

Advice for Health Canada

A strategic new committee has been established to advise Health Canada on the health and social services needs of English-speaking communities (ESCs) in Quebec. Its key role is to present the ESCs' development priorities to the Department for consideration in its funding strategy. It will thus assist in preparing the successor program of the current Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, which ends in March 2013.

This Health and Social Services Priorities Committee (HSSPC) was set up by Quebec's 19 anglophone health networks. The committee's 11 members have been selected according to regional representation; it includes one appointee from the CHSSN board (see page 8).

"The HSSPC is a significant new link at the community/federal level," says **Jim Carter**, CHSSN policy and program advisor. "Firstly, this body will help guide our communities into a new contribution program with Health Canada. And it will interface with the ESCs through an annual forum to report on progress made towards improving our community vitality."

The HSSPC succeeds an earlier committee created by Health Canada in 2000, which completed its mandate in 2007. The HSSPC will hold its inaugural meeting on December 11, with Health Canada representatives in attendance. ■

Government report revealing

A new study released by the L'Institute nationale de la santé du Québec (INSPQ) raises a host of questions about the future health and wellbeing of English-speaking Quebecers. The Socioeconomic Status of Anglophone Quebecers is part of a wide-ranging INSPQ project to study the health status of Quebec anglophones. It examines their socioeconomic situation over time, by geographic area, and in comparison with francophones.

"The two dimensions most often used in health studies to estimate socioeconomic status are education level and income," says **Normand Trempe**, project director. "In any society in the world, we've seen that if there is a big gap between rich and poor, the poor have worse health. The situation of anglophones in Quebec illustrates that."

Using a different methodology than was used before, INSPQ fine-tuned data from four census years, 1991 through 2006, with a special statistical indicator called the Gini Coefficient. "To our surprise," says Trempe, "we found the gap between poor and rich anglophones was much bigger than had previously been calculated. And it was much bigger than the gap among francophones. This information will allow us to more accurately compare health expectancies. That's not been done before."

"The data show that something was happening over those 20 years,"

says Trempe. "Francophones have been moving steadily up the socioeconomic ladder, but by 2006 anglophone populations were really in decline. That's one aspect that's really important in trying to imagine the situation 20 years from now."

Montreal is a special case

Three of four anglophones live in the greater Montreal region so its results are more pronounced. They are marked by contradictions: despite higher levels of university education, anglophones register higher unemployment rates than francophones; and despite higher average incomes overall, they are proportionally more likely to live in poverty. There are still groups of rich anglophones, but the number of poor continues to grow.

"We're working on mortality and natality rates now," says Trempe. "There's a time lag before changes in socioeconomic status start impacting on health, so we can only speculate on the future effects of this economic deterioration on the health of Quebec anglophones."

"This government study is very important," says **Jennifer Johnson**, executive director of the CHSSN, "in that it corroborates what we've been saying for years: there are anomalies that make our community unique and require that its needs be considered differently from the majority community." ■

(Full report available at: www.chssn.org.)

Guru gives advice to network leaders

Margaret Wheatley, internationally known organizational theorist, leadership futurist, writer and teacher, was guest expert at a Skype session with NPI members at their annual retreat in September. Topic of the discussion was Wheatley's 10 principles for creating healthy communities. Wheatley responded to questions from attendees on issues affecting their communities:

What do you do when partners don't live up to their commitments and you get mediocre results?

"That's not an uncommon issue. You need to be very clear at the outset; have frequent meetings to assess the situation as you go along. Don't leave anything to chance. And hold them to their agreement."

How do you change the conversation when working with difficult people in a small community?

"Don't hold a conversation with someone whom you know is negative. Work with the people who are allies, and control the structure of the discussion. But do spend time with that difficult person because you have to think more strategically with people who are not able to participate in a discussion."

How do you get others to do work?

"People want leaders today, and keep pushing back responsibilities to them. But it won't work with one leader doing everything. Decision makers become isolated because they are on their own. You have to work with others to determine what skill sets are needed, how to develop them and how to keep people onboard. And make this formal; don't leave it to chance."

