

Anglophones are poorer

While the latest Canadian census (2016) shows that English-speaking Quebecers are holding their own in terms of numbers—slightly growing, in fact—there are signs that their lot is not improving. The 2017-18 baseline data report just issued by the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) provides the most up-to-date sociodemographic information on the anglophone minority, data that will assist in developing strategies to improve the wellbeing of that community. Some highlights from the report:

- In 2016 there were 1,097,925 English speakers across Quebec, 13.8 percent of the provincial population. In Greater Montreal they were 32.8 percent of the total population.
- There was a much greater chance that English-speakers would be living below the poverty line than French-speakers.
- The gap in unemployment between English- and French-speakers increased between 2011 and 2016, and was greater for younger generations than for older.
- Unemployment was much higher than among francophones, 8.9 percent compared to 6.9 percent. Among English-speaking immigrants, 10.2 percent were unemployed.
- English-speakers are less likely than their French counterparts to earn \$50,000 or more.
- Young anglophones are more likely to have a university degree: 20.4 percent compared with 13.9 percent of French-speaking youth.
- Among English-speaking youth (15 to 29 years), close to 70 percent are located in a low-income bracket as compared to 38.5 percent of the total anglophone population.
- English-speaking youth (23.6 percent) are more likely to be living in poverty than French-speaking youth (14.9 percent).
- More English-speakers are likely to be living alone, below the poverty line, than French-speaking Quebecers.

The complete report is available at: www.chssn.org/documents

Promoting palliative care

The West Island Palliative Care Residence has created a new institute to help improve end-of-life care, not only in Quebec but throughout the country. Entirely funded by private donors, the Montreal Institute for Palliative Care will focus on both research and teaching. With the much respected Residence as model, experts in the field will share their findings to support “compassionate communities” elsewhere, with a view to expanding the palliative movement in Canada.

Mackay schools move

The Mackay Centre and Philip E. Layton schools will be moving to new quarters in September. The English Montreal School Board has constructed a new \$23.4 million facility in N.D.G. to house their 170 students.

The Layton school specializes in education for the blind; the Mackay school caters to children who have hearing, visual, cognitive and mobility impairments and communication disorders. For the past three years they have been renting space at MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre, but quarters there became insufficient. The new state-of-the-art facility will provide more spacious accommodation and specialized rooms that had been lacking.

Vic to McGill

The Quebec government is to cede part of the property formerly occupied by the Royal Victoria Hospital to McGill University. McGill will take over one-quarter of the total area, with the main building becoming the Max Bell School of Public Policy and the Sustainable Systems Initiative. Some smaller buildings to house classrooms, research facilities and administrative offices will be built behind the main building. Construction is planned to start in 2020 and is projected to cost \$700 million. The government is to hold public consultations on its plans for the rest of the site by mid-2019.

Advisory committees overdue

One of the provisions of Bill 10, the legislation passed in 2015 that massively reorganized the health and social services system in Quebec, allows for some protection of formerly independent institutions that were absorbed into the public networks. Foundations and owner corporations of designated institutions may create an advisory committee to protect the cultural and historic context of their historic institutions. But to date, few have done so.

Such committees have a significant role to play. For example, those of owner corporations would have veto power on changes that could negatively affect the role of their institutions. And foundations connected to historic hospitals would protect donations aimed at supporting services to their traditional community. Preservation of archival records is another issue to be addressed.

But although the law makes provisions for such committees, their creation is not automatic – each institution must ask the Minister that its advisory committee be formed. But once that request is received, approval has to be given.

For those corporations and foundations that are not familiar with this provision of Bill 10, or which have not yet implemented it, the Quebec Community Groups Network and the Community Health and Social Services Network will be encouraging them to set up their advisory committees.

Lachine hospital expanding

The 79-year-old Lachine Hospital is to be expanded at a cost of \$95 million. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2020, and be completed in spring 2023. The number of beds will increase from 52 to 60, all in single-patient rooms. Palliative care beds will increase from five to 10, surgery from five to 16. Plans call for a new pavilion to house the emergency room, intensive care unit, medical day unit, medical and surgery units, and the palliative care unit.

Attention for special needs

After three years of meetings and discussions, the East End Network for English-language Services (REISA) has made an important breakthrough in obtaining care for people with intellectual impairment. Walk-in clinics and specialized medical attention for people with special needs will be introduced during July in two east-end territories.

“This is a major step forward,” affirms **Fatiha Guemiri**, REISA executive director. “It was our initiative, and results have surpassed our expectations, because what we obtained we got for the francophone community also. So everyone benefits.”

Two years ago, Quebec set up a \$21 million action plan to address the needs of the growing numbers of Quebecers afflicted with autistic spectrum disorders. “They hired more staff to deliver services and reduce waiting times,” says Guemiri. “But there were still serious timing problems, particularly for English-speaking families.”

After holding a public forum last year that brought together parents, professionals and public service providers, and documenting the situation, REISA was able to negotiate new services with two CIUSSSs. Starting in July, monthly walk-in clinics will be offered at 14 super clinics (GMF) in the east end for special needs clientele. Discussions are under way to expand this service to 12 other GMFs in the east end. “Patients will get a same-day or next-day appointment right away,” Guemiri affirms. “They won’t have to go through the anxiety of sitting in waiting rooms for hours like before.”

