



NEWS RELEASE

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MINISTERS VISIT PUVIRNITUQ HEALTH CENTRE CONCERNING STAFF SHORTAGE

Puvirnituq, August 15, 2022 – For several weeks, the Inuulitsivik Health Centre (IHC) and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), with the support of the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec (MSSS)*, have bene working on a contingency plan to address the issue of staff shortages in the health sector. Actions have been taken and further steps will be made over the coming days. To ensure rapid support for the existing teams, physicians and management personnel have been called on to contribute to the effort and a call for nurses from other regions of Québec and other provinces has been launched by the Government.

On August 12th, 2022, the Minister of Health and Social Services, Christian Dubé and the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Lafrenière, were able to observe the situation during a visit and meetings with local authorities, namely, Jennifer Munick-Watkins, Acting Executive Director of the NRBHSS, and Claude Bérubé, Acting Director of the IHC, as well as with members of the medical personnel present at the IHC and members of the Hudson Bay Northern Nurses Union (*FIQ*). During the discussions, Ministers Dubé and Lafrenière learned of other issues linked to an equally serious personnel shortage in the psychosocial sector, including Youth Protection.

"This worrisome situation is presently at the core of our priorities. With my colleague lan Lafrenière, we went quickly on the ground to speak to the concerned people and wish to thank all those who lend a hand on site. I reiterate that we acted quickly to mobilize our teams and support the institution, but the fact remains that the communities are currently greatly affected, and that we must continue the work in the medium and long term so that access to health services be greatly improved."

Christian Dubé, Minister of Health and Social Services

"The current issues of access to health services in the Nunavik region are serious. It is important that together we find solutions adapted to Nunavik's reality that will meet Nunavimmiut needs. Local authorities can count on our full cooperation."

lan Lafrenière, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs

"It is a difficult situation. The lack of personnel in both the nursing and psychosocial sectors affects all of Québec, but especially Nunavik. All possible solutions are being considered. I am pleased to have had the chance to speak with Minister Dubé about the particularities of healthcare in Nunavik and the reasons behind our requests. We thank Minister Dubé and his team for their support."

Jennifer Munick-Watkins, Acting Executive Director, NRBHSS

"Minister Dubé's visit to see our reality with his own eyes and meet with our personnel was priceless. What we need are some persons capable of providing services, both for nursing care and in the psychosocial sector, who can come and work alongside the existing teams. Our needs are not great, but we have difficulty responding to them."

Claude Bérubé, Acting Executive Director, IHC

The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services 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

For information: Kathleen Poulin

Acting Coordinator of Communications, NRBHSS

media.nrbhss@ssss.gouv.qc.ca