

THE KINGSTON DESIGNATION UNDER THE *FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES ACT (FLSA)*:
French Language Services and You

Effective May 1st, 2009, Kingston will become a designated area under the *French Language Services Act*. As a member of the Kingston community, you may have questions about what this means for you. The following seeks to answer some of those questions as well as provide an overview of French language health care services.

The *French Language Services Act*: An Overview

The [*French Language Services Act*](#) (1986) (FLSA) guarantees an individual's right to receive services, including publicly funded health care services, in French from Government of Ontario ministries and agencies in 25 designated areas. The City of Kingston is the only area to be designated within the SE LHIN geographical area.

The preamble of the FLSA recognizes the contribution of the cultural heritage of the French-speaking population and wishes to preserve it for future generations. The [*Francophone presence in Ontario*](#) dates back more than 350 years.

Click here to view the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)*:

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90f32_e.htm

FLS Requirements within the Local Health System Integration Act (LHSIA)

The *Local Health System Integration Act, 2006* received Royal Assent on March 28, 2006. The legislation is an effort to establish an integrated health system to improve the health of Ontarians through better access to health services, coordinated health care and effective and efficient management of the health system at the local level by local health integration networks (LHINs).

Excerpts from the *Local Health System Integration Act* related to French language health services are below:

- A commitment to equity and respect for diversity in communities in serving the people of Ontario and respect the requirements of the *French Language Services Act* in serving Ontario's French-speaking community. 2006, c.4, Preamble (f)
- A French language health services advisory council to advise the Minister about health and service delivery issues related to Francophone communities and priorities and

strategies for the provincial strategic plan related to those communities. 2006, c. 4, s. 14 (2)

- A local health integration network shall engage the community of diverse persons and entities involved with the local health system about that system on an ongoing basis, including about the integrated health service plan and while setting priorities. 2006, c. 4, s. 16 (1).
- In carrying out community engagement under subsection (1), the local health integration network shall engage the French language health planning entity for the geographic area of the network that is prescribed. 2006, c. 4, s. 16 (4).

The South East Local Health Integration Network is responsible for the following health care sectors: hospitals, mental health and addiction services, long-term care facilities, community support services, community health centres and the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC).

Below, we have tried to provide answers to the most commonly asked questions regarding the provision of French language services within the LHIN's health service providers (HSP).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Kingston's designation under the *French Language Services Act (FLSA)* will take effect May 1st, 2009. What does that mean?

Kingston is the 25th area in the province to be designated under the FLSA. Kingston's designation was announced May 1, 2006 and will take effect May 1, 2009. Beginning on that date, the public is entitled to receive services in both English and French in local Government of Ontario offices. This means that members of the Francophone community will be entitled to receive services in French from all provincial ministry offices (e.g. Drivers' Licence Bureaus, OHIP office, etc.).

2. How does the Act apply to health service providers (HSPs) such as hospitals, long-term care homes, mental health and addiction programs and community support services?

Many of the direct services provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to the public are provided through HSPs. As managers of the local health system, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) are responsible for identifying HSPs that may seek designation under the FLS. Identified HSPs are then required to plan and report on the provision of services in French as part of their accountability agreement with the LHINs.

It is important to understand that **not every identified health service provider (HSP) will have the capacity to provide complete services in French by May 1st 2009.** However, all will work with the LHIN to identify current French language capacity levels as well as develop a **plan towards increased access and capacity for the provision of services in French.**

Once an identified HSP can demonstrate that it can provide services in French on a permanent basis, it can apply for official designation under the French Language Services Act. Designation guarantees that services will be available in French. **Currently, none of the health service providers in the Kingston area have achieved designation.**

3. Why is Kingston becoming a designated area?

Kingston is becoming designated for two reasons:

- a. The recent demographic growth of the Francophone population; and
- b. The high degree of engagement and participation levels of the Francophone community led by the *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario Mille-Îles* (ACFO Mille-Îles).

4. Will all future health care positions in Kingston require bilingualism?

No. The designation of bilingual positions is determined on a case by case basis to ensure the availability of services in French that are of equal quality.

5. Which health service providers have been identified for the provision of French Language Services?

In order to ensure a complete range of health care services within the Local Health Integration Network's responsibilities, the following health service providers have been identified:

- Kingston General Hospital
- Hotel Dieu Hospital
- Providence Care (including Providence Manor for long-term care)
- Frontenac Community Mental Health Services
- Options-for-Change
- Salvation Army Harbour Light
- Community Care Access Centre
- Victorian Order of Nurses
- Seniors Association Kingston Region
- Hospice Kingston
- Mental Health Support Network South Eastern Ontario
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- The Canadian Hearing Society - Kingston Region
- Alzheimer Society of Kingston
- Sexual Assault Centre Kingston

6. If an identified health service provider currently cannot provide adequate services in French, what can I do?

Here are some options that are available to you:

- a. Work with your Health Service Provider to obtain information on their current French language capacity and their plans to improve services in French.
- b. Contact your LHIN to obtain information on the progress of the local system in its development to provide French language services.
- c. In May 2007, the *French Language Services Act* was amended to create the [Office of the French Language Services Commissioner](#). Reporting to the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, but independent of the OFA, the Commissioner is responsible for handling complaints relating to the FLSA, conducting investigations to ensure compliance with the FLSA and submitting an annual report to the Minister that is tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

7. How can I participate as a Francophone member of the community?

- When you use the services of an identified health service provider, identify yourself as French-speaking.
- Participate in health system development community engagement activities offered by your LHIN and identify yourself as French-speaking.