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Launch of the Second Report on the Health of Francophones in Ontario

Laurentian University's Franco-Ontarian Institute and the Ontario Public Health Research, Education and Development Program at the Sudbury & District Health Unit have released the Second Report on the Health of Francophones in Ontario / *Deuxième Rapport sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario*. This report provides an in-depth picture of the state of health of francophones in Ontario and what differentiates them from other Ontarians.

This document, a follow-up to the first report that was released in 2000, was produced under the direction of Louise Picard, Director of the Public Health Research, Education and Development Program of the Sudbury & District Health Unit and Gratien Allaire, Director of the Franco-Ontarian Institute / *Institut franco-ontarien* at Laurentian University. The aim of publishing the research results is to help government and health services recognize the special needs of francophones in Ontario, and to influence the course of health policy making and planning. A further goal is to encourage institutions doing research in health to put greater emphasis on questions relating to the Franco-Ontarian population and to francophone communities.

The research team studied the population as a whole (francophone, anglophone, allophone) and regional differences. This second report is based on data from the Canadian Community Health Survey 2000-2001 and Statistics Canada 2001.

Principal findings of the Second Report on the Health of Francophones in Ontario / *Deuxième Rapport sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario*:

- Ontario's francophone population is older than the overall population, and seniors comprise a larger proportion of women than for the whole population. There is also a lower level of education.
- Visible minorities make up an increasing part of the francophone population of Ontario, especially in the Toronto and Ottawa regions.
- Francophones perceive their own health as not being as good as that of the general population of Ontario.
- Francophones have higher rates for smoking and a smaller proportion of persons live in a smoke-free household.
- There is no significant difference between francophones and the whole population of Ontario in rates of chronic diseases such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis, asthma, high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease, as well as of serious injuries. These rates generally increase with age and decrease as income increases. Heart disease rates have increased since the last survey, and here francophones are affected to the same extent as the general population, but their heart disease rates are higher than for anglophones.
- Since the first report, francophones continue to consult a mental health professional at the same rate, while there is increased usage among the anglophone population. Women's mental health is not as good as for men: they consult mental health professionals more frequently, they have a higher rate of depression, and report higher stress levels in the workplace.
- There is not much difference between francophones and anglophones in alcohol consumption. Allophones, however, show a lower level of alcohol consumption.
- As for sexual health, francophones are less inclined to abstain from sexual activity. The rate of sexual activity among francophone adolescents is no different from that of anglophone adolescents.
- In the matter of dental care, francophones visit their dentist less often than other groups.
- More than 50 per cent of francophones have been proactive and have "done something" to improve their health.
- Francophones in Northeastern Ontario are more inclined to report lifestyles that are more apt to give rise to immediate and future health risks. They make greater use of alcohol and tobacco, and consume less fruit and vegetables than francophones in other regions.

Recommendations stemming from the Second Report on the Health of Francophones in Ontario / Deuxième Rapport sur la santé des francophones de l'Ontario:

Ongoing from the first report:

- Increase access to francophone health data
- Continue research to fill the gaps and justify the results
- Create a provincial directory of documents relating to the health of francophones
- Recognize importance of the determinants of health
- Recognize the importance of cultural realities in implementing programs/services
- Identify and address the needs of sub-groups within the francophone population
- Ensure follow-up on the report

New in the second report:

- Use a definition that is better suited to the francophone reality in Ontario
- Complete the analysis of the data on literacy
- Use the report in the school curriculum
- Broaden our knowledge of the position of francophone seniors
- Monitor the progression of chronic diseases
- Coordinate the efforts of the various sectors with a view to improving the health of the Franco-Ontarian population

For more information, please call Louise Picard, Director of the Public Health Research, Education and Development Program at the Sudbury & District Health Unit at (705) 522-9200, ext. 330 or Gratien Allaire, Director of the Franco-Ontarian Institute at Laurentian University at (705) 675-1151, ext. 5026.

For a copy of the report, visit: <http://www.sdhu.com/content/resources/folder.asp?folder=4113&parent=11&lang=0>

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