Ten principles for creating healthy communities

- People support what they create
- People act responsibly when they care
- Conversation is a legitimate problem solving process
- To change the conversation, change who is in it
- Leadership can come from anywhere
- Focus on what works
- The wisdom to solve our problems is within us
- We can learn a lot when things are not going well
- Human relationships are the key to resolving issues
- Be generous, forgiving and kind to one another

How do you re-engage people who have given up?

"In our current environment, when problems arise, people walk away. Perseverance and discipline are lacking. People are narcissistic. So you need to come together regularly to anticipate problems and to solve each problem the moment it comes up. Explore what's wrong and what works. Speak truthfully."

How do you deal with people who are territorial?

"You should create a group for self-protection. Give them a piece of work to do, and encourage them

to be part of the group's thinking. The wisest decisions always come from collective intelligence."

How do you know when to walk away?

"We have to notice if we're in a situation that is shrinking us, when we know that we can be better. But often we don't see ourselves that we're deteriorating, so we should ask family or friends for their observation. It's also very effective to look ahead one year and ask yourself if the situation will be better or worse. If you can't change things for the better, be ready to walk out."

How do you prevent burnout?

"That's the question of our time! Our work/life balance is way off. When does the workday end? It's imperative that we say 'no more' to that game of having to be constantly on call. Draw the line for your own mental health and wellbeing. Take time to find your inner peace and you'll be much more effective. In a world going crazy, you can become the peaceful centre in the storm."

How do you move partners from the getting-to-know-you phase to the what-we-can-do-together phase?

"First of all, know where you want to go and then shift the group into a now-we're-together-what-might-be-possible phase. We used to start with a 'vision', with one big project at the beginning, but that's not really effective. Start with reality-based issues, and start thinking small, with one small project. Success will lead to success with an incremental approach." ■

Newest networks making their mark

Three new community networks that have recently become part of the CHSSN family bring the total number of networks (NPIs) formed across the province since 2003 to 19. Bordering the greater Montreal area, their English-speaking communities share many socio-demographic characteristics with that in the metropolitan region, but each has its own intrinsic challenges. Still at various stages of development, they share a common goal: to lead successful local partnerships that improve access to health and social services for their English-speaking community.

Vaudreuil-Soulanges

Showing an awareness and community concern not usually associated with public institutions, it was the Vaudreuil-Soulanges CSSS that two years ago spearheaded creation of network partnerships to address the health needs of anglophones in that region. That network initiative is now sponsored by one of the original partners, the Corporation de développement communautaire de Vaudreuil-Soulanges (CDC V-S).

“There are over 30,000 English-speakers in our territory,” says **Geneviève Leduc**, coordinator, “and they account for 25 percent of the total population. We’re the only MRC in the Montérégie that has seen an increase in people under 35, so youth and families are an important part of our planning.”

In the short term, network members have launched three health promotion programs aimed at the younger generation. There is a self-awareness program for children in grade 6 designed to help them make

the transition to high school. Another provides counseling to adolescents on making right choices, particularly concerning substance abuse. Self-esteem workshops are helping girls aged 9 to 12 avoid deleterious living habits.

“For the long term,” says Leduc, “we need to tackle the rising issues of chronic disease, people with loss of autonomy, and growing numbers of immigrants. And with increasing numbers of children, there’s a problem in getting treatment for intellectual and physical disabilities. There were direct corridors for accessing such specialized services in Montreal, but funding has been cut to those programs, so we have to find other solutions.”

ARC South Shore

The new Assistance and Referral Centre (ARC) South Shore officially became an NPI in September. “There are many good organizations in the Montérégie area,” says **Colin Coole**, executive director, “but there’s been no one focal point that could coordinate the healthcare interests of the 76,000 English-speakers that live in the territory.”

The region’s historic anglophone base is steadily shrinking, replaced with a rapidly growing population of immigrants having English as a second language who are seeking health and social services in English.

“We are in an essentially French territory,” says Coole, “so there are no designated institutions here. My background involves many years of working with and for key players in

the public system. That has given me a good degree of access and an advantage when asking institutions to make voluntary provisions for services that address the community’s needs. So we are making good progress.”

