Youth Employment

In March 2021, the Relier les jeunes d'expression anglaise à l'offre provinciale des services d'employabilité et de ressources en matière d'emploi project concluded the second phase of the Youth Employment project.

The project was financed by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec with additional funds from the Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise, doubling resources and allowing for the addition of six new groups in 2019 and one new group in 2020.

Phase 2 continued to pursue the overarching objective of integrating English-speaking youth into the Quebec workforce by:

Expanding the capacity of CJEs and, in the case of CASA, in-house employability services to serve English speakers; Building awareness of the CJEs and CASA's employability services among English-speaking youth.

In 2020 one new project participant (CAMI) joined Townshippers' Association, CASA, NSCA, 4 Korners, ECOL, MWCN, REISA and VEQ, enabling the project to have an even wider regional impact.

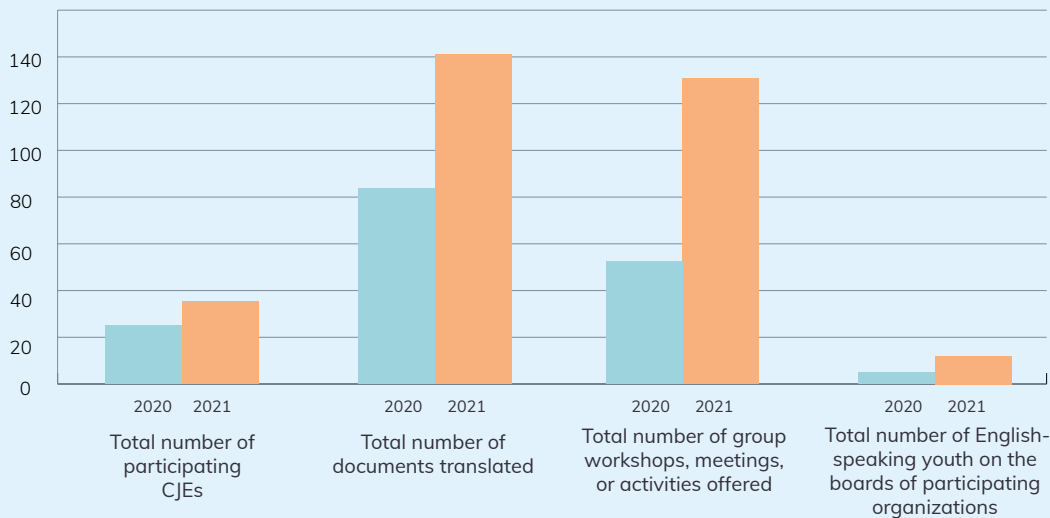
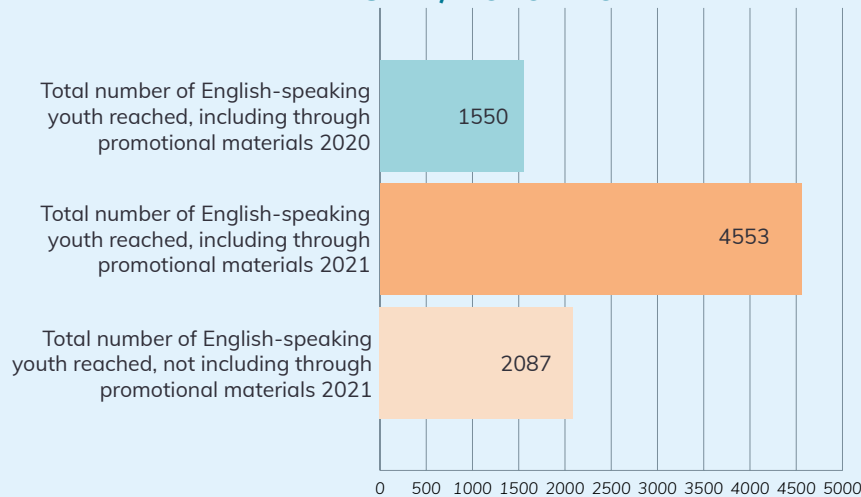
While most barriers to employment for English-speaking youth had not changed in Year 2 of

Phase 2 of the Project compared to Year 1, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the problems that English-speaking youth faced in the areas of employment and employability.

