

Ici on parle!

How to Actively Engage Francophone Patients
Tools for French and English-Speaking Physicians

Family Physician Information letter

Background information

The Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR) in collaboration with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine are pleased to offer a unique continuing education and professional development (CEPD) opportunity. This CEPD program aims to help improve the Francophone patient experience within your office. A review of literature revealed certain gaps in French-language health services in Northern Ontario. For instance, though Northern Ontario Francophones are an aging population with higher rates of numerous chronic conditions and complex care needs, there exists a maldistribution of physicians who are competent enough to conduct their practice in French in the province, with rural and northern communities finding themselves particularly underserved. This maldistribution is concerning given the high Francophone population in the north. Given the link between patients' health and provider communication, it is essential that physicians who have chosen to practice in Northern Ontario, both those who **can** and who **cannot** speak French, are equipped with strategies to offering patient-centered care; which includes offering services in the patient's language of preference.

Recent discussions with family physicians working in Northern Ontario revealed several unique challenges faced when serving French-speaking patients. In particular, the lack of education and opportunities for continued professional development regarding Francophone needs were frequently discussed. In addition, physicians identified that those opportunities that do exist are expensive and often require a leave from work and travel to attend, which many found inconvenient and often impossible. The present CEPD program was developed to address these needs. As a result, we are offering you an education program that addresses the communication needs of Francophones in Northern Ontario; we are providing this program free of charge, virtually eliminating the need to travel, and providing you with an opportunity to earn numerous Mainpro+ credits.

The education program

This CEPD program is composed of three phases:

PHASE 1: Assessment

You will receive a survey package that uses a multisource feedback approach to assess the offer of French language services in your office.

- You will begin by completing a short questionnaire that measures your current offer of French language health services.

- You will provide one of your receptionists (preferably the one who has been working with you the longest) with a similar questionnaire.
- The receptionist in question will also be informed to randomly circulate surveys to 40 patients who visit your practice (with special instructions to try to hand out an equal number to Francophone and Anglophone patients). These patients will both rate the current offer of French-language health services in your office as well as your communication behaviours.

Phase 1 can be completed at your convenience and only requires 10 minutes of your time. Surveys are available in both French and English and can either be completed in paper format or online. A business reply envelope will be provided for each individual survey. This phase will end on **February 28, 2017** and we would ask that you or your receptionist return all collected surveys by this date.

PHASE 2: Education

Once surveys from all participating physicians have been collected, we will move to the education phase. In this phase:

- You will receive a short report that will provide you with **feedback** regarding your individual survey results (including assessments by yourself, your receptionist and your patients). Comparison to average physician scores will also be included, and your individual strengths and areas for improvement will be identified. Therefore, phase 1 will serve as a needs assessment, informing the remainder of the education program which will be tailored to you specifically.
- You will receive **literature** regarding the importance of language in health care delivery that will include information and tools to improve your skills in offering French-language health services and treating French-speaking patients. Specifically you will be provided with the “ACTIVE OFFER INFORMATION TOOLKIT” from the Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l’Ontario. You will also be referred to specific sections of the toolkit that address your areas for improvement.
- You will be invited to participate in a workshop in which barriers to the offer of French language health services in the North will be discussed and you will create an action plan to implement strategies within your practice.
 - These workshops will be held in various communities within the North and represent the only instance travel may be required (if you choose to participate).

PHASE 3: Post-Education and Reflective Activity

A follow-up survey intended to measure changes to the active offer of French-language health services will occur 2-4 months following the education/workshop phase.

- As in phase 1, you will once again receive the questionnaire, while also reflecting on how the education you received has benefited your practice.
- You will also provide your receptionist with the survey package, who will again distribute surveys to patients.
- You will receive a final report summarising results from the education program, including your post-education results in comparison to your pre-education results.

Possible Credits Earned

By participating in this education program, you will have the opportunity to earn a number of *certified* and/or *non-certified* Mainpro+ credits. The number and class (*certified* or *non-certified*) of credits earned will depend on the extent to which you participate in each component of the program. For instance, *non-certified* Mainpro+ credits can be claimed for self-directed learning such as completing and coordinating the survey, reading the literature and reviewing the final reports. For each hour you spend on these self-directed activities, you can claim *non-certified* Mainpro+ credits. You will also be invited to complete a Linking Learning to Assessment and a Linking Learning to Practise exercise following your readings (in the Education phase and Post-education & Reflective phase) which are eligible for 5 *certified* Mainpro+ credits each. Finally, the 2 hour workshop in the Education phase has been certified by the College of Family Physicians of Canada for 4 *certified* group learning Mainpro+ credits. In addition, upon participating in the workshop, all activities in the assessment and education phase will qualify for *certified* group learning credits. Note that you cannot claim both *certified* and *non-certified* credits for the same activity. You do not need to complete all parts of the program and you can choose to only participate in certain parts (for instance, you can fill out the pre and post-education questionnaires without having to do the Linking Learning to Assessment/Practice exercises or the Workshop). Any credits you have earned over the course of the program will be awarded to you regardless of the percentage of the program completed. The following table summarises how multiple credits could be earned:

Activity		Possible Mainpro+ credits earned						
		Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
Assessment Phase	Complete Physician Survey & coordinate Receptionist and Patient surveys	1 Non-certified credit (1 hour)	1 Non-certified credit (1 hour)	1 Non-certified credit (1 hour)	2 Certified credits ¹ (1 hour)			
	Review survey results and read literature		1 Non-certified credit per hour ²	1 Non-certified credit per hour ²	2 Certified ¹ credits per hour ²			
Education Phase	Do Linking Learning to Assessment activity			5 Certified credits	5 Certified credits	5 Certified credits	5 Certified credits	5 Certified credits
	Participate in Workshop ³ & complete Reflective exercise				4 Certified credits	4 Certified credits	4 Certified credits	4 Certified credits
Post-education & Reflective Phase	Complete Physician Survey & coordinate Receptionist and Patient surveys					2 Certified ¹ credits (1 hour)	2 Certified ¹ credits (1 hour)	2 Certified ¹ credits (1 hour)
	Review final report						2 Certified ¹ credits per hour ²	2 Certified ¹ credits per hour ²
	Do Linking Learning to Practice activity							5 Certified credits
Total Mainpro+ credits earned		1 Non-certified	2+ Non-certified	2+ Non-certified 5 Certified	13+ Certified	15+ Certified	17+ Certified	22+ Certified

1. All *Non-certified* self learning credits earned will be eligible for *Certified* group learning credits upon attending the workshop, otherwise they will remain *Non-certified*.
2. These credits are earned on an hourly rate, 1 *non-certified* credit can be claimed for every hour of work.
3. This workshop meets the certification criteria of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and has been approved for 4 Mainpro+ *certified* group learning credits.

The research component

In addition to receiving Mainpro+ credits, by participating in this CEPD program you will also be participating in a unique research study that is seamlessly imbedded within the education program. The surveys in phase 1 will serve as both a needs assessment, used to tailor your education experience, while also being analysed to gain a better understanding of the current state of French-language health services in Northern Ontario and the importance of language on the patient experience. The barriers to offering French-language health services and the action plan developed in the workshop will be qualitatively analysed to inform future educational activities. Finally, results from the post-education phase will both inform you about your progress and be analysed to evaluate the impact of the education program.

You have the right to withdraw from the education program (and in turn the research component) without penalty or consequence. You can also refuse to answer any question on the survey or to refuse participation in any part of the program. As this is a continuing education program, you will only be awarded Mainpro+ credits for the sections completed (as described above), however refusing to answer questions on a survey will not prevent you from earning credits and the credits you have earned will not be compromised should you choose to withdraw from any subsequent part of the program. You can also withdraw from the study while still remaining in the education program simply by making a request to Patrick Timony (PE_Timony@laurentian.ca) to have your data destroyed. Your receptionist and patients will also be informed that they are participating in a research study. Note that the receptionist and patients will have the right to refuse participation, which will not negatively impact your ability to participate in the program or earn credits.

Beyond earning Mainpro+ credits, there are a number of benefits to participating in the program for yourself, your coworkers and your patients. By learning about the importance of offering linguistically appropriate health services; you will be better able to offer patient-centered care to your Francophone patients. The built-in needs assessment in phase 1 will allow the education to be tailored specifically to your needs, which will allow you to gain skills and develop strategies that are directly applicable to your practice. You will also be encouraged to share these skills and strategies with coworkers who will indirectly benefit from your involvement. Finally, your patients will ultimately benefit the most, by receiving quality service in their language of preference.

Though there are no physical or psychological risks to participating in the program, there may be social risks. Some physicians could feel uncomfortable having their patients rate their communication skills for fear that a bad rating could harm their professional image. To reduce this risk, your name will not appear on any research material (e.g. surveys, consent forms); rather a unique ID number will solely identify you. As a result, there is no way for anyone other than the research team to link a particular survey to a physician. Furthermore, the surveys are comprised mainly of close-ended multiple choice questions and give very little opportunities for respondents to elaborate on issues they may have with their physician. Thus, no professionally damaging information will be collected.

Any and all data you provide will be stored in the strictest of confidence. All paper questionnaires will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, within a locked office of an access-controlled building at Laurentian University. All electronic data, including web-based versions of the questionnaires, will be stored on CRaNHR's secure server that is protected by the security protocols of Laurentian University Computer Services. Only researchers who are working on the study and have signed non-disclosure agreements will have access to the data. Your data will

also be stored anonymously without any identifiable information. Your data will be identified by a unique ID code and only the lead researchers will be able to link your data back to you. Given that the information learned from this study will be used to inform future educational initiatives, your data will remain securely stored on CRaNHR's server indefinitely and could be used for future research purposes.

If you have any further questions about the education program or the built-in research components, please contact:

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You can also contact the **Research Ethics Officer** at Laurentian University regarding possible ethical issues or complaints about the research itself at 705-675-1151 ext. 3213 or 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email ethics@laurentian.ca.

