

COMMUNITY  
NetLink

NEWS FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK



AUTUMN 2023 | VOLUME 39

- + Caring for Young Carers P2

---

- + Launch of the 2023 edition of the Community Mobilization Model P3

---

- + Mental Health Commission of Canada P4

---

- + Regions Equipped with CHSSN Survey Results P5

---

- + CHSSN Briefs Posted Online P5

---

- + NPIs Come Together for an Annual Knowledge Exchange Event P5

---

- + Welcoming Three New Staff Members in 2023 P7

---

- + From Advocates to Actors in the Public Health System P7

---

- + Analyzing the 2021 Census Data P8

(Left) Connie Jacques, Présidente-directrice générale adjointe du CISSS de la Gaspésie at CHSSN's annual knowledge exchange event this past fall.

# Connie Jacques:

## A Champion Within the System

The Présidente-directrice générale adjointe of the CISSS de la Gaspésie, Connie Jacques, was invited to the latest CHSSN knowledge exchange event and presented to over 60 participants her perspectives and approaches in delivering health and social services to the English-speaking population of the Gaspésie.

Having significant anglophone and First Nations communities on her territory, she cited many occasions when the challenge of serving her entire population and not forgetting about these important minority populations had become clear to her.

She noted the significant contribution through partnership that




## Connie Jacques continued...


community organizations such as CAMI, CASA and VISION have made, helping the CISSS adapt services in English and reaching an isolated clientele.

She also encouraged NPI organizations from around the province to get known within their CISSS/CIUSSS by participating on various committees and building relationships with the heads of service departments.

“Get known so you’re not forgotten!” was Jacques’ important message, heard by all.

“Connie has become a well-known advocate and champion within the health and social services system in Québec and her CISSS has been an excellent example of how to serve an English-speaking clientele,” said Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director of the CHSSN, following the presentation. 




CHSSN’s Amy Bilodeau and Jenn Cooke along with participants from 4 Korner, MEPEC, AMI Quebec, LEARN, and Y4Y Québec. 



# Caring for Young Carers

Amy Bilodeau, Program Manager for the Youth Mental Health Initiative and Jenn Cooke, Montreal Development Agent and representatives of organisations from CHSSN’s Youth Mental Health Initiative (4 Korner, MEPEC, LEARN and Y4Y Québec) participated at the Young Carers Conference hosted by AMI Quebec.

“Many children under the age of 18 are drawn into unpaid caring roles because they live in families where there is chronic illness, mental health problems or substance misuse, and because other alternatives are not available. Many of these children, widely referred to as ‘young carers’, provide regular and significant amounts of care, often ‘hidden’ because of the absence of awareness by professionals in the fields of education, health and social care..” said Dr. Saul Becker, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex and a keynote speaker at the conference. “While there are some positive outcomes for children, published research also shows that children’s caring tasks can have negative outcomes, especially during the transition between school and further/higher education and paid work.”

“According to the 2018 General Social Survey on Caregiving and Care Receiving, about 19% (1.25 million) of youth aged 15 to 25 provided care or help to family members or friends with a long-term condition, a physical or mental disability, or problems related to aging,” said Oliver Fitzpatrick, Young Carers Coordinator at AMI Quebec, in response. “Globally several studies have found that caregiving starts as young as 6 and that on average 10% of all youth are caregivers in need of our help.” 

A short video on the situation of young carers is [linked here](#).



This document can be downloaded at [chssn.org/document-category/frameworks/](https://chssn.org/document-category/frameworks/)



# Launch of the 2023 edition of the Community Mobilization Model

The community mobilization model is an inspiring collective vision for change. It recognizes the important role community organizations/networks play in improving the health and well-being of vulnerable English-speakers in their regions. Built on twenty years of experience, the model identifies key strategies, practices and values that have proven to be effective.

The original version of the Community Mobilization Model was published in 2012 by the CHSSN in collaboration with the Institut national de santé publique du Québec (INSPQ). The 2023 edition was recently launched at an exchange event with organizations participating in the Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI). <sup>1</sup>

# Mental Health Commission of Canada



CHSSN presented a report on the mental health needs of English-speaking Quebecers to then Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Carolyn Bennett on May 5, 2023.

That presentation resulted in a decision by the Mental Health Commission of Canada to bring its entire Board of Directors and senior staff to Quebec City for an in-depth briefing and discussion of the mental health needs and the services available for English-speaking Quebecers.

“It was a great opportunity for our organizations to get to know each other better,” explained Jennifer Johnson, Executive Director of CHSSN. “We’ve been using resources created by the Commission for many years but I quickly realized that the situation of our official language minority communities was not well-known to them and they were genuinely surprised to hear about the needs and the lack of services with respect to mental health.”