An evaluation document for Year 2 of Phase 2 of the project was prepared by Sunita Nigam (Ph.D.) for CHSSN in June 2021. It concludes:

When comparing the numbers from Phase 2, Year 1 and Phase 2, Year 2 of the Project, it's clear the participating organizations and CJEs did a great deal to improve the access of English-speaking youth to employability services, and to acquire a clearer picture of the needs and challenges facing English-speaking youth in the areas of employment and employability in Quebec.

### PHASE 2 / 2020 - 2021



While all participating organizations emphasized that there remains more work to do, the work they were able to carry out in collaboration with their regional CJEs, especially in the context of the global pandemic of COVID-19, is impressive.



# Broadening Support and Representation in the Health and Social Services Sector (BSR)



## Extending CHSSN support to a broader community

We were thrilled to continue our ongoing partnership with the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) through the creation of a three-year support and representation project in the health and social services sector.

The three major objectives of this project are:

- To outreach and support community health and social services organizations and networks.
- To provide greater representation and collaboration with government and non-governmental provincial stakeholders.
- To engage in policy and program development, research and representation initiatives.

In the first year, several workshops, webinars and events were offered to English-speaking organizations and networks across the province where online learning was emphasised because of the pandemic. Workshops included grant-writing, leadership, online learning tools and mobilisation. A Mental Health and COVID-19 Forum was held online with over 100 participants and 16 diverse speakers.

Numerous meetings with provincial partners and the government were held online. Pilot projects and research documents were created, translated, and disseminated based on an early childhood survey and a meeting with Minister Mathieu Lacombe and Christopher Skeete, deputy of Sainte-Rose.





# Senior Wellness Centres



## Supporting seniors to stay at home as long as they wish

Following a province-wide consultation on the priorities among the CHSSN NPI Network, it became clear that supporting the health and wellness of seniors was high on the priority list.

In March 2021, the CHSSN received 3 years of funding from the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) to launch a Senior Wellness Centre (SWC) Program that includes funding and creating a community of practice for 30 organizations and 76 SWC sites across the province over 3 years.

SWCs are a community-run program, adapted to unique language and cultural needs of isolated, English-speaking seniors. By offering purposeful and evidence-informed health education and health promotion activities, in collaboration with local health and social service professionals, SWC's aim to:

- Break social isolation for English-speaking seniors
- Increase access to information about health and social services in English
- Increase autonomy and well-being





*Enhancing Regional  
Community Capacity*  
Renforcer la capacité  
communautaire régionale

Applying the CHSSN Community Development Model to other sectors

# Enhance Regional Community Capacity (ERCC)

## Our partnership agreement with the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers (SRQEA) ran for three years (2018-2021)

### Central elements for the project:

- Broaden the territorial scope and services of regional English-speaking organizations through development of satellite points of contact
- Support organizations to diversify their mandates to non-health and social services sectors and respond to community needs
- Support the translation of key documents
- Increase the capacity of these organizations to represent their needs
- Increase contact and relationship with government and community stakeholders.

**17**  
**Satellite Points**  
 of contact

**20**  
**Organizations**  
 diversified their mandates to non-health and social service sectors such as education, social and economic development, and arts and culture to name a few.

