

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MASS SCREENING FOR TUBERCULOSIS IN SALLUIT

**Kuujjuaq, November 6, 2015** – Due to the rising number of active tuberculosis cases in the community of Salluit, more than 24 cases since June 2015, the Department of Public Health of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), in close collaboration with the Inuulitsivik Health Centre (IHC) and the Northern Village of Salluit, has decided to be pro-active and counter attack to limit the extent of the outbreak by organizing a mass screening in the community.

To stop the progression of the outbreak, a mass screening per household will start on November 9<sup>th</sup>. “It is very important to understand that the community, although experiencing a limited outbreak situation at the moment, is not under quarantine. It is to avoid reaching epidemic proportion that we are acting now and on such a big scale,” says Dr. Serge Dery, Director of Public Health. “With the support of the community this action plan will help us have the big picture of the state of tuberculosis in the community and make sure that everyone is screened.”

Screening measures took place at Ikusik School, where high school students have been tested in the past weeks. “The mass screening will be household based, including elementary students. Acting on a household base helps de-stigmatize the process as everyone, over two years of age, will be invited to be seen,” says mayor Paulusie Saviadjuk.

An entire section of the CLSC has been prepared and is dedicated to this mass screening. Additional medical staff is on site to ensure a smooth and efficient process. The screening will have three components:

- Clinical questionnaire
- Tuberculin skin test
- Chest x-ray

All Sallumiut are invited to tune in to the FM throughout the coming weeks to receive more information in regards to the mass screening and how it will unfold and may contact their CLSC for additional information.



Here are a few key reminders about tuberculosis:

## *What is tuberculosis?*

Tuberculosis is a contagious disease caused by a microbe, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The microbe most often establishes itself in the lungs, but other organs such as the lymph nodes, kidneys and bones can be affected. Tuberculosis can develop rapidly after initial contact with the microbe, just as it can manifest several years later.

### *What are the symptoms?*

The symptoms most indicative of tuberculosis are the following: an important cough that persists for more than two weeks, often accompanied by mucus or phlegm, fever, great fatigue, loss of appetite, night sweats and weight loss.

## ***How does an individual get infected with tuberculosis?***

When an individual with contagious pulmonary tuberculosis coughs or sneezes, he or she projects microbes into the air. When another individual inhales those microbes, he or she can be infected.

**Who are most at risk of getting infected with tuberculosis?**

The individuals most at risk are those in close and prolonged contact with a sick person who is contagious, i.e., domestic and other intimate contacts. The most vulnerable are children, elderly persons and those whose physical resistance is compromised by other diseases or by their lifestyle.

### ***Is there a treatment for tuberculosis?***

**Yes, and it is essential.** When the medication is taken as prescribed, tuberculosis will heal and become non-contagious. The patient will thus avoid serious complications, besides protecting his or her loved ones. Note that in Québec, tuberculosis is a disease subject to obligatory treatment. It is treated with several medications (generally from two to four different types) that must be taken regularly for a minimum period of 6 months. Thanks to the effectiveness of the medications used, the contagiousness of cases generally diminishes rapidly.



## News Release

*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 55<sup>th</sup> 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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