LaSalle

LaSalle has over 57,000 English-speakers, 35 percent of whom are visible minorities. It has the highest concentration of Black anglophones in the Montreal region, half of whom live in single parent families and 35 percent of whom live in poverty.

CCS, sponsor of the fledgling NPI in LaSalle, organized a first meeting of potential partners in September, followed by a forum in November at which some 20 key stakeholders emerged.

“They’re getting to know each other now,” says coordinator **Luigi Morabito**. “This is a very disparate territory, with no real history of cooperation among organizations. We’re guiding them to see how beneficial it would be for them to join forces on issues or projects.”

There has been one important breakthrough for the new NPI. The local CSSS has requested to meet with network partners to describe services that are available to youth and families and to seniors.

“It’s taken nearly two years to get this far,” says Morabito. “It will be at least another two for it to be fully swinging. But we’ve broken the ice; I know it will work.” ■

Laval paints portrait

In its project to promote community development in six Quebec anglophone communities, l'Institut nationale de santé publique du Québec has focused first on drawing up comprehensive portraits of the selected sites. The largest is Laval, with the fastest growing English-speaking population in the province. Over 300 Lavalois have participated in public consultations to discuss concerns for their future.

"It was interesting to note which discussion themes attracted the most people," says **Luigi Morabito**, Laval NPI coordinator. "Each time it was health and social services, especially as they applied to seniors and youth special needs."

Among the issues raised at the consultations was the overall lack of healthcare information and services in English. There was concern about frequent misunderstandings that can have long-term impacts. This was of particular concern for unilingual seniors, because few long-term residences offer services in English.

On the positive side, attendees commended the effort that many public employees made to speak English. "And they came up with some solutions," says Morabito. "We need to sensitize healthcare workers to what anglophones need, and publicize available services."

Students from Concordia's Department of Applied Human Sciences coordinated activities at the forums. They are preparing a report that will identify priorities for action. "I'll be taking that report back to the network partners in early 2013," says Morabito. ■

4 Korner satellite open its doors

4 Korner Family and Resource Centre opened its first satellite office, in Ste-Agathe-des-Monts, in September. This move was made possible through collaboration with the local English Communities Committee, long active in the region, and the CSSS des Sommets, that is providing the space.

"We're lucky to have an onsite coordinator from the region," says **Rola Helou**, executive director. "**Kim Nymark** is our point person there who, as well as administering the office and its referral function, will be out in the community making our presence known."

The goal is to find out what are the real needs of some 3,000 anglo-

phones residing in the Ste-Agathe region – as well as those of the thousands of weekenders and tourists. "To our knowledge," says Helou, "services in English are minimal. When we determine what needs are not being met, we'll move to fill the gaps."

News of the new office has been spreading quickly. "We've had really good response," says Helou. "We've received inquiries from the public as well from the local MP offering support, from the regional community development table inviting us to join, from organizers of a forum on child neglect. I'm very excited about the feedback we've already received. I'm already imagining other satellites." ■

A Heritage summer

Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence enjoyed an event-full summer. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the occasion was marked by the opening of an important new community centre and the staging of a circus gala to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the renowned Reford Gardens.

The new Heritage Cultural Resource Centre and Library in Métis-sur-Mer was inaugurated on June 22 by the Official Languages Commissioner **Graham Fraser**. The centre boasts the first bilingual library in the region, a reflection of the bicultural approach Heritage has established in the community.

"One of our main mandates is to build bridges across the divisions of history and language," says **Lisan**

Chng, executive director, "and this centre certainly does that. We had a lot of cooperation and support from our francophone neighbours in getting it established. And we're continuing to operate in that bicultural spirit by offering all our activities to the whole community."

The centre is offering reading programs for youth, workshops on adolescent issues, inter-generational literacy workshops and seniors activities. The centre will be the focal point for health promotion activities and will enable Heritage to reach the region's broader English-speaking community as well.

