

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## LET'S ALL ENCOURAGE HEALTHY PREGNANCIES

**Kuujjuaq, September 6, 2018** – Each year on September 9, at 9:09 a.m., a moment of silence is observed to recall that alcohol is a serious threat to maternal and infant health.

This annual event, observed throughout the world takes on particular importance in Nunavik. In the Qanuippitaa health survey of 2004, 44.2% of women admitted to having consumed alcohol during their last pregnancy. Prenatal exposure to alcohol is the primary avoidable cause of congenital anomalies and intellectual impairment among children; some disorders are permanent and irreversible.

International FASD Awareness Day (FASD: foetal alcohol spectrum disorder) is observed on the ninth day of the ninth month of the year to underline that during the nine months of pregnancy, there is no safe quantity of alcohol that may be consumed, and this is true at all stages of pregnancy.

Dr. Marie Rochette, Director of Public Health of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), points out that several initiatives exist in Nunavik to raise awareness and support the communities. "Interventions in the schools are carried out to raise awareness among youth on the risks of consuming alcohol during pregnancy. Training on FASD prevention is offered to interveners in the communities and community meetings for pregnant women are organized to discuss healthy pregnancy. These initiatives bring pregnancy at the forefront and are ways to celebrate it."

The NRBHSS invites the churches of Nunavik communities to ring their bells at 9:09 a.m. on Sunday, September 9, to remind all Nunavimmiut to observe a moment of silence and encourage healthy pregnancies.

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 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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