NEWS RELEASE

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COVID-19: TEMPORARY LIMITATION OF TRAVELS TO AND FROM NUNAVIK

Kuujjuaq, December 26th, 2021 –

On December 23rd, it has been confirmed that the Omicron variant is circulating in Nunavik. Facing this unprecedent situation and a high level of risk, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), Makivik Corporation and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) unanimously agreed to limit travels from the south of the province and from Nunavik to critical and essential travels only.

The main purpose of this measure is to delay as much as possible the spread of the virus (highly contagious) within the region. In the south of the province, Omicron variant is predominant, spreading at an incredible pace, and is affecting the health care system. The threat of a new and worse outbreak is not only on the population, but also on our health care systems. Hospitals down South are reaching their maximum capacity and won't be able to accept patients. Our regular service corridors are highly compromised, as the health care system in the South is overloaded.

Protect the region by a limitation of travels to and from Nunavik

The NRBHSS, Makivik and KRG, stand together in their mission of protecting the population and have agreed to limit travels from outside the region to Nunavik or from Nunavik for a period of 28 days, effective as of December 29th 2021 until January 26th 2022.

Acknowledging the high impact of such a measure, this decision will be reevaluated on a weekly basis, following the evolution of the situation of Covid-19, both in the North and in the South.

"It is with a heavy heart that this announcement is made. These decisions are not easy ones. The consequences for the region are real, and so is the risk we are in. In regard with the evolution of the actual situation, this is inevitable.", says Minnie Grey, Executive director of the NBHRSS.

"The decision to restrict travels and impose a temporary lockdown is based on the seriousness of the situation and is taken for everyone's health and safety.", say Pita Aatami, President of Makivik Corporation.

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"Imposing the new measures is not taken lightly by the regional organizations and the leaders. To protect the population and our region is our responsibility. It is obvious that the situation we are in requires drastic measures for everyone's safety.", says Hilda Snowball, Acting President of the Kativik Regional Government.

Travelling to Nunavik will be accepted for essential travels only. This includes, but is not limited to: those who must travel to provide or receive essential services in the education, public-security, justice, health, social, day-care, municipal and airport sectors as well as their dependants who reside on the territory. Those who work or exercise their profession on behalf of a construction, telecommunication or maintenance company can travel insofar as the work to be performed is critical. Critical work is work which, if not carried out, endangers the health or safety of the population or which endangers the integrity of an infrastructure and/or systems. Those who have their principal residence in the region will be able to return home for the period of the lockdown.

The delivery of essential services and the regular supplies of goods will not be affected by this lockdown. Nunavik Territory Authorization Access (NTAA) will be granted to authorized travellers.

Vaccination
The booster shots (3rd doses) are offered to Nunavimmiut over 18 years old since a few weeks now. Studies shows that vaccination with 2 doses reduces the risk of serious illness. A booster dose significantly increases the protection against infections with Omicron (75% efficacy) and against hospitalizations (80-85%). The population is more than ever encouraged to get the vaccine.

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