

PRESS RELEASE

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CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF THE YPA: OFFICIAL LETTER OF INTENT

Kuujjuaq, July 19th, 2018 – On behalf of the Sukait Working Group on the cultural adaptation of the youth protection services, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) is pleased to announce that the Quebec Government has officially been notified of the region's intent to act in the scope of section 37.5 of the Youth Protection Act. This article allows Indigenous communities to conclude an agreement with the Quebec Government for the cultural adaptation of the Youth Protection services according to their culture, beliefs, customs and values.

In its strategic plan 2009-2016, the NRBHSS mandated the Regional Advisory Committee on Youth Services (RACYS) to assess the regionalization of youth and family services in priority. The objective is to ensure that the services provided to youths and their families are organized in a comprehensive and coherent manner while being culturally relevant and appropriate. Nunavik leaders identified the development of cultural adaptations to the Youth Protection program as being core, to better respond to the specific needs of youth and their families.

In May 2017, Mina Beaulne was appointed as the Nunavik Integrated Youth and Family Services Advisor and currently leads this project. Ms. Beaulne has been presented the project to all the major organizations and to all the communities in Nunavik. As a result, NRBHSS, Makivik Corporation, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, Qarjuit Youth Council, Nunavik Elders committee, Saturviit Women's association, Avataq and Northern Villages are mobilized under the current initiative. They support the creation of a special youth protection program and each of their Board of Directors passed resolutions pledging support to the project, are actively collaborating in the process and approving the NRBHSS' leadership in doing so.

The NRBHSS held its AGM in June, in Kuujjuaq and the official letter of intent addressed to Premier Couillard, Ministers Barette and Charlebois, was signed jointly by NRBHSS Board of Directors' Chair Lucy Tukkiapik and Charlie Watt, President of Makivik Corporation. The letter has been sent with all the resolutions testifying to the support and mobilization of all the communities and organizations in Nunavik towards the development of a special youth protection program.

This letter states that: "as Nunavimmiut, we hold the safety and protection of our children at heart. While we acknowledge the importance and the necessity to ensure the safety and development of our youth, we equally feel that any youth protection program has to be created by Inuit and for Inuit to be respectful of our cultural identity, of our family and community structures, and of our beliefs, customs and values. Only then should it be successful."

This letter of intent marks the first step towards the beginning of the negotiation of an agreement with the Quebec Government. The Sukait Working Group will continue their work until December 2018. As it is of great importance for the NRBHSS that this program belongs to all Nunavimmiut, public consultations will be held in all the communities of Nunavik during Spring 2019, before submitting the final proposal to Quebec.

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 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

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