

We Speak Is Growing!

Plautdietsch Interpreters

The Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, Access Alliance and Ontario Health West are proud to announce the graduation of additional Plautdietsch speaking interpreters who will be available for on-demand or in-person interpretation through the We Speak Language Access Initiative.

Responding to the unique needs of Essex County, local Health Service Providers and the RIO Network worked together to identify languages of need, including Plautdietsch (commonly known as Low German).

Accordingly, funding was secured via the Erie St. Clair LHIN (now Ontario Health West) to purchase a small number of virtual seats for an accelerated Language Interpreter Training Program (LITP) with Conestoga College.



The opportunity to participate in the LITP was shared widely through WE LIP networks and by partner organizations and council members in search of candidates who speak languages of need. Successful candidates would need to be available for interpretation supports, including some evenings and weekends. Mennonite community leaders offered their support to this initiative, sharing this opportunity with community members who were interested and met the LITP criteria.

As a result of this collective effort and community support, this first cohort of LITP graduates includes three (3) Plautdietsch speakers. Along with these interpreters, We Speak has also sponsored the translation of important guides for working with interpreters into Plautdietsch.

“The Low German speaking community members may not know of the services as there is not much advertising in their language, service providers need to be aware of interpreting/translating services and in turn let their clients know these services will be utilized when needed. It may be a slow process, but with more interpreters available in all languages, more people will have access to more and better services, whether it be healthcare, law, education, or any other areas. The gaps in the LG community for support is huge, but will become smaller with organizations such as the We Speak program and Ontario Health, that have recognized and are now actively working towards providing adequately trained interpreters.”

--We Speak Interpreter

We Speak is Expanding

The We Speak Language Initiative keeps growing! While initially conceived to decrease barriers and improve access to health care services, We Speak is beginning its expansion to other sectors as well.

We would like to welcome **UHC – Hub of Opportunities, Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society, Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, and the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario** to the We Speak network. As well, We Speak is now available on all **Essex-Windsor Emergency Medical Services** vehicles.

The flexible nature of We Speak –the on-demand access to over 180 languages, per minute billing, and no minimum appointment length or monthly fees—makes this initiative a good fit for settlement organizations, and any sectors where language barriers present a challenge to providing the best service.

Having easy access to professional interpretation can help alleviate stress of both staff and clients, and save time and energy ensuring that information is clear and correct.

If you're interested in learning more about how We Speak can help your organization overcome language barriers with an easy-to-use platform, please visit: www.WeSpeak.ca or email oh-west_wespeak@ontariohealth.ca



We Speak 