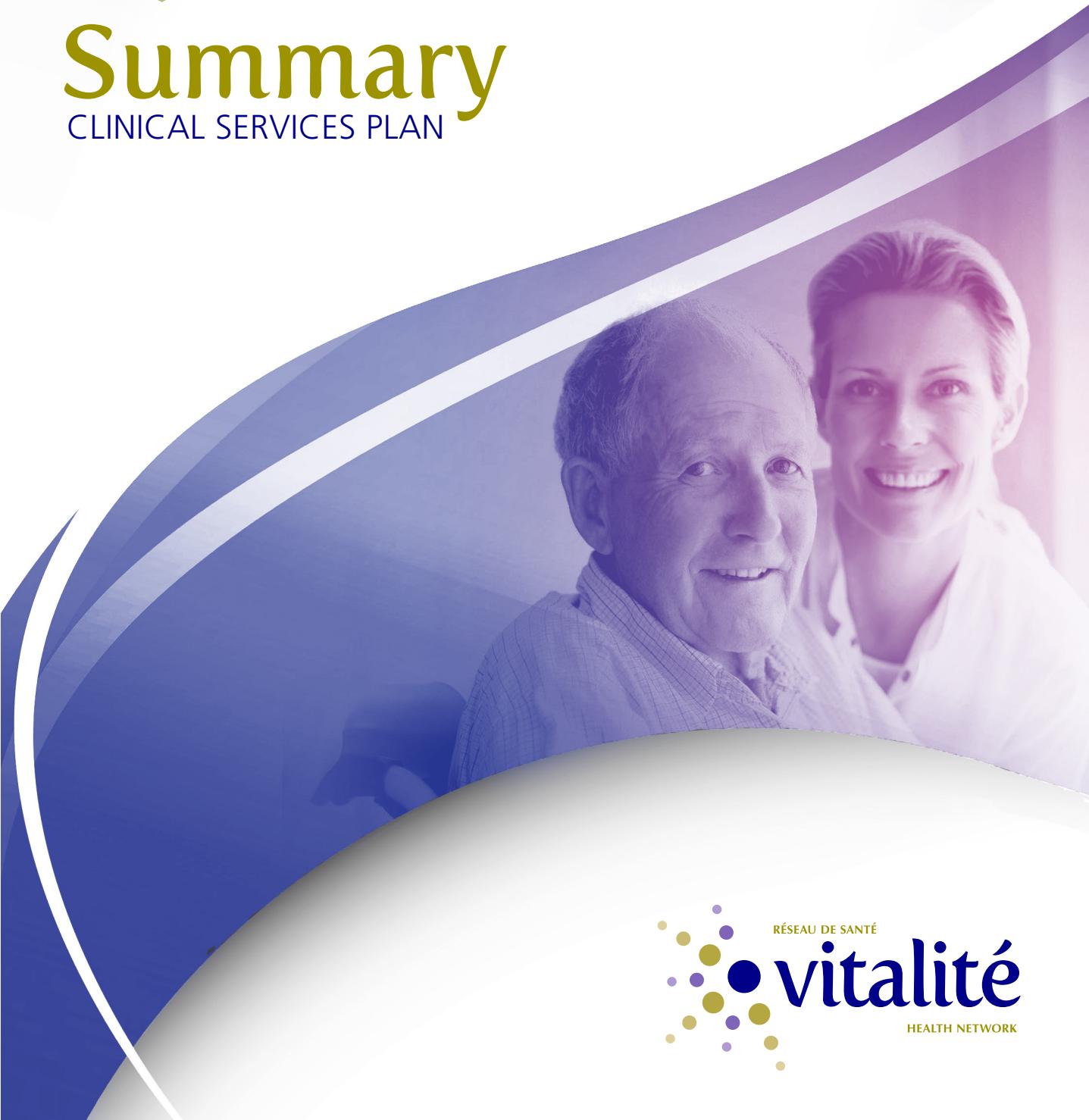




Summary

CLINICAL SERVICES PLAN



Note to the reader

This purpose of this Clinical Services Plan report is to consolidate the French-language services that are and should be offered to the population served by Vitalité Health Network with due regard for the needs and rural distribution of this population. The report also focuses on a catch-up plan for the Network to develop new services for people in the province.

The many measures proposed to enhance the regional organization of specialized services within the Network are the result of days of brainstorming by multidisciplinary groups, set up by client category with professionals and physicians from all the Network zones. These days of brainstorming and work gave rise to fruitful discussions among the various clinical professionals and made it possible to clarify the organization model desired for the Network services. All participants welcomed the initiative to hold these meetings and want such days to be held regularly in the next few months to continue developing the model and improve the quality of services.