"We want to bring children in from the Lower Saint Lawrence," says Chng. "We just have to solve the transportation problem." ■

GG comes to town

September 18 was a royal day in Rouyn-Noranda when **David Johnston**, Governor-General of Canada, came to call on Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn-Noranda. He was touring Canada's minority language communities and requested to visit this remote anglophone community in Quebec.

"What made this visit interesting for him was the active participation of our francophone partners," says **Sharleen Sullivan**, Neighbours executive director. "It was they who presented the joint projects we were involved in and who cited the value of our working together on issues that affect both linguistic communities. They described our health promotion campaigns, the seniors program, our support for homecare providers, youth sports, and the bilingual concert we had organized together."

Sullivan explained that while there are nearly a million English-speakers in Quebec, small communities such as hers are under significant stress and must continuously work at ensuring their future. And that the loss of English communities in Quebec – especially those located outside the Montreal region – would be a great loss to Canada and its core value of linguistic duality. "I also emphasized the importance of the federal role in our survival," says Sullivan.

"I mentioned, too, the small irritations of daily life," says Sullivan, "like not having access to English books or movies. The Governor-General seemed to be very impressed with our work. It was a wonderful occasion for us." ■

Nannies give mothers a break

New mothers in the Gaspé region can enjoy some moments of rest, thanks to a new program run by Vision Gaspé Percé Now. Super Nanny Arrives matches parents of a child under one year with retired grandmothers who love children.

"It's designed to support families in the trying post-natal period," explains **Jessica Synott**, program coordinator. "Many young mothers, particularly those with other young children, are often very much in need of respite from the stress of tending to newborns. Our nannies do that. They also help the young mothers develop parenting skills."

In addition to their personal experience, nannies receive up-to-date

training from a perinatal nurse at the CLSC. Each provides care for up to three hours a week, for up to six weeks. The service is available in both French and English.

"We now have five nannies on call and six more ready for training," says Synott. "So far it's francophone mothers who have called, and three of those got anglophone nannies. They all communicated in their own way and it worked out really well."

"Business is a little slow right now," says Synott, "but it's due to pick up soon. We're not counting numbers for success, though. If we can help a new mother avoid burnout or postpartum depression, then it's worth the effort." ■

Interns move into the community

Matching health and social services students with community organizations can create a win-win situation for both parties. The East Island Network for English-language Services (REISA) is proving it so with its new internship program, launched last April.

"It's a new way of thinking," affirms **Ghislaine Prata**, REISA consultant. "I always felt we had to develop the community sector as a placement opportunity. Now, with REISA's program, I can see what a fantastic opportunity it is for community organizations to have the extra help, and for students to get valuable experience that they can carry into their professional lives."

Eleven interns studying in dietetics and nutrition, special care

counseling, and social work are currently serving and learning at agencies in Montreal's East End. Plans are under way to expand their numbers next year. "This program is going so well that we're now discussing internships with the local CSSSs," says Prata. "And we also recently partnered with the Montreal Health and Social Services Agency at a career fair to promote careers in the healthcare field among English-speaking and bilingual youth."

REISA has also received a grant from the placement program sponsor, the McGill Training and Retention of Health Professionals project, for a student to train as an addiction counselor. The student will intern at Toxic-Stop, a REISA partner, and work there for three years after getting her certification. ■

Caregiver support program gets more support

The Megantic Community Development Corporation (MCDC) has received some special funding to expand its caregivers support program. It comes through the L'APPUI pour les proches-aidants program, sponsored jointly by the provincial government and the Chagnon family foundation.

“The wonderful part of this exercise,” says **Suzanne Aubre**, MCDC executive director, “is that we applied in partnership with two local francophone organizations. We each outlined objectives for our own community, but under one umbrella. We got the full amount we asked for, \$11,500 a year for three years.”

MCDC has been offering services to caregivers for many years. It created a caregivers support group

while its specially trained volunteers offer respite. It provides documents in English, holds training workshops to inform caregivers about the legal aspects of caregiving, and coaches them on how to avoid burnout.

