

# *Section 1*

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Francophone Community

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The French presence in Ontario dates back nearly 400 years to the establishment of the Mission of Sainte-Marie-Among-the-Hurons (Simcoe County) in 1639.

Like the general population of Ontario, the Franco-Ontarian community is diverse and vibrant. For many years, it has welcomed Francophones from Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Today, Francophone racial minorities represent 10% of the province's Francophone population.

Ontario is home to 611,500 Franco-Ontarians. Approximately 35,000 Francophones live in the larger Southwest region, which includes both Erie St. Clair and South West LHINs. The Francophone population is approximately 21,000 people in the Erie St. Clair LHIN and approximately 14,000 in the South West LHIN.

<sup>1</sup> Taken and adapted from the Office of Francophone Affairs' website at [www.ofa.gov.on.ca](http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca).

The Franco-Ontarian community is older than the overall population in Ontario. While the median age of the general population is 40.1, the median age of the Francophone population is 44. In the larger Southwest region, this figure goes up to a median age of 50.8.

The most notable age categories among Francophones are the 45-54 and 65 and over categories: close to one out of five Francophones is included in both of these age groups. In the larger Southwest region, one out of every four Francophones, 26.6%, is a senior. Another sign of aging of the Franco-Ontarian community is that the proportion of Francophones aged 65 and older is higher than the proportion of youth aged 14 and under (17% versus 14%).

Women make up more than half of the Francophone community (53%). The situation is similar in the larger Southwest region with 53.7%. Across the province, more than two out of three couples (68.3%) are exogamous, meaning that one parent is Francophone and the other parent is not. In the larger Southwest region, 87.5% of families are exogamous. Lastly, 15.9% of Franco-Ontarian families are single-parent households.

Ontario's Francophone population is a dynamic community because of its many institutions and associations in the fields of education, culture, health, justice, the economy and communications. In the larger Southwest region, Francophones can count on a variety of community organizations, from French-language school boards, community college and day care centres to seniors clubs and community cultural centres. Health and social services sectors are where services are the most limited or quasi-inexistent. Please see Section 9 on resources for names and contact information of Francophone community organizations in the area.

## Health Status<sup>2</sup>

In the summer and fall of 2012, the Erie St. Clair/South West French Language Health Planning Entity conducted a comprehensive health survey of Francophones to better understand the health status and health needs of the Francophone population in the Erie St. Clair and South West LHINs.

In total, 1,200 adults aged 18 years old or over responded to the survey. Three-quarters of respondents lived in the Erie St. Clair LHIN region and one-quarter lived in the South West LHIN region. Distribution of respondents at the county level is fairly representative.



*The cultural diversity of the Francophonie significantly enriches our discussions."*

Stephen Harper, Prime Minister,  
Remarks at the 14th Summit of  
la Francophonie, October 13, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Taken and adapted from the report *Francophone Health and Use of Health Care Services in the Erie St. Clair/South West Local Health Integration Networks*, 2013, accessible online at [www.entite1.ca](http://www.entite1.ca).

**Notable results:**

- Respondents were asked to rate both their physical and mental health in separate questions. Interestingly, people tended to rate their mental health as being better than their physical health: 48% of respondents rated their physical health as excellent/very good, compared to 68% who rated their mental health as excellent/very good.
- Though only 2% of respondents reported being underweight, 21% of respondents fell into one of the two obese categories (moderate obese and severe obese).
- Respondents also tended to rate their physical health differently based on their Body Mass Index (BMI) status; in particular, ratings of fair/poor health were significantly increased among respondents who fell in the obese categories.
- Nearly all respondents (93%) reported having a regular medical doctor.
- Of those with a regular medical doctor, only 6% of respondents spoke with their doctor in French.
- Of those who reported not having a doctor, the most common reason was not having tried to contact one (35%), followed by no French-speaking doctors available in the area (27%).
- When they were sick, the vast majority of respondents indicated that they usually went to their doctor's office (67%) or else to a walk-in clinic (18%).
- Similarly, most respondents indicated that they usually went to their doctor's office (54%) or to the Internet (18%) when they were seeking health information or advice.
- In the last 12 months, 26% of respondents indicated that they had visited the emergency room at a hospital.
- In particular, respondents from Grey/Bruce, Chatham-Kent, Elgin/Rural Middlesex and Sarnia-Lambton were more likely to have been to the ER in the last 12 months.
- In terms of the most recent ER visit, 39% of respondents reported going to the ER for a minor problem, and of those, 52% said the reason why they did not get treatment elsewhere was because their family doctor was not available and 21% indicated that it was because it would take too long to get an appointment.
- Overall, 37% of respondents indicated that they had at least one illness or health condition as diagnosed by a doctor.
- Of those with a health condition, the most common illnesses were bone/joint conditions (40%) and cardiovascular conditions (32%), followed by 'other' illnesses/conditions (28%).
- Most Francophones who reported having a health condition were living in Sarnia-Lambton, Pain Court/Grande Pointe, Tecumseh or Windsor.
- Having a health condition was also significantly associated with age (highest in 55-64, 65+ age groups) and with visiting the ER in the last 12 months.

- Additionally, of those with a health condition, 36% indicated that they had more than one of the diagnosed conditions listed (i.e. bone/joint, cardiovascular, diabetes, lung, mental, cancer, kidney, other).
- As well, respondents with multiple conditions were most likely to live in Windsor and be in the 65+ age group.

**More specifically:**

- Among those having a bone/joint illness, 73% suffered from arthritis.
- For those with a cardiovascular disease, 73% suffered from high blood pressure.
- For those with diabetes 53% suffered from type 2 diabetes.
- For those with a lung disease, 67% suffered from asthma.
- For those with a mental illness, 68% suffered from a mood disorder and 32% from an anxiety disorder.

For more information, please refer to the report titled *Francophone Health and Use of Health Care Services in the Erie St. Clair/South West Local Health Integration Networks* accessible online at [www.entite1.ca](http://www.entite1.ca).