Source: North East Local Health Integration Network

Active Offer of FLS in Health

Employer Fact Sheet

What is Active Offer of FLS (French Language Services)?

Active Offer happens when…

*Francophone members of the public are **informed** about available services in French, have **access** to these services and are **satisfied** with the quality of these services.*[1]

Quality French-language services are **"actively offered"** if the following elements are present:[2]

- a "client" or "service-focused" approach;
- knowledgeable and well-trained staff who have a clear understanding of their corporate and individual responsibilities regarding FLS;
- a willingness, where necessary, to look at alternative or innovative ways to meet FLS obligations and the needs of the Francophone community; and,
- time to "plan ahead".

How does Active Offer of FLS fit into the health care system?

Local health service providers who are identified or, under the *French Language Services Act*, designated to provide FLS, are encouraged to be proactive in establishing and offering services in French, **rather than relying on the public having to request them**. As crown agencies, LHINs are also accountable for providing FLS using an active offer approach.

As stated by the French Language Services Commissioner – François Boileau – in his *Special Report on French Language Health Services Planning in Ontario, 2009*: "It has been shown, time and time again, that active offer has a considerable impact on the demand for services. The more actively a service is offered, the more demand there is for it. This is as true for health as for any other sector."

How do I promote an Active Offer of FLS?

- Educate staff and management on the *FLS Act*[3] and the FLS requirements under the *Local Health System Integration Act*[4].
- Ensure visual cues in the service environment that let the public know that services are available in French (i.e. signs, name tags, etc.)
- Offer services simultaneously in French and English (i.e. on the phone, at the reception desk, at admission, in print, etc.)
- Develop mechanisms for non-bilingual staff to handle requests for services in French – in person or over the phone.
- Identify and carry out an assessment of bilingual staff and the resources needed to ensure an active offer of FLS (i.e. language testing and training, bilingual reference tools, etc.)
- Develop a mechanism to identify French-speaking clients in order to facilitate needs assessment and matching of clients with French-speaking staff.
- Engage the Francophone community as an active partner in designing programs and services that meet the community's own needs (i.e. FLS Committee, consultations, etc.)
- Integrate FLS in strategic plans and develop policies and procedures pertaining to FLS (i.e. in HR policies, complaint mechanism, etc.)

[1] From "*OPS Framework for Action: A Modern Ontario Public Service*", 2006
[2] From "*Practical Guide for the Active Offer of French-language Services in the Ontario Government*", Office of Francophone Affairs, April 2008
[3] **http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90f32_e.htm**
[4] **http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2009/elaws_src_regs_r09515_e.htm**