

SUBMISSION TO
THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Re: BILL 276, *SUPPORTING RECOVERY AND
COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2021*

Date: May 17, 2021

Queens Park, Toronto

by

ENTITÉ 4
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Introduction

Entité 4 is pleased to have the opportunity to provide input to the Standing Committee on General Government regarding Bill 276, *Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021* – an Act to enact and amend various Acts.

Entité 4 is one of Ontario’s six French Language Health Planning Entities mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Health to improve access to French language health services.

Entité 4’s catchment area corresponds with the service boundaries of the Central, North Simcoe Muskoka and the Central East Home and Community Care Support Services agencies. Previously, this territory aligned with that of the Central, North Simcoe Muskoka and Central East LHINs.

Since 2010, Ontario’s French Language Health Planning Entities work collaboratively with local, regional and provincial partners, to develop health services tailored to the realities facing the communities we serve.

Our strong connections with the Francophone community help us to understand the health care needs of Francophone patients and their caregivers.

BILL 276, Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021

The legislation before this Committee is broad in its recommendations to modernize regulations and support Ontario’s economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these regulatory changes are well outside of the scope of our work, however, Entité 4 wishes to speak regarding Schedule 9 of Bill 276.

Schedule 9. French Language Services Act

The Schedule amends the definition of “government agency” in the French Language Services Act to permit the designation of municipal homes and joint homes as public service agencies.

Bill 276 would expand eligibility for designation under the *French Language Services Act* to include municipally run long-term care homes.

Designation is a voluntary process that culminates in the legal recognition of an organization’s ability and ongoing commitment to provide high-quality services in French, by the Ontario government. The designation process is an integral part of ensuring the sustainability of French language services over time.

One of Entité 4's partners, Bendale Acres Long-Term Care Home is a City of Toronto home that deserves recognition for the excellent work they do in caring for their Francophone residents. Bendale Acres has been recognized as a model practice in serving official language minority long-term care residents.

Entité 4 welcomes this change and recognizes the potential benefits of this expansion for Ontario's Francophone communities.

Ontario's Francophone Communities

Ontario is home to the largest Francophone population in Canada, outside of Quebec. Currently, more than 622,000 Francophones live in Ontario.

The rich diversity in Francophone communities across the province translates into complex and varied health needs. Growing Francophone communities within the Greater Toronto Area include diverse ethnic communities and newcomers to Canada. Furthermore, the North Simcoe Muskoka area boasts one of the oldest Francophone communities in Canada, dating back more than 400 years.

According to 2016 Census data, on average, Ontario's Francophone population is older than the general population. At 19.5 per cent, the proportion of Francophones 65 years of age and older is greater than the proportion of individuals over the age of 65 in the total population (which sits at 16.2 per cent).

Language Matters in Long-Term Care

The COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on the undeniable vulnerability of long-term care residents. A vulnerability which is further amplified among Ontario's Francophone population as the ability to speak a second language often deteriorates with age. Francophone seniors and their families are often faced with a difficult choice when seeking long-term care services: selecting a residence that can meet linguistic and cultural needs or one that is close to home.

There remains an ongoing need for high-quality linguistically and culturally appropriate long-term care for Francophones. Communicating in the resident's own language provides physical and mental health benefits such as reducing social isolation, rates of depression and the number of falls and hospitalizations.

Conclusion

Expanding eligibility for designation to municipally run long-term care homes signals to the Francophone community the enduring commitment of the Government and the service provider towards Francophone seniors. We thank the Government of Ontario for this commitment.

For more information, please contact:

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