



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATUS REPORT: TUBERCULOSIS CASES IN NUNAVIK

Kuujuuaq, June 28, 2012 – The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) would like to report on the current tuberculosis cases in Nunavik.

As of June 26, 2012, 74 tuberculosis cases have been reported in Nunavik for 2012: 65 in Kangiqsualujjuaq, 8 in Salluit and 1 in Kangiqsujuaq. By comparison, the data for 2010 and 2011 indicate 12 and 27 respectively. This outbreak is consistent with the tendency observed over the past few years toward a rise in the number of cases of active tuberculosis in both Nunavut and Nunavik.

Situation in Kangiqsualujjuaq (874 inhabitants)

In this village alone, a total of 68 cases of active tuberculosis has been reported since the occurrence of the first case in November 2011. The last case reported in this village dates back to September 2010.

The majority of cases were diagnosed during May and June 2012 after investigations conducted since the beginning of the year. This sudden increase in cases of active TB had an immediate impact on the local, regional and supraregional health services: investigations, isolation beds, administration of treatment, search for and evaluation of contacts.

To deal with the situation, the Nunavik Department of Public Health, in close collaboration with the personnel of the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre and the Kangiqsualujjuaq CLSC, has established measures under the four-part plan of action: surveillance, organization of services, community action and communication:

- **Surveillance:** With the participation of field epidemiologists from the Public Health Agency of Canada, the regional personnel and consultants, the epidemiological situation is being monitored closely, which permits identifying the groups most at risk, in view of targeted intervention.
- **Organization of services:** Additional resources were provided locally to assist in the identification and investigation of contacts as well as to manage treatment. A mobile pulmonary X-ray machine was acquired for the Kangiqsualujjuaq CLSC and a radiology technician visits that community regularly. Isolation beds were added to the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre. A machine for microbiological diagnosis of tuberculosis was installed at the UTHC laboratory.
- **Community action:** The elected officials and local representatives were met and informed a number of times. Community resources have been mobilized to better inform the public.
- **Communication:** A communiqué was issued on May 9, 2012, and messages were conceived for broadcast over local radio. Updates are regularly provided. Other messages destined specifically for youths have been posted on Facebook.

Application of these measures required the collaboration of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, the *ministère de la Santé et Services sociaux* and the Montréal hospitals involved.

Other Public-Health Measures

The Nunavik Department of Public Health recommends BCG vaccination for all newborns and children under the age of two years in the community of Kangiqsualujjuaq. However, the supply of BCG vaccines has been interrupted. Once the vaccine manufacturer resumes supplying BCG doses, we will proceed with the vaccination of children without further delay.

The Department of Public Health set forth recommendations and provided specific information destined for the workers who will be arriving in the community over the next few weeks. We do not recommend BCG vaccination for these workers or even the application of the tuberculin skin test before their arrival, as the degree of contact with the local population is very limited.

No restrictions in terms of travel between the Nunavik communities have been established and no screening is indicated, barring a specific public-health recommendation.

Upcoming Steps

As long as the present outbreak persists, these sustained efforts will continue from the points of view of surveillance and intervention. In the coming weeks and months, the Nunavik Department of Public Health plans on designing a program for preventing and controlling tuberculosis for the entire region.

Additional Information

Refer to our communiqué dated May 9, 2012, by clicking [here](#).

*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 services and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.*

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Source: Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services

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This communiqué is also posted on our Web site at www.rrsss17.gouv.qc.ca.