The Commission representatives toured the Jeffery Hale site in Quebec City and then invited Johnson to attend a meeting with Lionel Carmant, *Ministre responsable des Services sociaux*.

“It was their first visit to Quebec City and I think they were a bit shocked to learn about the demographics of our communities across the province,” concluded Johnson, “particularly the high unemployment and poverty levels with their inevitable impact on mental health. Interestingly, they said it was a similar profile to francophone communities outside Quebec.”

Learn more about the Mental Health Commission of Canada at [mentalhealthcommission.ca](https://mentalhealthcommission.ca)



◀ (Top Left) The MHCC delegation with Jennifer Johnson from CHSSN in Quebec City. (Bottom Left) Jennifer Johnson briefs the delegation.

# Regions Equipped with CHSSN Survey Results

CHSSN and the CROP polling firm collaborated to implement a provincial survey of 4,000 English-speaking respondents regarding their satisfaction with English-language health and social services offered in their region. The survey touched on the satisfaction of a variety of services such as CLSCs, private clinics, Info-Santé and Info-Social, overnight stays at a hospital, emergency services and mental health. <sup>1</sup>

The provincial survey results can be downloaded at [chssn.org/documents/crop-english-language-health-and-social-services-access-in-quebec/](https://chssn.org/documents/crop-english-language-health-and-social-services-access-in-quebec/)

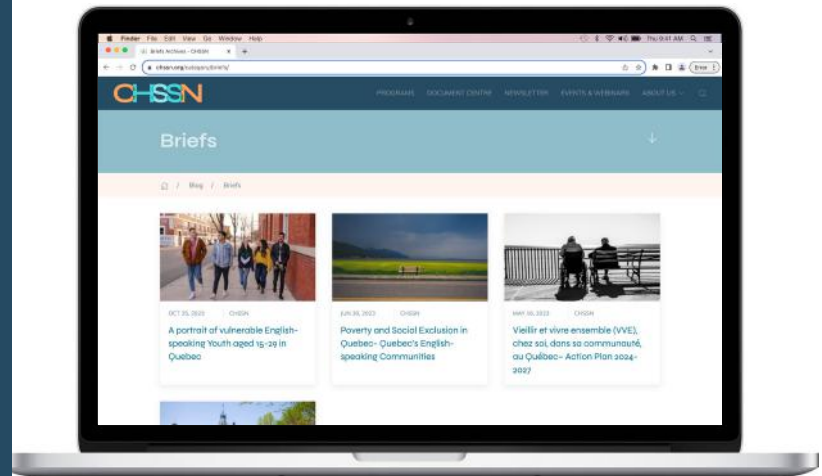
In a 2023 survey of over **4000 English-speaking** Quebecers.

**33%** of respondents indicate not being served in English at a CLSC.

**27%** of these respondents asked for services in English but were denied.

**66%** of respondents report having a negative experience with regards to medical procedures at a hospital.

**91%** of the English-speakers who had been served in their language when they dealt with a mental health professional thought that it was very important to have obtained the service in English.



## CHSSN Briefs Posted Online

CHSSN continues its policy, representation and communications work with government officials on important issues related to the health and well-being of the English-speaking population.

Several months back, the CHSSN submitted a brief to the Québec government on the potential impact of Bill 15 relating to key provisions of existing legislative guarantees for health and social services in English.

A brief reacting to a new government Action Plan to improve the situation of individuals and families living in poverty and social exclusion in Quebec was also prepared and submitted earlier this year.

A recent CHSSN response to the *Vieillir et vivre ensemble (VVE), chez soi, dans sa communauté, au Québec — Action Plan 2024–2027* is yet another recent example of how influencing policy has been a constant focus at CHSSN.

The latest CHSSN brief to be released was a response to the Quebec government's *Politique québécoise de la jeunesse 2030* and focused primarily on issues relating to the mental health status of English-speaking youth and the lack of available mental health services in English. <sup>2</sup>

These briefs are posted on the CHSSN blog: [chssn.org/category/briefs](https://chssn.org/category/briefs)



# NPIs Come Together

## for an Annual Knowledge Exchange Event

This past fall, approximately 60 individuals participating in the Networking and Partnership Initiative (NPI) funded through Health Canada participated in an annual knowledge exchange event.

In addition to sharing promising practices between NPIs related to improving access to health and social services in the English-language in their region, special guests provided information related to Info-Santé and Info-Social (811) and Interpretation Services.

“It’s so important to have face-to-face events like this as it builds important relationships and increases knowledge sharing during the year between NPIs working in their regions,” says Russell Kueber, Director of Programs for the CHSSN. “It was nice to have representatives from Health Canada at this event. They got to see and hear first-hand the successes and challenges of the NPIs.”