REISA’s efforts were doubly successful. Starting in July, there will also be a bi-monthly walk-in clinic at the Centre of Dreams and Hopes, the only facility in the east end offering English services to clientele living with autism spectrum disorders. The Centre, which offers therapeutic and recreational activities for children with special needs and respite services for parents, also welcomes persons from other areas of the city. For information: 514 041 1560.

City studies youngsters

Results of a major study of young Montrealers were released in May by the regional public health department. During 2017, some 13,400 grade-six youngsters and 7800 parents responded to questions concerning behaviours and lifestyle habits, health, educational success, and social relations. The information gathered will be used in setting more effective public policies to assist youngsters to transition into adolescence.

The survey shows that 60 percent of the youngsters are from immigrant families, and 86 percent claim good family support. Even though 95 percent have at least one parent working, 16 percent live in homes with not enough money for essentials, such as food or lodging. Although 95 percent claim good health, over 70 percent of girls and 59 percent of boys are not physically active enough, and 62 percent of them do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. One in 20 of these students is at high risk of dropping out of school. Among boys, 53 percent reported using aggressive behaviour, compared to 36 percent of girls. For more information: topomtl.ca.

CIUSSS is communicating

The Montreal-Centre integrated health and social services centre (CIUSSS) has introduced two new communication vehicles to keep its users and the general population informed on available Centre resources and health issues in general.

The annual Well-being Magazine outlines services, clinics and programs available to English-speakers. The next edition, in September, will focus on young children and families, and will be distributed to families of grade six students in the English Montreal School Board: <http://ciuss-centreouestmtl.gouv.qc.ca/en/news-and-media/well-being-magazine>. In addition, a podcast, Your Health, covers news and insights from across the CIUSSS network: <http://ciuss-centreouestmtl.gouv.qc.ca/en/news-and-media/podcastyourhealth>. The current series is focused on new or soon-to-be mothers.

Some spending on seniors

Quebec introduced a new five-year action plan in June to promote and support “active ageing”. The \$12 million program contains some 85 measures that will address such diverse issues as health promotion and tax credits. Key monies, however, will be directed to measures that aid older Quebecers who want to stay in their homes and remain active in their communities or at work.

A Quebec for All Ages takes many forms. It will benefit community organizations that provide transportation programs, the idea being to reduce isolation and nurture participation in society. There is also strong support for programs that promote inter-generational exchanges. Municipalities and businesses will receive financial aid to make their premises more senior-friendly.

Montreal, in turn, has announced its \$3 million action plan that includes making public parks and buildings more accessible, and providing 12,000 more affordable housing units over the next four years. (Over half of Montreal seniors are renters.) Also included was a promise of improved street crossings, more readable street signs, and more inclusion in municipal and social affairs.

New name, same vocation

The N.D.G. Food Depot continues to grow. Founded in 1986 as an emergency source of food for the disadvantaged, the once small drop-in centre has over the years mushroomed into a major focus for food provision, education and advocacy. Emergency food baskets remain its core service, but now with a \$1.98 million budget, the depot manages 20 programs that provide people on low incomes access to nutritious food. Communal dining, a “good food” market, collective gardens, school lunches, and cooking workshops are thriving. It has now been re-named to become the Depot Community Food Centre, marking its membership in Community Food Centres Canada, a national movement advocating food security and better health for the poor.

Business help for nonprofits

MBA students from McGill have started a free consulting service, [ThinkR](http://www.thinkrconsulting.com), to aid nonprofits with their business plans or problems. Participants, under faculty supervision, volunteer to help with short-term projects in the areas of strategy, finance, marketing and innovation. The project is sponsored through the Quebec Community Groups Network's Community Innovation Fund. For information: www.thinkrconsulting.com.

International mental health

Canada is co-founder of an international mental health initiative called the Alliance of Advocates for Mental Health and Well-being. Partnered with Britain and Australia, the Alliance aims to encourage and coordinate worldwide public action on mental health. This issue has been identified by the World Health Organization as one of the world's most pressing health challenges.

Respite for grieving children

NOVA West Island is offering a weekend in the country for children experiencing change or grief from the death of someone close to them. Camp Carousel is, in effect, a "circle of support" where private or group sessions will provide listening, discussion, and comforting activities to foster expression of emotions and to facilitate healing. It will be held on September 7, 8 and 9. For information: 514 695 8335, ext. 210.

More money for homeless

The City of Montreal is granting over \$1.7 million to 40 community organizations that provide services to homeless people. This new funding brings its total budget for homeless programs to \$2.8 million. The city is also planning to develop 950 more units of social housing for homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless.

In brief

Co-chairs of the 2018 Centraide of Greater Montreal campaign are **Stephen Bronfman**, executive chairman, Claridge and **Marie-Josée Lamothe**, managing director, Branding, of Google Québec.

Geoffrey Chambers was elected president of the Quebec Community Groups Network.

Dr. **Pierre Gfeller** was named president/executive director of the McGill University Health Centre.

Lynne McVey has been named president/executive director of the CIUSSS West-Island Montreal.

Benoit Morin has been appointed president and CEO of Héma-Québec.

Lili-Anna Pereša, president and CEO of Centraide of Greater Montreal, was named Knight of the Ordre national du Québec.

Josie Primiani was elected president of the board of REISA.

Jean-François de Grandpré was re-named president of the Foundation of Greater Montreal.

Dr. **Lawrence Rosenberg** was re-appointed president/executive director of the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal.

Nominations are called for the Victor and Sheila Goldbloom Distinguished Community Service Awards. Deadline is July 31. For information: www.qcgn.ca.

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