

# Policy on the Language of Service



Jeffery Hale  
Saint Brigid's

Une communauté de soins  
A Community of Care

March 24, 2015

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 Jeffery Hale Saint Brigid's	<b>Policies and procedures</b>	DG 2015-03-24-007
<b>Policy on the Language of Service of the Jeffery Hale – Saint Brigid's</b>		

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## Organizational Context

Jeffery Hale – Saint Brigid's (JHSB) was created on April 1, 2007 as the result of the integration of two establishments which, together, have over 300 hundred years of history serving the English-speaking community in the Capitale-Nationale region.

With deep roots in Quebec City's English-speaking community and a long tradition of caring, JHSB is a public, bilingual institution under participatory governance dedicated to providing safe, compassionate and high quality care.

JHSB is designated under section 508 of the Law on Health and Social Services (LSSSS) which specifies which establishments, amongst those recognized under article 29.1 of the French Language Charter, those which are obligated to provide all of their health and social services in both the French and English languages.<sup>1</sup> JHSB offers acute primary care, community services and longer term care and services.

Amongst the strategic objectives of the organisation are *the promotion of linguistic duality and openness to cultural diversity*.<sup>2</sup> JHSB serves a significant population of French and English-speaking users, as well as users from other linguistic communities who have limited French-proficiency and their families. Ensuring that users can effectively provide staff with a clear statement of their health condition and its history and understand the provider's assessment of their condition and treatment options is essential to the provision of quality patient care.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Capitale-Nationale. *Programme d'accès aux services de santé et aux services sociaux en langue anglaise pour les personnes d'expression anglaise – 2012-2015*, Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de la Capitale-Nationale, 2012, 32 p. et annexes.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.jhsb.ca/assets/official\\_docs/strategic\\_plan.pdf](http://www.jhsb.ca/assets/official_docs/strategic_plan.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Paras, Melinda. *Straight Talk : Model Hospital Policies and Procedures on Language Access*. California Health Care Safety Net Institute (2005). <http://www.safetynetinstitute.org/wp-content/oldMedia/Site/StraightTalkFinal.pdf>



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Law 10, which was adopted on February 7, 2015, reinforces the intention of the government that health institutions put in place the means to offer services in English and French when their mandate to do so has been confirmed in a regional access program. Specifically, institutions must foresee hiring staff with knowledge of both languages (Art. 76 and 169).

Law 10 also includes special provisions which favor the maintenance and development of JHSB and its special mandate to serve the English-speaking community of the Capitale-Nationale region even though it will be regrouped with the Centre Intégré Universitaire de Santé et de Services Sociaux de la Capitale-Nationale (Art 209 to 211).

### Policy objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure that employees communicate effectively with both French and English-speaking clients and that Language Assistance Services are also available for other Limited-French or English Proficient (LFEP) individuals and their surrogate decision-makers at all points of contact, in a timely fashion and in their preferred language in order to ensure an understanding of their health condition and treatment options.

Recognizing that language access is an integral component of the delivery of high quality and safe health services, JHSB has developed a number of policies, procedures and tools in the area of linguistic access. The organisation has undertaken to consolidate and develop these initiatives within the framework of a comprehensive language access policy.

As a health and social service establishment designated to provide all of its services in both the English and French languages, and given the consequences of a lack of appropriate language services for both users and providers in terms of access to care, compliance with treatment regimens, cost of health services, and both client and provider satisfaction with their health care encounters, JHSB requires a clear language access policy and detailed operational procedures, both to ensure quality health care services and to meet provincial legal and regulatory requirements for language access.

### JHSB Organisational Policy Statement

JHSB is committed to respecting the stipulations of the Health Act and the regional access plan for English language services, thus ensuring that all JHSB services are available in both the French and English languages. Accordingly, JHSB is committed to providing health services that are responsive to preferred language, health literacy, and other communication needs. The organisation will therefore:

- Actively offer quality health and social services to the French and English speaking populations it serves in the language of the client's choice within a reasonable timeframe, at all points of contact and at no cost to the client.



