

WRHA FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES RESEARCH TIDBITS

Issue 7

LEADERSHIP

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Leadership is a crucial component of the Active Offer of health care services in the patient's preferred official language. In their working environment, health professionals will encounter colleagues who may not be aware of the rights, realities and living conditions of official language communities. To ensure sustainable improvement of the Active Offer of health services in the patient's preferred official language, health professionals must become catalysts for change and innovation in their work environments. To achieve this, they must demonstrate personal and ethical leadership toward their patients by actively offering health services in both official languages. At the same time, they must exert a positive influence on their workplaces and on their communities (Lortie, Lalonde and Bouchard, 2012).

DID YOU KNOW?

To ensure sustainable improvement of the Active Offer of health services in both official languages, minority communities must be able to rely on the leadership of health professionals.

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To demonstrate leadership in the Active Offer of health care services in the patient's preferred official language and to fully respect linguistic rights, health professionals must assert their personal leadership by developing their skills and adopting concrete behaviors.

FACTS & FIGURES

- ▶ A person living in a minority community is more likely to affirm a need if the environment allows him or her to feel comfortable speaking the chosen language and has a sense that the situation can change and improve;
- ▶ 40 % of Francophones in MB have difficulty receiving health services in the minority language (French);
- ▶ 67% of Francophones in MB find it important to receive health services in French;
- ▶ Access to health services in English was three to seven times higher than access to health services in French throughout the country;

Source: Landry, CIRLM, 2014

LEADERSHIP INVOLVES:

1. *Establishing a clear vision;*
2. *Sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly;*
3. *Providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision, and;*
4. *Coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders.*

VALUES & ETHICS

Behaviours required to assert leadership:

- ▶ By being aware of the direct relationship between the Active Offer of health care services in the patient's official language and the quality of these services for patients;
- ▶ By promoting rights and obligations pertaining to official languages in the work environment;
- ▶ By affirming their feelings of belonging, of pride and of being citizens of Canada;
- ▶ By understanding the ethical consequences of their actions and behaviours toward their patients;
- ▶ By conveying, through their actions, their respect for equitable access to care and services in both official languages;
- ▶ By guaranteeing equal use of both official languages in all aspects of care or services (oral and written communications);
- ▶ By providing equitable and fair care to their patients, regardless of their linguistic affiliation or choice.

STRATEGIC THINKING

Behaviours required to assert leadership:

- ▶ By being highly determined to bring official languages issues at the forefront of their facility's concerns;
- ▶ By being able to reflect and be favourable to ongoing evaluation of offered services in a minority community;
- ▶ By demonstrating critical thinking on the active offer of health care services in both official languages;
- ▶ By continually striving to improve the work environment's capacity for active offer;
- ▶ By clearly understanding their own responsibilities in the implementation of the active offer vision of health care services in the patient's preferred official language and discussing this issue with colleagues;
- ▶ By listening to the suggestions offered for dealing with challenges, respecting linguistic rights, and promoting the use of both official languages.

COMMITMENT

Behaviours required to assert leadership:

- ▶ By continually affirming and demonstrating commitment to the Active Offer of services in the official language preferred by the patient;
- ▶ By exerting a positive influence on their workplaces and communities;
- ▶ By seeking concrete opportunities to promote active offer;
- ▶ By communicating with colleagues their responsibilities in terms of the language of service;
- ▶ By ensuring that the linguistic needs of their patients have been met and that communications respect the preferred language of each patient;
- ▶ By ensuring that good practices are implemented and applied;
- ▶ By not hesitating to make difficult decisions to address situations when a patient's language rights are not respected;
- ▶ By demonstrating courage, creativity and initiative in their efforts to improve active offer;
- ▶ By recognizing that change can be slow and continuing their efforts without being discouraged;
- ▶ By being sensitive in dealing with the issue of the language of service.



HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO INCORPORATE ACTIVE OFFER

1. Establish with their patients quality relationships that are genuine and compassionate, and based on mutual respect and transparency;
2. Seek to understand the impact that cultural differences may have on the quality of health care and services;
3. Convey, through their actions, their respect for equitable access to French language care and services;
4. Understand the ethical consequences of their actions and behaviours toward their patients;
5. Determine at the first point of contact their patients' language preference (taking their patients' linguistic pulse... a vital sign);
6. Ensure that their patients are comfortable using the official language of their choice;
7. Guarantee equal use of both official languages in all aspects of care or services (oral and written communications);
8. Seek concrete opportunities to promote Active Offer; and
9. Play a leadership role to ensure steady improvement of their environment to make it more conducive to Active Offer.

Source: Lortie, Lalonde, and Bouchard, 2012

IMPLEMENTATION

It is evident that besides the skills and knowledge related to health professions, the Active Offer of safe, quality services in both official languages also involves acquiring the notions and tools required to provide it. In the opinion of many, developing a form of leadership among health professionals in order for them to act favourably towards Active Offer is an important part of this process. According to the CNFS, the knowledge to act in the area of Active Offer is the outcome of a variety of learning experiences leading to knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to Active Offer. Knowledge to act can evolve into "ethical leadership" through which a health or social service professional can highlight the importance of the Active Offer of French language services in her or his workplace, thus becoming a catalyst for change and innovation (Consortium national de formation en santé [CNFS], 2012).

IN A NUTSHELL...

To demonstrate leadership, each service provider should look for every opportunity to promote French language services, and take steps to remedy the situation when they become aware of language gaps in their organization. Service providers should also seek out opportunities for continuing education in French.

Following the suggestions of Beaulieu (2010), the experts pointed out how important it was for individuals working in an Anglo-dominant setting to feel supported by their employer if they are to put their willingness to actively offer French-language services.



QUOTES & NOTES

"Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right." (*Professor Warren G. Bennis*)

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"Walk the talk. To be a good leader, you have to do more than just give instructions; you have to practice what you preach in all situations."

(*Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2011*)

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"Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself." (*Henry Ward Beecher*)

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"The art of communication is the language of leadership." (*James Humes*)

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"Leadership contains certain elements of good management, but it requires that you inspire, that you build durable trust. For an organization to be not just good but to win, leadership means evoking participation larger than the job description, commitment deeper than any job contract's wording." (*Stanley A. McChrystal*)

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"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them become what they are capable of being." (*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*)

CONTRIBUTION OF MANAGERS

Health professionals must not be the only ones bearing the responsibilities of the active offer of services in the patient's preferred official language. They must be able to rely on adequate organizational support, particularly the managers. Whether they are bilingual or unilingual, the managers must be the champions of official languages and be guided by values of linguistic duality and respect. Furthermore, they must be willing to favour the use of both official languages at work and model behaviours that show their commitment to linguistic duality within their organization.

Source: (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2011)

I AM COMMITTED BECAUSE:

- ▶ I respect the language rights of the public;
- ▶ I cannot assume that I know the client's official language preference;
- ▶ I maintain a standard of service excellence;
- ▶ I represent the government of Manitoba;
- ▶ I promote Canada's fundamental values: linguistic duality, diversity, inclusion and respect.

DID YOU KNOW?

Importance of French-language services :

- ▶ Foster a better understanding;
- ▶ Provide better quality care and services;
- ▶ Establish a better relationship between the professional and the patient or client;
- ▶ Provide a better quality of life;
- ▶ Avoid professional errors;
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary service delivery costs



OUR COMMITMENT

The Winnipeg Health Region and all its service providers aim to:

- ▶ Improve access to health services in French, including primary health care;
- ▶ Ensure there are an appropriate number of organizations able to provide health services in French, consistent with Ministry standards;
- ▶ Ensure an adequate distribution of health professionals who are able to provide care in French;
- ▶ Provide information and resources in French;
- ▶ Respond to issues of interest and concern;
- ▶ Focus on the Active Offer of services in French;
- ▶ Increase staff awareness about needs of the French-speaking community;
- ▶ Collaborate with Francophone community representatives, and;
- ▶ Facilitate changes to improve the quality of services provided.



RESOURCES

The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority French Language Services mandate is:

To assist the WRHA in promoting and providing health services in French in accordance with its French Language Services policies, the Government of Manitoba French Language Services Policy, and regulations established under the legislation governing the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba.

VIDEO - The importance of Active Offer



VIDEO - What is an Active Offer and why is it so important?



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