**(Top)** The participants at this year’s annual NPI Knowledge Exchange Event. **(Left)** An NPI development recognition award handed out to Chloée Alary from 4Korners. Other award winners were Ushana Houston from ACDPN for NPI development; Brian Gignac from MCDC for mentoring; and ARC for excellence in administration.



Danica Logan



Flora Janos



Julie Lemieux

## Welcoming Three New Staff Members in 2023

The CHSSN has hired three new staff members in the past year.

Julie Lemieux has replaced Pascale Guilbault as Financial Manager, Danica Logan has replaced Nathalie Lokoka as Project Coordinator for Adaptation and Mental Health and Flora Janos is the most recent staff member hired as Administrative Assistant.

Welcome all three to the CHSSN team!

# From Advocates to Actors in the Public Health System

He doesn't sport a grey beard and his enthusiasm and energy belies more than three decades as the Executive Director of Jeffery Hale Community Partners (a member association of CHSSN), but Richard Walling is truly one of the elder statesmen of English-speaking community vitality efforts in Quebec City and a founding visionary of CHSSN.

"When I started here in March, 1991, in this very same office," he observes, laughing, "I was all by myself. Across our programming now, we have more than 80 staff members and dozens and dozens of volunteers."

Walling describes the basic focus of Jeffery Hale Community Partners (JHCP) as "continuously expanding our reach to the most vulnerable to better the health and wellness of the English-speaking community of the Greater Québec City region, including Portneuf and Charlevoix." JHCP has a particular focus on the needs of seniors, of families, and of people needing support with mental health. A complete account of JHCP's extensive programming is available at its websites — [jhpartners.net](http://jhpartners.net) and [wejh.ca](http://wejh.ca).

"We worked out a lot of our core approach as the Holland Centre, an innovative, community-focused public health service that we started with support from the McConnell Foundation and local foundation money," remembers Walling. "We took the learnings (and many of the staff and volunteers) from that very successful project, piloted in

(Below, L to R) Jennifer Johnson, Richard Walling and Louis Hanrahan, founders of the Holland Centre



Quebec City and then in Thetford Mines, and transferred them to the founding of CHSSN in 2020."

The core approaches of focusing on the most vulnerable, building a robust evidence base of needs within the community, evaluating programming that exists in the public system in French if not in English, then partnering with the public system to adapt or develop effective responses to demonstrated needs has been at the heart of CHSSN growth and the sustained excellence of JHCP itself.

Walling describes JHCP as "the bridge to public health and social services in English in Quebec City."

"We have seen tremendous growth since the 1990's," agrees Walling. "We started in advocacy but we've become actors in the system. Our ability to articulate the needs of our community with a real evidence base — numbers not just anecdotes — and our flexibility in finding innovative solutions get us to the table where decisions are made. Our public partners know we're there and that we can be trusted."

# Analyzing the 2021 Census Data

CHSSN demographer,  
Dr. Joanne Pocock. ▶



**Q. JOANNE, YOU'VE BEEN ANALYZING CENSUS DATA FOR CHSSN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS; WHAT STANDS OUT TO YOU IN THESE LATEST NUMBERS IN TERMS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION OF ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC?**

**A.** It is worth noting that according to the 2021 census, the English-speaking population of Quebec grew in the 2016–2021 period, increasing from 1.1M to 1.25M. In 2021, English speakers represented a robust **14.9%** of the Quebec population. This growth was experienced in every age category with the 25–44 years age group showing the highest level of growth in terms of absolute numbers. I would speculate that this is due to a rise in newcomers from outside the province and Canada.

Another notable characteristic continues to be the sustained level of English-French bilingualism among Quebec's language minority communities. In 2021, **64.4%** of English speakers living in Quebec were bilingual compared to **43.7%** of French speakers.

**Q. IN THE PAST, WE'VE WATCHED UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY (LICO) RATES AS INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY STRESS POINTS AND CHALLENGES; WHAT DOES THE LATEST ANALYSIS SAY ABOUT THESE TWO KEY ISSUES?**

**A.** While Quebec's English-speaking population has grown, so too have the economic inequalities we have tracked over the years. This is, of course, very troubling for an organization like CHSSN as socio-economic status is widely accepted around the world as a key social determinant of the health of individuals and communities.

According to the 2021 Census, 269,805 of Quebec's English speakers (15+) live on an annual income of less than \$20,000. This represents **25.7%** of this population which is a much higher proportion of low-income earners than observed in the French-speaking majority (**19.9%**) sharing the same territory. The 2023 report of the Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) using the 2021 census tells us that English speakers are more likely to have precarious employment such as work in a temporary position or work involving fewer average weeks. They are more likely to work part-time compared to French speakers.