“Caregivers in our community never, never ask for help,” says Aubre. “So we started looking at ways to bring help to them. We’re such a small community, we know who’s sick, and so we developed a personal approach. We decided to call them and offer help directly. We visited to see what was needed, and liaised between them and service providers. The response was immediate and worked wonders. We knew we’d struck gold!

“Our new funding will go to expanding the existing program,”

Aubre explains. “We’re working now on a new concept with the CLSC day centre. Our unilingual anglophone seniors don’t go to its activities because everything is done in French. We’ve proposed providing a volunteer interpreter to accompany them so that their caregivers will have a whole day of respite. And the CLSC has strongly endorsed that idea.

“L'APPUI is such a wonderful program, says Aubre, “that I’d like to see other English-speaking communities take advantage of the opportunity. It’s important to note that funding offers are generally made on a regional basis, so anglophone organizations might not be contacted directly because they are not on the radar. They should inquire locally about applying.” ■

Batshaw case to the Supreme Court

The City of Dorval has gone to the Supreme Court of Canada in its continuing attempt to block expansion of the Batshaw Youth and Family Services facility in that city. In August, the Quebec Court of Appeal had unanimously upheld a lower court decision to allow Batshaw to add two closed-custody units in Dorval to accommodate youth from its Prévost campus. A decision on whether the case will be heard in Ottawa is expected within six months.

“This new roadblock means that adolescents will continue to live in century-old buildings that are no longer suited to their needs,” says **Leigh Johnston**, interim director of Batshaw’s Residential Services. “In

Dorval, they would have closer access to their families, to alternative education, to job possibilities. We could more effectively help them re-integrate into society.

“The people protesting our plan say that they want to protect their community,” continues Johnston. “Apparently they don’t want to help children who have fallen by the wayside. That’s very discouraging.”

Batshaw’s aim is to consolidate residential operations onto two sites, in Dorval, and on another property in Beaconsfield. They are currently scattered across five sites, a situation Batshaw contends complicates the provision of services and adds to the workload of its professional staff. ■

New centres a first

Some older anglophones in the Magdalene Islands are now enjoying the amenities provided by two new wellness centres. Located on Grosse Île and Entry Island, the centres are the first for the Islands’ English-speaking population.

“There are only around 800 English-speakers in the region,” says **Candice Aitkens**, NPI coordinator. “So the actual number of seniors is not high. But the centres are very important to them in breaking their isolation.”

The centres offer a range of health promotion activities such as healthcare information, physical activities, mind stimulating games, and collective kitchen sessions. ■

Food for thought

Montreal's Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors has introduced a novel way of helping mentally-ill clients to improve their lives. It's a simple, effective, program that could be adapted by other organizations.

"We get them interested in food," says **Noga Yudelevitch**, designer of the program. "I've always believed that cooking can be therapeutic; we're proving it with our new workshops. We can see how learning simple cooking skills gives these people a sense of control over one aspect of their lives."

The program is designed for people with mental illness who are cognitively functional but not equipped to look after themselves efficiently. Most of the Cummings participants live alone, most are very poor, and have to manage food on their own. But with a long history of illness, many never learned to cook.

The cooking program began in May, with 70 participants. A professional chef teaches basic recipes, the planning of nutritious meals, budgeting and shopping. A professional therapist is always present to guide discussion.

"We sit and eat as a family," says Yudelevitch. "It's a new kind of social occasion for them, and they're picking up on that. Some have started entertaining guests for the first time in their lives."

"Other organizations could easily adopt this program," Yudelevitch says. "You don't need a chef, but a professional therapist must be present who knows the people. If not, it's just another cooking class." ■

AGAPE chosen for pilot

The Youth and Parents AGAPE Association has been selected to do a trial run of an internationally known psychotherapy program for children suffering abnormal reactions to separation. Results will determine if the program will then be introduced in French in Quebec.

"The program is called Circles of Security," explains **Ian Williams**, coordinator. "It's an American-registered treatment procedure that re-enforces the parent/child bond. It's an amazing program that's being used with very successful results around the world."

AGAPE became involved in the pilot project because the Université

de Sherbrooke was interested in evaluating the program in a Quebec context. But all the material is in English, so researchers approached the Laval CSSS to suggest an anglophone organization that could recruit English-speaking families to participate.

