



“A Matter of Services - Addressing the Health Issues” October 2004 to March 2008

Overview of Project

The Coasters Association Inc. received a project from Health Canada entitled, “A matter of Services - Addressing the Health Issues” through the Quebec Community Group Network partners.

The HSSNPI started on October 18th, 2004. In the first phase, we have accomplished the establishment of a networking committee called the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health (LNSCH). This committee steers the HSSNPI program and approves the data evidence plans generated. Surveys were created and focus groups held on topics (youth and children, women’s issues, wait times and post care, transportation and lodging, and drugs and alcohol) to determine the Health and Social Service needs of the population, this information was instrumental in the planning for the second phase. A synopsis of the current actions and history of the organizations involved in the LNSCH was completed.

The mission of the project is to support the development of the capacity of Quebec’s English-speaking communities, to ensure their vitality through cooperation and partnership with the health and social services system, in order to improve and to develop and maintain access to the full range of services for Quebec’s English - speaking minority communities.

Network Unit Development and Maintenance:

In 2004, a networking committee was established called the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health (LNSCH). The LNSCH is a dynamic group of community and public sector leaders from various organizations and include:

- Centre de Sante Services Sociaux de la Basse Cote Nord
- Commission Scolaire du Littoral
- Coasters Association Inc.
- Council of Mayors (5 municipalities)
- Community Economic Development and Employability Committee
- Quebec Labrador Foundation
- Local Development Center
- Sureté du Quebec

During the project, the Coasters Association will be working closely with the Community Health and Social Service Network (CHSSN). This organization has a mandate to support communities in the development of their networks within the HSSNPI program. They provide training and act as a consultant to all ten (10) organizations that have been approved for funding by Health Canada. A support team has been established for each of the groups to provide guidance, advice and support to ensure the success of the HSSNPI project. Our support team members are Hugh Maynard and Russell Kueber.

This project is an excellent opportunity for the Lower North Shore to formulate a strategic action plan that will contain primary goals, a way to achieve these goals, integration of the needs of the English - speaking communities in addressing priorities, as well as a way to obtain sustainability. It will affect all the population, as it has no boundaries regarding age or sectors. It will increase community ownership in the planning and development of services and the promotion of better access to health and social services, through the formation of sub-committees for each initiative. Over the course of the program, sustainable initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that the English-speaking communities of the Lower North Shore have improved services with better accessibility and enhanced quality of care and will be offered health and social services locally as much as possible. There will be a support network for those services that must be acquired elsewhere, to ensure quality services. Through the creation of durable links between different stakeholders that have already been formed and those that are foreseen, including communities, the health and social services system and other sectors, such as education, these initiatives will become a reality.

Partnering with these community and public sector leaders helps to ensure that the LNSCH has a voice within the communities and a direct link to the community networks and resources. The goal is to ensure representation from all sectors of the Lower North Shore on the LNSCH to identify, prioritize, address and resolve health and social services issues.

The LNSCH is in the process of answering to the needs of the population through five (5) established priorities (Youth and Children, Women's Issues, Drugs and Alcohol, Off Coast Services and Services to the Intellectually and Physically Challenged)

Research and Profile Development

The purpose of these Community Health Profiles is to lay the groundwork for the development of Community Health Plans. These profiles will provide a snapshot of the health of the population living within the LNS area and will present opportunities for local residents, community leaders and health care providers to effectively work together to improve the overall health of the community. They will be compiled from provincial, regional and local data sources and will act as an information tool to assist with the planning and development of community health plans.

What is a Community Health Plan?

A **Community Health Plan** is a report about the community that describes the health of the people in the community, the conditions in which they live and the resources available that can be used to improve health. Community health planning is ongoing. It identifies the community's health issues and outlines ideas and strategies which, when put in place, will work towards improving the overall health of the community.

A Community Health Plan includes:

- Information about the CSSSBCN and services

- Highlights of an assessment of particular communities (e.g. data, community input and research).
- A description of key health issues and priorities in the communities
- Recommendations for strategies/action by the CSSSBCN and other stakeholders

Purpose

- Identify health needs and issues within the community, and then develop plans to meet those needs, or concerns.
- Have good working relationships with others involved in the local health system.
- Assist the public in gaining access to needed health resources.
- Have a common goal of focusing on wellness as well as on illness, looking at all aspects of health.
- Value community input based on good information.
- Committed to sharing information about health care as well as issues that affect health with anyone who has an interest.

