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RÉGIE RÉGIONALE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DU NUNAVIK
NUNAVIK REGIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THREE MIDWIVES RECEIVE NATIONAL CERTIFICATION

Kuujjuaq, October 7, 2015 – On September 23 at the *Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec*'s annual general meeting, three midwives from Nunavik received their long-awaited certification that made them official midwives throughout the province. Saira Kakayuk and Lizzie Sakiagak Tayara from Salluit and Mary Ittukallak from Puvirnituq are joining the growing group of Inuit midwives, a profession that is making a difference for *Nunavimmiut* by increasingly enabling child delivery in the region.

Considering the high birth rate in the region, midwives are an important resource in Nunavik, and according to the three graduates it is not just like any other job. As Ittukallak points out, "accompanying a patient is a very nice moment, to be able to soothe their pain," a feeling echoed by Kakayuk, who "feels very honoured inside her heart for witnessing such beauty (birth)." All three midwives started their training between 2004 and 2006 and have witnessed over 200 births, making this on-the-job training a long commitment, one that Sakiagak Tayara said could not have been possible without the support of her husband.

The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) could not be prouder of the midwifery program and its students: "It is important for women and their families to be able to give birth at home, to be surrounded by their loved ones and more importantly to be able to receive services in their mother tongue especially in moments of great pain and stress," said Minnie Grey, Executive Director of the NRBHSS

There are four birthing centres in Nunavik, three on the Hudson coast, located in Inukjuak, Puvirnituq and Salluit, and one on the Ungava coast located in Kuujjuaq. The midwifery program core competencies used as a basis for education and qualification of midwives in Nunavik are equivalent to those of the *Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec* (*OSFQ*) and the Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM), adapted to practice in the Nunavik region. The community midwife's scope of practice is focussed on normal pregnancy, birth and postpartum. The Nunavik midwife acts as a team leader in both normal and abnormal situations and in emergency care, and works in collaboration with other members of the health-care team. The scope of competency for a Nunavik midwife in these areas often extends beyond those required by the *OSFQ* and the AOM due to the nature of practice in a remote region.

P.O. BOX 900, KUUJJUAQ (QUÉBEC) J0M 1C0
TEL: 1-844-964-2244 / 819 964-2222 FAX: 819 964-2888

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The NRBHSS is a public agency created in 1978 under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. *It is responsible for nearly the entire Québec territory located north of the 55th parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.*

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Source: Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
Department of Inuit Values and Practices

For information: Caroline D'Astous
Communications Officer, NRBHSS
819 964-2222, extension 293

For information about the program: Jennifer Watkins
Director of Inuit Values and Practices
819 964-2222 extension 247