There are discussions to be continued and scenarios to be further questioned and developed. The plan should therefore remain a living and dynamic document. It outlines the major directions of the service organization vision for the Network but leaves room for further reflection to improve and complete this vision, namely as regards means of implementing it.

Summary

Vitalité Health Network has been making considerable efforts for a number of years to improve its operational performance. Its 2015-2018 Regional Health and Business Plan (RHBP) signals its intention to place greater emphasis on the improvement of resource and service utilization through a fundamental realignment of the health care system and service organization and delivery. This realignment will involve the development of alternatives to hospitalization that will tailor care delivery and follow-up to the clients' evolving health care needs and improve the system's efficiency.

In the Summer of 2015, the Department of Health asked the Network's management to evaluate the repercussions of two service reduction scenarios involving three community hospital facilities, namely the Lamèque Hospital and Community Health Centre, the Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital, and the Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Joseph de Saint-Quentin. These scenarios consisted in closing beds or transforming short-term beds into long-term beds, in addition to closing emergency departments at night and reducing diagnostic services.

Examining these scenarios led the Network to propose a third scenario encompassing all of the Network's hospital facilities, which was deemed preferable for both the Network and the population. This plan forms the backdrop of the Clinical Services Plan developed by the Network. It is based on the vision of a network of tiered services focused on primary health care, with a marked emphasis on ambulatory and community-based care as well as on home-based care and services for the development of both primary health care services and specialty and subspecialty services.

The Clinical Services Plan is based on an analysis of the acute care hospitalization patterns of the population served by the Network. This analysis indicates that Vitalité Health Network's hospitalization rates, particularly in the three northern zones, exceed those of Horizon Health Network and of most of the other Canadian provinces. It also indicates that a significant portion of the Network's acute care bed complement is being used inappropriately, for purposes other than acute care, due to inefficiencies in clinical and hospital practices and to the limited availability of community resources and services (e.g. nursing home beds, home-based care). According to this analysis, the number of "poorly utilized" or "avoidable" acute care beds would vary between 177 and 216. In this context, the implementation of alternatives to hospitalization involves a better organization of services to be offered to people.

The Clinical Services Plan proposes optimization solutions supporting the implementation of two major strategies designed to transform and modernize services, namely the expansion of alternatives to hospitalization and the reduction of use of hospitalization and of length of stay. With respect to the first strategy, the priority optimization solutions centre on strengthening the Extra-Mural Program, ambulatory care services, and community-based services. With respect to the second strategy, the Network focuses on better managing hospital care episodes and improving the continuums of care and services for the various clients (e.g. individuals with chronic diseases , seniors, Mental Health and Extra-Mural Program clients).

The organization of specialized services is also based on a model of tiered services organized in networks throughout the Network's territory. This model also includes reinforcing continuous quality improvement mechanisms from a regional practice harmonization perspective in all medical and professional disciplines.

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The Network's service organization model allows for the delivery of services in communities as often as possible for ambulatory care services. It is also aimed at improving rehabilitation services and Extra-Mural Program services for several types of clients. As for hospitalization services, all regional hospitals should offer a fairly complete range of services, except for more specialized services. In this case, there are plans for expanding the service area within Vitalité Health Network or in collaboration with Horizon Health Network for some tertiary care services.

The regional models developed for oncology and nephrology services will be extended to geriatric and chronic pain management services for the time being. Emphasis will also be placed on regional practice standardization for other services.

As regards tertiary care services, the Network relies on the catch-up plan to develop new services for people in the province:

- ▶ With the recognition of the Francophone Regional Neurology Department, the Network intends to develop a provincial centre for the treatment of rare diseases;
- ▶ Respirology and oncology expertise makes it possible to anticipate the development of a centre of excellence for thoracic surgery;
- ▶ The Network's oncology expertise, combined with that in neurology, opens the door to the possibility of developing a provincial genetics program.

Since variations exist in the population's needs from one health zone to another and one community to another and in the nature of the services available locally and regionally, the Network's Clinical Services Plan foresees the development of action plans in each of the four zones. The general approach will consist in targeting alternatives to hospitalization in each community and in phasing these in while capitalizing on a \$4 million structured investment plan in the first year as well as on partnership with communities.

Finally, the Clinical Services Plan developed by the Network is designed to meet the people's health needs more effectively. Based on a trend analysis of illnesses and care delivery modes elsewhere in Canada and around the world, the system remains centred on delivering hospital-based services while the primary health care services delivered in the community or in the home

remain underdeveloped and underutilized with the increase in chronic illnesses and the rapid aging of the population.