The compilation of the profiles and development of community health plans is an important component of the LNSCH's Strategic Plan and HSSNPI coordinator's work plan in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Our knowledge base however still needs to be expanded as we continue to survey the youth of the Lower North Shore and find specific areas of concern in the communities. These results, once concluded, will provide a more detailed health and social service community profile of the fifteen communities of the Lower North Shore.

Continue to Implement Strategies based on Initial Needs Assessment Conducted in 2004-2005:

Telehealth

The Telehealth Project is a partnership between; McGill University, the McGill University Health Center, CHSSN (Community Health and Social Service Network), and the Coasters Association. The Telehealth Project provides health and social information via videoconferencing to remote English-language communities in the province of Quebec. The main goal is to build community capacity to participate in Telehealth activities. These sessions also aim at empowering individuals and their communities to take action in their own health and through greater awareness of the available English-language resource and build strong health-care partnerships within their communities. In this two-hour free community event, an interactive information session is held by qualified health care professionals, via videoconference from the Montreal Children's Hospital. To date we have held various videoconferences on topics such as; Cancer, Learning Disabilities, Bullying, Alzheimer's and Grief and Loss.

A Resource Library on Telehealth sessions topics for 2006-2007 has been drafted. Information on; Bullying, Alzheimer's, Learning Disabilities, Grief and Loss, Cancer, Mental Health and Drugs & Alcohol was researched, gathered, and compiled. The resource library consists of a list of Canadian websites, along with a brief description.

Available books on the above-mentioned topics were researched, providing a book description and a place where the book will be available and the price. Various pamphlets, fact sheets that are available for download, purchase and/or have available at the Coasters have also been researched. Also included are all the resource material gathered at each of the Telehealth Sessions, and a request had been made for each of the Telehealth sessions DVDs for 2006-2007.

Voices & Choices

A great program was discovered, through Health Canada, called Voices and Choices. This program helps schools assess their student's needs through a Needs Assessment Questionnaire. Voices and Choices actively involve students in their school community, enabling them to have a greater influence over their health and school situation, and improve both their health and the health of their school environment.

This program was piloted in St. Paul's School with tremendous results:

- St. Paul's School Health Committee
- Breakfast Program
- Fitness Center
- Rewards Program (Simple Plan Concert, Montreal Canadians Hockey Game)
- Retreat on Drugs and Alcohol Abuse in partnership with Gaspé and the Magdalene Islands, and the possibility of organizing a retreat on the Lower North Shore
- Renovated and improved the Library at Mountain Ridge School to help improve literacy

KIDS Summer Camp

The Anglican Diocese of Quebec was anxious to provide leadership training and opportunities for young people in their diocese. At the same time, the Gaspé Deanery had begun to train camp counselors and provide their own program at Fort Haldimand Camp and various communities. Using their model for training, and the Fort Haldimand Camp facility, the Program Committee began a diocesan-wide program in the summer of 2003.

The program/curriculum is chosen by the Camp Ministry Team (CMT). This team chooses a program which has good pedagogy for children, rich resources in music and crafts, and tells a story based in scripture and appropriate for kids. Programs at this level are suitable for kids of all Christian backgrounds. In recent years the denary have used programs from Wood Books (Canada); Habitat for Humanity (US); and Cokesbury. The Camp Ministry Team purchases several copies of the Vacation Bible School program each year and offers these programs to interested participants at no additional cost.

In the summer of 2006, a six (6) week summer camp pilot project for children between the ages of six to twelve ran in the Municipalities of Bonne Esperance and St. Augustine. The summer camp entitled Kindness, Inspiration, Determination, Spirit, "KIDS" has proven to be a great success.

In the last week of June, the Camp Ministry Team held a training camp over four days, which covered a wide range of skills and knowledge. The curriculum included information

about learning styles; child development; Christian formation for children; managing challenges and stress; games; curriculum specific material; legal responsibilities and lots of other interesting topics. All counselors were required to attend the training camp. Although they did not pay for the counselor's time at the training camp, the denary covered all their travel/accommodation and training expenses for training camp.