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- Provide health care services that are responsive to diverse preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs at within a reasonable timeframe, at all points of contact and at no cost to the client.
- Clearly inform the community, partners and all clients of the availability of all services in both English and French as well as access to free Language Assistance Services (LAS) for all linguistic communities.
- Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance services.
- Provide residential services which promote à sense of linguistic and cultural identification and belonging within the living environment for both French and English speaking persons.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### *Governance, Leadership and Staff*

The governing body, leadership and staff of JHSB are committed to promoting language access to health and social services. The governing body, leadership and staff will:

- Advance and support organisational governance and leadership practices which address policies, organisational practices and resource allocation decisions promoting linguistic accessibility and supporting the role and responsibilities of JHSB as a regionally designated bilingual establishment.
- Support the offer of ongoing training to members of the Board, management and employees on linguistically appropriate policies and practices.
- Continue to promote and develop partnerships with educational institutions and community organisations to enhance recruitment and retention of bilingual staff.

#### *Hiring and staffing*

JHSB is committed to offer all of its services in French or English in keeping with the users' preference. JHSB programs and departments will:

- Identify services that must be made available in both languages.
- Set language proficiency standards for each of the said services, recognizing that the level of language proficiency required of service providers may vary as a function of the service required and the circumstances in which it is provided.
- While ensuring appropriate professional and technical competencies, promote the hiring of staff proficient in both English and French.
- Offer when possible language training to increase the language proficiency of staff already in place and having to serve Anglophones.
- Integrate language proficiency criteria into selection processes for internal postings.

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### *Oral Language Assistance Services*

Language Assistance Services (LAS) will be offered to individuals who have limited French proficiency (LFP) at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services when services cannot be made available in English. JHSB will train and ensure the competence of bilingual staff to act as interpreters when required.

Language Assistance Services (LAS) will be offered to individuals who have limited French and English proficiency (LFEP) and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.

Qualified providers of healthcare interpreting at JHSB include:

- Bilingual JHSB medical providers whose bilingual qualifications will have been tested and documented.
- JHSB bilingual employees who are licensed and certified to provide medical, nursing, medical technician or social work services and who have been determined to be bilingual through JHSB human resources processes.
- JHSB healthcare interpreters who have received training and meet JHSB qualifications for the provision of healthcare interpreting.

Use of contracted interpreter services that have met the qualifications of healthcare interpreting determined by JHSB is recommended. The use of family members, children, friends, and untrained volunteers as interpreters will be discouraged.

### *Written language and communication*

Vital clinical information documents and forms will be identified by JHSB management and will be made available to clients in both French and English.

To the extent possible, and in accordance with current legislation, wayfinding, signage, and electronic and written postings will be in both French and English.

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### *Bilingual living environments*

JHSB recognizes that persons residing in its facilities for longer periods will benefit from a familiar environment where both its linguistic and cultural comfort will be taken into account. To that end, the following measures are retained, subject to current legislation, in the sectors designated as offering services in both English and French:

- Posting and signage will be in both French and English.
- Official activities of a therapeutic or social nature will be offered in both French and English.
- Internal written communications will be available in both French and English.
- Active participation of both French and English community and volunteers will be encouraged

### **Organisational Self-Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement**

JHSB will monitor its progress in implementing and sustaining language accessibility objectives and communicate results to all stakeholders, constituents and to the general public by:

- Collecting and maintaining accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor, evaluate and inform linguistically responsible service delivery.
- Conducting regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations it serves.
- Establishing a language access implementation plan which reflects the results of its community consultation and needs assessment.
- Conducting regular assessments of its bilingual offer of service and Language Assistance Services (LAS) and integrating LAS-related measures into assessment measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.
- Implementing conflict-and grievance-resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent and resolve conflicts or complaints.