

THE CNFS IS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING FRENCH-LANGUAGE HEALTH SERVICES IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES. TO THIS END, IT WORKS IN COLLABORATION WITH ITS MEMBER INSTITUTIONS - UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES PRESENT IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA - TO DELIVER THE POSTSECONDARY TRAINING REQUIRED TO DEVELOP FRANCOPHONE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.

THE CONTEXT

Since it is recognized that immigration contributes to the demographic, economic and social development of Francophone minority communities, the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) has, since 2006, been interested in the situation of internationally educated Francophone health professionals.

Immigration helps address our health professional shortage by giving internationally educated Francophone health professionals the opportunity to integrate into Francophone minority communities (FMCs). Preparatory studies have delineated this pool of professionals of interest to the CNFS and identified their most pressing needs. The various recommendations resulting from these studies form the basis for the CNFS's current initiatives in the immigration field.

THE MAJOR ISSUES

These CNFS initiatives conducted with support from partners are designed to provide relevant solutions to the major issues identified by the various studies. Some of these issues include the lack of information, resources and training in French to support the integration of internationally educated Francophone health professionals, the complexity involved in obtaining equivalencies for degrees and credentials from professional colleges, the profusion of often incomplete information on professional integration requirements in the health field, the costs associated with taking professional examinations, etc.

THE CONSORTIUM NATIONAL DE FORMATION EN SANTÉ (CNFS):

at the crossroads of training, health and immigration to support the successful integration of Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHPs)

The Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) is a pan-Canadian organization bringing together eleven university and college institutions¹ offering programs of study delivered in French in various health disciplines, as well as regional partners² working to improve access to the health training programs delivered in French across the country. The CNFS also has a National Secretariat, located in Ottawa, that plays a leadership, development and coordination role in planning and achieving the Consortium's objectives.

The objective of this strategic alliance is to increase the number and impact of Francophone health professionals and researchers in order to guarantee and improve French-language health services, thereby ensuring that these are of high quality and tailored to the needs of Francophone minority communities.

Supported by the CNFS's own structure as well as by the health training programs offered by its 11 member institutions, the CNFS's central role is coming into sharper focus as the development and delivery of its bridging programs for internationally educated Francophone health professionals gain momentum. The CNFS is also making concerted action a key priority at all levels within the sectors. Representatives of the immigration,

¹ Université Sainte-Anne, Université de Moncton, Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick, New Brunswick Community College – Campbellton, Campus Saint-Jean, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, Laurentian University, Collège Boréal, University of Ottawa, La Cité collégiale, Collège Acadie%lle-du-Prince-Édouard.

² Institut français de l'Université de Régina, Collège des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, Service d'Orientation et de Formation des Adultes du Yukon, Collège Éduccentre de la Colombie-Britannique, Fédération francophone de Terre-Neuve/Labrador.



TRAINING

The health care programs offered by the member institutions of the CNFS

The bridging programs offered to internationally educated health professionals

health and training sectors are working with the CNFS on this issue to ensure that the collective action taken to integrate internationally educated Francophone health professionals into FMCs proves successful.

MEANINGFUL RESULTS: THE CNFS'S IMMIGRATION PROJECTS SHOW A PROMISING FUTURE

To provide an adequate response to the major issues identified at the outset (see previous page), the CNFS and its partners have conducted two major initiatives³ that have yielded significant results.

Regional referral and orientation programs

The CNFS is aware of the resources available to immigrants at the national, regional, provincial and local levels. With this in mind, it is working closely with the local and provincial organizations involved in implementing its regional referral and orientation programs for internationally educated health graduates wishing to settle in Winnipeg MB, Ottawa ON and Edmundston NB.

At the end of March, 2011, a total of 125 Francophone IEHPs were participating in these three programs. The CNFS's officers provide them with the one-on-one orientation services best tailored to their situation and needs.

Based on the data collected during the two years that these programs have been operating, we can conclude that:

- The process is faster when pathways are individualized;
- Individualized referral activities allow IEHPs to move through the various steps of their professional integration more easily;
- Alternatives to the pathways and/or bridging programs are discussed with the interested parties and with the partner organizations or institutions involved in applying them, which yields positive concerted action on individual files;
- Partnerships with professional colleges have greater impact and lead to dialogue and ongoing discussions;
- Professional colleges and regulatory agencies are much more sensitive to the situation of internationally educated Francophone health professionals and graduates;
- Ongoing collaboration with professional colleges and regulatory agencies is making more French-language resources available to them;
- The bridging programs and/or other upgrading training offered to participants meet their needs;
- Ongoing collaboration with various partners is making it easier for Francophone IEHPs to obtain clinical and job placements.