"We're very happy about that," says Williams. "It's a very worthy program, so we're pleased to get our families involved. And it also illustrates how past collaboration with our network public partner is paying off."

If the pilot proves successful, AGAPE will broaden the program to add more anglophone families. ■

Anglophone youth en forme

Young anglophones in the Quebec capital region are going to be boosted into practicing a more healthy lifestyle. Jeffrey Hale Community Partners (JHCP) has received a government grant to establish a 'Quebec en forme' program. This program, which aims to encourage and establish healthy lifestyles among young people, has long been in French schools across the province. This is the first time that an English-speaking community in the capital region has been designated for participation.

"There's been very little hard information gathered on the health-related habits of our youth," says **Annebelle Cloutier**, launch coordinator. "We do know that, overall, they don't get enough physical activity and that smoking is a problem in our high schools. We

intend to add to our knowledge and address the most pressing issues."

JHCP spearheaded the project, and brought onboard other partners from the school and community milieu to make a joint application for funding. Their first priorities now are to draw up a portrait of present needs, to sensitize families to healthy living, and to start promoting physical activity and healthier eating.

"Ten schools in the greater Quebec region will be targeted," says Cloutier. "We'll be getting youth directly involved in planning and organizing activities and will be implementing the first phase this fall. We received a three-year grant to set up the pilot. If it proves effective, funding could be extended indefinitely." ■

Goldbloom Awards

The Quebec Community Groups Network has cited three members of the province's English-speaking community for the 2012 Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Award.

The Honourable **David W. Angus**, retired Senator and former chair of the board of the McGill University Hospital Centre, was cited for his generosity as a benefactor and supporter of community institutions. **Gretta Chambers**, former Chancellor of McGill University, is widely-known for her work in journalism, public affairs and the educational field. She headed up a major provincial task force on the state of the English language in Quebec and chaired the Advisory Board on Education for 15 years. Noted for his life-long work among community groups in the Montreal area, Father **John Walsh** is widely respected for his efforts to bridge religious and cultural divisions in Quebec society. ■

OBM brings them in

The Old Brewery Mission's newly-opened Café Mission in Montreal is attracting over 100 homeless visitors a day, with counselors on hand to assist with employment and housing problems. In the evening, the café is used as a second cafeteria, allowing more clients to be served without having to wait in line outdoors.

"For 123 years, we've wanted to get rid of the humiliation and discomfort of waiting in public for an evening meal," says **Matthew Pearce**, executive director. ■

For suicide prevention

AMI-Quebec is offering suicide prevention training for professionals practicing outside the Greater Montreal area. A three-day training session will be offered via teleconferencing over a period of two consecutive weeks. The training will be provided by Suicide Action Montreal, noted for its expertise in the field.

"We've been doing outreach on many other aspects of mental illness to groups across the province," says **Ella Amir**, AMI executive director. "We thought it was time to offer professionals without access to the most up-to-date information some assistance in dealing effectively with this problem."

The courses (including training materials) cost \$160 per participant, and will be offered during January. For information: 1 877 303 0264. ■

Members of the new HSS Priorities Committee

Leslie Alleyne
Suzanne Aubre
Kathy Brown
Helena Burke
Colin Coole
Benita Goldin
Fatiha Guemiri
Shannon Keenan
Jody Lessard
Danielle Lanyi
Luigi Morabito

CHSSN new board members

Don Bourgouin: Gaspé
Kevin Drysdale: Outaouais

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The CHSSN

The Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) is a network of community resources, associations and public institutions dedicated to the development of health and social services for English-speaking communities in Quebec.

The CHSSN's objectives are to:

- Foster projects and initiatives, through partnership and network building, to promote access to English-language health and social services, and support community vitality
- Create new knowledge and provide information on English-language communities and their needs
- Promote, evaluate and disseminate successful models of organization of services
- Promote informed public policy supporting the vitality of English-speaking communities
- Support conferences and other forms of consultation on health and social services for English-speaking communities

For more information on the CHSSN, visit the website or contact us at:

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