

Overview of French-Language Health Services in Ontario (2017–2020)

Study conducted by OZi –
An essential foundation for planning



Data collection

- From 1,420 health care providers (HCPs) funded by Ontario Health.
- Response rate of 94%

Healthcare sectors

- Hospitals
- Mental health and addiction services
- Long-term care
- Community support services
- Community health centres

Designation status

- Designated¹: 80 HCPs (6%)
- Identified²: 190 HCPs (13%)
- Non-identified³: 1150 HCPs (81%)

Key Findings

1. Geographic disparities

- Only the **Champlain and North East** LHINs guarantee the presence of at least one Designated HCP in each of the five care sectors.
- **Only 48%** of funded direct services are classed as Designated, meaning that **52%** have no guarantee of accessibility in French.
- Of the 37 Designated localities⁵, 23 have gaps where services are only provided by Non-identified HCPs in at least one sector of care.

8 LHINs⁴ out of 14 with **no Designated HCP**

10 of these **23** localities lack Designated services in at least three sectors of care, despite a Francophone population that would justify it.

2. Gaps in the continuum of care

- **Hospitals, higher proportion** of Designated or Identified services (**48%**)
- **Long-term care, lowest proportion: Only 9% of Designated or Identified HCPs.**

Most vulnerable sector

3. Compliance with Designated improvement requirements

- **Designated HCPs**: high compliance (**68%** to **100%**)
- **Identified HCPs (in the process of becoming Designated)**: compliance between **24%** and **80%**
- **Evolution (2017–2020)**: Designated HCPs: **63%** → **85%**
Identified HCPs: **29%** → **43%**

Progress likely linked to systematic **data collection** and **support from French-language health services planning entities.**

4. Underutilized bilingual human resources

- **63%** work in Designated HCPs
- **17%** in Identified HCPs
- **20%** (≈ 3 642 people) in Non-identified HCPs
- **Designated hospitals** employ the highest proportion of bilingual staff (**81%**)
- **Non identified LTCs**: **1 876** bilingual human resources **44%** of untapped bilingual human resources
- **8 of 14 LHINs**: majority of bilingual human resources work in Non-identified HCPs

Major Opportunity

Better mobilize bilingual human resources to address **access gaps** and **strengthen the provision of French-language services**

Reference document
Scullion, D., Taillon, M., Ranger, M.-C., Glaude, N. & Desaulniers, J. (2024). Contribution d'OZi à l'état des lieux des services de santé en français en Ontario. *Minorités linguistiques et société / Linguistic Minorities and Society*, (22). <https://doi.org/10.7202/1110629ar>

Study Summary

The study highlights progress among Designated and Identified HCPs, but still reveals gaps: uneven geographic distribution, weaknesses in the continuum of care (particularly in LTC), and underutilization of the bilingual potential of non-Designated HCPs, which could otherwise improve access to care for Francophones.

Definitions and clarifications

¹ Designated HCP: officially recognized by the ministry, with formal obligations to offer services in French, in accordance with *Ontario's French Language Services Act* (FLSA).

² Identified HCP: potential capacity to offer services in French, in the process of becoming Designated.

³ Non-identified HCP: no obligation to offer services in French.

⁴ LHIN: Local Health Integration Network.

⁵ Designated locality: The FLSA guarantees Francophones in these localities the right to local government services in French.