For further information on the CNFS's regional Immigration programs:

- ▶ Ottawa integration program: <http://cnfs.lacitec.on.ca/professionnels-etrange.htm>
- ▶ Winnipeg IEHP integration program:
Tel.: 204-237-1818, extension 339
- ▶ Edmundston IEHP integration program: <http://www.umoncton.ca/umce-scienceinfirmiere/node/151>

³ La formation des Professionnels francophones de la santé formés à l'étranger (PFSFE), 2006 à 2010, avec l'appui de Santé Canada, Division des ressources humaines dans le domaine de la santé.

L'intégration des Diplômés internationaux de la santé francophones (DIS) dans les communautés francophones en situation minoritaire, 2008 à 2010, avec l'appui de Ressources humaines et développement des compétences Canada, division de la reconnaissance des titres de compétences étrangers

HEALTH

Collaboration with professional colleges in the health sector

Collaboration with hospitals and health centres as potential employers

Bridging programs

Bridging programs bring the knowledge and skills of immigrating health professionals up to the practice requirements set for their professions in Canada. Given the important role of examinations in obtaining professional licensure, the CNFS and its partners have established the following programs:

- La préparation aux examens des ordres professionnels pour les sciences infirmières et les soins infirmiers auxiliaires,

This program was developed by La Cité collégiale in partnership with the University of Ottawa and is offered at La Cité collégiale in Ottawa, Ontario, <http://cnfs.lacitec.on.ca/formation-appoint.htm>, and at the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg, Manitoba, <http://www.ustboniface.mb.ca/>

- La préparation aux examens des ergothérapeutes francophones formés à l'étranger

This training program is the result of a partnership involving the CNFS-University of Ottawa section, the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) and McMaster University. <http://www.otepp.ca/>

Coming soon

- La formation d'appoint pour les médecins francophones formés à l'étranger

This new training program has been the focus of a recently forged partnership between the CNFS, the University of Ottawa and the Catholic Immigration Centre of Ottawa. The first step has involved adapting the original content into French.

Over the next year, the CNFS and its partners will be working to establish mechanisms to offer the training to internationally educated Francophone physicians.

Intercultural training

- A first training program has now been offered for over two years to individuals working closely with immigrating health professionals. This program is available online at <http://cnfs.net/fr/formationinterculturelle/php>

To offer this training in person, please contact:

- ▶ The National Secretariat of the CNFS, at 613-244-7837 or 1-866-555-2637, or
- ▶ The Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB), at 204-233-0210, extension 444

Coming soon

- Une formation interculturelle pour les professionnels et diplômés francophones formés à l'étranger is currently being developed by the CNFS-Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface (CUSB) section. Initially, this training will be offered to the IEHPs taking the CNFS's three regional referral and orientation programs.
- The Government of New Brunswick is interested in forging a partnership with the CNFS specifically focused on:
 - Delivering intercultural training to health care providers;
 - Developing an introductory course on the Canadian health care system for Francophone IEHPs to facilitate their integration into the Canadian labour market.

IMMIGRATION

- **Integration of Francophone IEHPs**
- **Importance of regional and provincial partnerships**
- **Involvement and collaboration by host communities**

Broader perspectives on immigration at the CNFS

Going to the source

All the immigration studies conducted by the CNFS have flagged the negative consequences resulting from insufficient or inaccurate information being provided before immigrants leave their countries of origin. Subsequent problems in their social and professional integration to Canada could be avoided if requirements, administrative and professional procedures were clearly spelled out at the pre-immigration stage.

The CNFS is therefore exploring the possibility of forging new partnerships setting these parameters for a positive and effective initiative upstream from the immigration continuum of internationally educated Francophone health professionals.

Identifying the needs of internationally educated Francophone midwives

Midwives rank third among the priority occupations identified by the regional CNFS programs. The lack of resources and upgrading training in French for this profession has led the CNFS to work with Laurentian University in exploring the scope of this group's needs. As well, an exchange of information has taken place between the CNFS and representatives of the relevant provincial ministries of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. These ministries have already developed self-assessment tools and other important resources for internationally educated Anglophone midwives.

Strengthening provincial partnerships in New Brunswick

The CNFS's regional referral and orientation program being conducted in Edmundston NB started taking on a new dimension following a January meeting at the Université de Moncton. This meeting, attended by the province's main stakeholders involved in Francophone immigration, increased the number of potential employers of IEHPs participating in the program and attracted provincial authorities' interest in the bridging programs created and delivered by the CNFS.

LOOKING FORWARD

The CNFS will continue working on these important components of its immigration program, supported by its partners. The aforementioned outcomes achieved have confirmed the value of the best practices being implemented regionally or nationally. These are clearly going a long way toward meeting the needs of internationally educated Francophone health professionals. The CNFS nevertheless hopes to broaden its field of intervention and collaboration, one step at a time, as it works to achieve our common objective of strengthening Canada's French-language health care system through the successful integration of IEHPs.



**Consortium national
de formation en santé**

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