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## INUIT HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS BROUGHT TO LIGHT AT STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

**Kuujuuaq, October 13, 2023** – Findings from the Qanuilirpitaa? 2017 Health Survey, which documents the health status of Nunavimmiut, were instrumental in supporting Lucy Grey from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) during her participation at the 19th meeting of the Stockholm Convention in Rome, Italy. In collaboration with the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the NRBHSS shared Qanuilirpitaa? 2017 Nunavik survey results which were obtained with significant contributions from Nunavimmiut participants and have yielded essential information regarding contaminant levels in the Arctic and their effects on Inuit populations.

Chemicals known as long-chain perfluorocarboxylic acids (LC-PFCAs), are part of a group called “forever chemicals” that do not break down under any known environmental conditions. These chemicals are extremely persistent in the environment and have been linked to a myriad of health outcomes in humans, including cardio-metabolic diseases and immune system suppression. Like other Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), accumulation of these chemicals are detected in the tissue of various animals harvested and consumed by Inuit, resulting in concentration levels found in the human body, far greater in numbers than with southern populations.

“Adverse health effects do not outweigh the benefits of the nutritional value of traditional foods harvested by Inuit. However, the consistent increase in levels of these detrimental chemicals is cause for concern. Inuit rightfully harvest highly nutritious, traditional foods that should be free of chemicals carried throughout the environment from great distances” stated Ms. Grey. “Inuit are bearing the brunt of the issue of these chemicals and preventive measures must be taken internationally to not just quell, but eradicate the levels found, in order to safeguard the environment, wildlife and humanity from the effects of their toxicity.”

Past legislation at the national and international levels concerning these types of chemicals have been attributed largely in part by findings from data collected in Nunavik and the commendable participation of Nunavimmiut was crucial.

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### About the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Service:

The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is a public agency created in 1978 under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It is responsible for nearly the entire Quebec territory located north of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.

**Source:** Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services

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