Each camp/site was responsible for finding funding for their counselors. The Camp Ministry Team was more than happy to help in this process. The camps received funding to hire eight (8) animators through Deanery grants and funding available through the Summer Career Placements for Students at Human Resources and Development Canada.

A partnership was formed with the local municipalities, sports committees and schools to use their facilities to run the program.

The start up costs for craft & snack supplies were the responsibility of the camp. The denary provided a list of the craft supplies needed. Due to our remote location, the deanery prepared a box with the difficult to obtain supplies (which was reimbursed by each camp to the denary) and sent with the senior counselor at each camp.

The KIDS Summer Camps charged a \$35/week to cover the cost of snacks and supplies. Through a partnership formed with the Coasters Association and the 4H Club of Quebec insurance was offered for a flat fee of \$15.00 for the six-week program.

The KIDS Summer Camp is a great initiative that has been made possible by a partnership formed with The Coasters Association, the Anglican Diocese of Quebec, 4H Club of Quebec, local municipalities, sports committees, schools, active community volunteers and organizations in both St. Paul's River and St. Augustine. Work is currently underway on the possibility of obtaining funding for four additional camps (ages 6 – 12) for the upcoming summer of 2007.

Strategic Plan/Communication Plan

A Strategic Plan has been completed, which provides a detailed outline of the Goals and Objectives of the Health and Social Services Networking Partnership Initiative as well as the Mandate, Mission and Objectives of the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health. A Communication Plan for 2006-2007 has been completed and both are currently in use by the LNSCH.

Drug and Alcohol Retreat for Teenagers

A partnership was created with Gaspé and the Magdalene Islands to obtain funding for a Retreat on Drug and Alcohol Abuse for teenagers from the three Anglophone minority areas. The Retreat was held in Gaspé during the month of May 2006 in which six (6) youth leaders of the St. Paul's School Health Committee attended.

Extra Regional Services

"Access to Extra-Regional Health Services in Eastern Quebec – A Community Network Approach to Needs Assessment" was a joint effort between CASA, Vision Gaspé-Percé

Now, CAMI, Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence, the North Shore Community Association and the Coasters Association Inc. The purpose was to assess the number of Anglophones using extra regional services and the nature and quality of the services. All information collected has been analyzed and compiled for the Provincial report, however, a report of the findings of the LNS was also produced.

Sustainability (Planning for the Sustainability of the LNSCH)

The LNSCH is now planning for the long-term sustainability of the organization, not only for the financial means to operate but also to expand the number and range of partnerships that will help identify, prioritize, address, and resolve the many health and social service access issues for the communities of the Lower North Shore. A draft sustainability plan is being prepared which includes strategies to identify and secure funding sources beyond 2008-2009. By working collaboratively with government, businesses, and community groups we can find the means to achieve sustainability for the LNSCH together.

Five (5) Years 2008-2013, Priorities:

1. Implemented community health plans for the five municipalities.
2. Animators administering the health plans in the five (5) municipalities
3. A long-term Telehealth program implemented.
4. Established administrative structure with personnel for the networking committee LNSCH.
5. Improved quality of health services for the Anglophone minority population of the Lower North Shore.

There is a chronic need to find lasting solutions to the health and social issues on the Lower North Shore. The HSSNPI project has provided the people with an avenue to express what is happening to them and have this information brought to regional organizations and has provided a valuable tool to initiate and move forward the efforts of those who wish to improve the health and social services system on the Lower North Shore. Community support and cooperation are necessary to succeed. The creation of the Lower North Shore Coalition for Health marks a significant milestone in this process. With the end of the HSSNPI project fast approaching it is imperative that funding be secured to continue this project and carry out the long-term objectives set forth by the LNSCH. With the creation of a sustainability plan, over the course of the next five years, sustainable initiatives will be undertaken to ensure that the English-speaking communities of the Lower North Shore have improved services with better accessibility and enhanced quality of care.

Ida Jones
Health and Social Services Development Agent
Coasters Association Inc