## Community Support Initiative

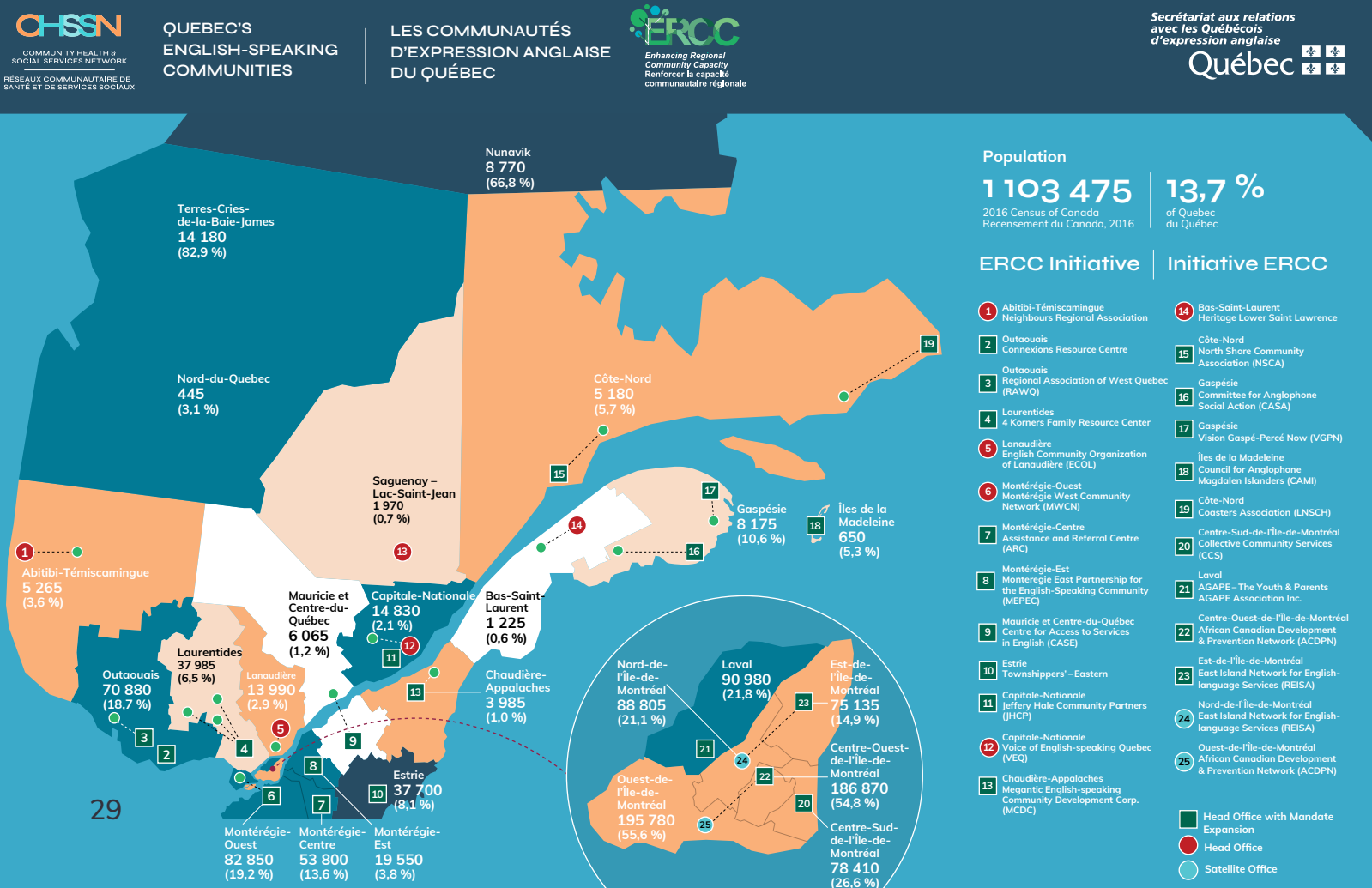
All of the CHSSN support activities were done virtually this year using on-line platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Mentioned above under NPI, the Webinar training series registered 225 participants and the Community Leadership Training Program registered 344 participants.

# The ERCC Youth Employment Initiative

ERCC continued to support the extension of youth employment programming to 4Korners, ECOL, MWCN, REISA, VEQ and newest recruit CAMI (see Youth Employment section on page 21). The initiative aims to facilitate the integration of English-speaking youth into the Quebec labour market, using best practices from other Quebec regions in close collaboration with their local Centre Jeunesse Emploi.

This initiative shed light on the English-speaking youth across the province facing unique challenges related to employment and employability compared to their French-speaking counterparts.

We're delighted the ERCC program and Youth Employment initiative will be moving forward, collaborating with the Regional Development Network (RDN) and the SRQEA for the transition of management of both projects.





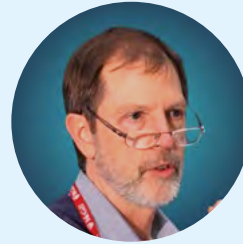
# CHSSN Team



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Project Coordinator



**Russel Kueber**  
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Project Administrator



**Nathalie Lokoka**  
Project Coordinator



# CHSSN Funding Partners



Santé  
Canada Health  
Canada



Fondation Lucie  
et André Chagnon

*Secrétariat aux relations  
avec les Québécois  
d'expression anglaise*

Québec 

*Secrétariat  
à la jeunesse*

Québec 



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada



# CHSSN Annual Report

2020 - 2021

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