



PROVIDERS OF LANGUAGE-APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS ARE SCARCE: *Self-declared language capabilities of the healthcare workforce in Ontario*

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- ### KEY TAKE HOME MESSAGES
1. Ontario's *Regulated Health Professions Act* mandates the collection of language data as part of their minimum data standard.
 2. These data show that very few providers can provide care in Indigenous languages or sign language in Ontario.
 3. Focusing on the same seven professions in the National health workforce language data study, Ontario specific data found that while English continues to be the dominant language of service for these professions there is significant diversity in the top non-official languages across these professions.

BACKGROUND

- First Nations and Inuit Communities, deaf persons, newcomers to Canada and speakers of non-dominant official languages face linguistic barriers to health care.
- These barriers have important patient safety implications.
- Little is known about the language capabilities of the healthcare workforce in Ontario.
- The legislative mandate around the collection of language data in Ontario enables a comprehensive examination of language of care of health providers.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To examine and compare self-declared language capabilities for seven professions: Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Pharmacists, Psychologists and Physiotherapists.
- (2) To examine the prevalence of health care providers that have self-declared language capabilities in the non-official languages of the populations facing the greatest linguistic barriers to health care.
- (3) To compare dominant official and non-official languages across the seven case professions.

METHODOLOGY

A secondary language analysis of language variables in the Ontario's Health Professions Database was conducted focusing specifically on the seven case professions:

- Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, Registered Practical Nurses,
- Occupational Therapists,
- Pharmacists,
- Psychologists and
- Physiotherapists

TARGET POPULATION LANGUAGES

Very few providers can provide care in Indigenous languages or sign language in Ontario.

In 2017, healthcare providers for the 7 case professions in Ontario are able to provide service in...

English	Almost 100%
French	6-14%
Indigenous Languages	<50 people
Sign Language	< 60 people
Indigenous Languages	
Algonquian Languages	
Iroquian Languages	
Mohawk	
Micmac	
Cree	
Ojibwa	
Inuktitut	

TOP NON-OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

There is a significant diversity across the seven case professions.

In 2017, healthcare providers for the 7 case professions in Ontario the top non-official languages providers are able to provide service in...

Profession	Top non-official language
Nurse Practitioner	Chinese
Registered Nurse	Philippine
Registered Practical Nurse	Hindi
Occupational Therapists	Cantonese
Pharmacists	Arabic
Psychologists	Spanish
Physiotherapists	Hindi

DISCUSSION & NEXT STEPS

While the findings reveal that there are very few providers who can provide care in non-official languages, availability of these data can help create important linkages with populations that face significant language barriers to health care and in turn address important patient-safety implications.

NEXT STEPS
Examine the geographic distribution of non-dominant official language and non-official language speaking providers in relation to non-dominant language and non-official language speaking populations.