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There are few situations as frightening as arriving at a hospital in acute distress and being unable to communicate what is wrong to nurses and physicians. Awareness of this simple fact has driven New Brunswickers to strive for something no other province has achieved: a bilingual society, in which individuals can count on ready access to health care in the official language of their choice.

Linguists Gisèle Chevalier and Lise Rodrigue of Université de Moncton have brought the province a step closer to this goal. Spurred on by the needs of medical students, they've compiled a guide to Acadian health terms. It's an idea that should receive the full backing of the provincial government. It epitomizes how the people of this province are working to understand each other better.

The book *Les mots pour parler des maux* (Words for talking about pain) provides translations of regional words or phrases in English and standard French. It also explains why these words are used in New Brunswick, mapping the evolution of health concepts from France to contemporary Acadie. By explaining the historic roots of Acadian words about pain, illness and the body, the guide gives health care workers a foundation for respecting linguistic differences.

New Brunswickers have the will to understand each other; this resource provides new means. We hope the provincial government will work with the authors to make it available to all who might benefit. In all likelihood, more examples of regional health terms will be discovered after its publication. Maintaining the directory online would help authorities update it, or even add material reflecting common Mi'kmaq and Maliseet health terms.

Passing the Official Languages Act 40 years ago did not make New Brunswick bilingual; it gave formal scope to an ongoing process of bringing mutual respect and understanding to governance. This is an ongoing challenge we must continually work at if we want bilingualism to flourish.

We need to start celebrating our differences - not using them to divide us.