With respect to unemployment, the rate was high in 2016 for English-speaking Quebec at **8.9%**. According to 2021 census, it is now **10.9%**. To compare, it was **6.9%** for French speakers in 2016 and is still **6.9%** in 2021.

In 2016, a couple of Quebec regions (Bas-St-Laurent and Saguenay Lac St. Jean) indicated lower rates of unemployment for English speakers compared to Francophones. In 2021, the unemployment rate for English speakers is higher in every Quebec region.

Looking at the 25–44 age group, we see that the gap between Anglophones and Francophones has increased. In 2016, English speakers in this age cohort had a rate of **8.5%** while for French speakers it was **5.7%**. In 2021, it is **9.8%** among English speakers aged 25–44 and **5.2%** among French speakers the same age. No doubt, in 2023 this inequality is already impacting the health of the young families and children that CHSSN, and their networks, work with. Clearly, this younger half of the English-speaking population is not faring as well as their seniors were at the same age.

When it comes to LICO, for both the minority and majority language group living in Quebec, the tendency to live below the low-income cut-off declined between 2016 and 2021.

However, the relative gap between Anglophones and Francophones in terms of the tendency to live in poverty has



grown. In 2016, **18%** of English speakers were living below LICO compared to **12%** of French speakers. In 2021, **12%** of English speakers were in this position compared to only **7%** of French speakers. This means that, in relative terms, the gap has grown.

The greatest gap between minority and majority language populations in terms of this measure of poverty is evident in the 15–24 years age group — a life stage typically characterized by completion of education and entry to the job market. Among English-speakers aged 15–24, **19.4%** are living below LICO compared to **9.1%** of French-speakers of the same age. This means that English speakers in this age group are twice as likely as their Francophone counterparts to be living below LICO.

When observed by region (RTS territory), the proportion of the English-speaking population living in poverty in Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal is as high as **21.7%** and **21.2%** in Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. English speakers in the Capitale-Nationale and Chaudière-Appalaches regions are more than twice as likely as their French-speaking neighbours to be struggling to meet their basic needs.

Overall, the trend towards a declining socio-economic status does not bode well for the health of Quebec's English speakers nor for the vitality of Quebec's minority language population generally. Organizations like CHSSN working to improve access to health and social services for minority language speakers are no doubt experiencing an increasing need among those they serve.

#### **Q. HOW CAN THIS DATA INFORM BETTER DECISIONS ABOUT HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROVISIONS LOCALLY?**

**A.** CHSSN research is very attuned to the fact that socio-demographic characteristics can vary, sometimes dramatically, between the regions of Quebec's vast territory, between language groups and also age groups. To be actionable and effective a knowledge base that is finely nuanced in these terms is absolutely required. Generalizations that overlook the gaps between the majority and minority at a regional level, for example, are not sufficiently targeted and can make the impact of inequalities even worse. It is costly to the health of the Quebec population and to the health system serving the province to assume that the situation of the minority and the majority are one and the same or that Anglophones in Montreal and the Lower North Shore experience the same health and social service challenges. Better decisions that benefit both the minority and majority language communities are made by relying on census data that is organized to provide local level information. **N**



**Better decisions that benefit both the minority and majority language communities are made by relying on census data that is organized to provide local level information.”**

#### **SOME KEY NUMBERS FROM THE NEW CENSUS DATA ANALYSIS INCLUDE:**

##### **BILINGUALISM**

English speakers **64.4%**  
French speakers **43.7%**

##### **UNEMPLOYMENT**

English speakers **10.9%**  
French speakers **6.9%**

##### **LOW-INCOME**

English speakers **25.7%**  
French speakers **19.9%**

CHSSN wishes you  
a Happy Holiday  
season!



The amazing CHSSN team with (from L to R): Anne-Marie Cech, Julie Lemieux, Jennifer Cooke, Erica Botner, Amy Bilodeau, Céline Lebigot, Sara Lakhrissi, Danica Logan, Russell Kueber, Jennifer Johnson. Absent from the picture: James Carter, Steve Guimond, Flora Janos.



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.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CHSSN  
VISIT THE WEBSITE OR CONTACT US AT:**

**CHSSN**

1270, chemin Ste-Foy, bureau 2106 Québec (Québec) G1S 2M4  
Tel: 418 684 2289 Fax: 418 684 2290 email: [info@chssn.org](mailto:info@chssn.org)  
[chssn.org](http://chssn.org)

Legal deposit: National Library of Canada: ISSN 1709-2175  
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.

Publication of this newsletter is made possible through  
a financial contribution from Health Canada.