

**NUNAVIK REGIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

HEALTH PLAN BLOCK FUNDING AGREEMENT

UPDATE 2025-2029



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RÉGIE RÉGIONALE DE LA NUNAVIK REGIONAL
SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES BOARD OF HEALTH
SOCIAUX DU NUNAVIK AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACJQ	Association des centres jeunesse du Québec	MADO	Maladie à déclaration obligatoire
ADI	Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative	MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
AOM	Association of Ontario Midwives	MNQ/NQM	Northern Quebec Module (Ullivik)
AHSSS	Act respecting health services and social services	MMIWG	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
CBHSSJB	Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay	MSSS	Ministère de Santé et des Services sociaux
CHSLD	Extended-care residential hospital centre	NISPS	National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy
CLSC	Local community service centre	NNC	Nutrition North Canada
CLWW	Community liaison wellness worker	NI	Nunaituqait Ikajuqatigiitut
CPEJ	Child- and youth-protection centre	NRBHSS	Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
CPNP	Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program	NYHA	Nunavik Youth House Association
CRDM	Centre de réadaptation en dépendances de Montréal	OSFQ	Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec
DYP	Department of Youth Protection	PPO	Planning and programming officer
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	QNIHS	Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey
FCNQ	Federation of Cooperatives of New Quebec	RPC	Regional Partnership Committee
FNIHCCP	First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program	RUIS	Integrated university health network
IHC	Inuulitsivik Health Centre (Hudson Coast)	RSPC	Regional Suicide-Prevention Committee
INIHB	Insured/non-insured health benefits	SIPPE	Services intégrés en périnatalité et en petite enfance
INSPQ	Institut de santé publique du Québec	SHQ	Société d'habitation du Québec
IPQ	Ilusiliriniqmi Pigutjiutini Qimirruiq	SPLW	Suicide-prevention liaison worker
IT	Information technology	STBBI	Sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections
ISC	Indigenous Services Canada	TB	Tuberculosis
ITK	Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami	UTHC	Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre
KMHB	Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau		
KI	Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (school board)		
KRG	Kativik Regional Government		

METHODOLOGY

The development of this health-plan update is primarily informed by program-level information gathered through internal consultations. Program coordinators and program leads completed structured templates designed to capture updated details regarding program descriptions, priorities, planned activities for the coming years and the ways in which each program is implemented within the northern context.

The data collected through this process constitute the main source of information for the present document. In essence, the content reflects the expertise, priorities and realities identified by the teams responsible for each program.

WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Executive Director of the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, I am pleased to present this updated version of our health plan. This document reflects the commitment of our teams to review and refine the objectives and activities of the programs funded by Indigenous Services Canada, in order to ensure their continued relevance for the population of Nunavik.

While this renewed health plan provides a comprehensive overview of our health and social services network, it focusses specifically on the funded programs, their goals, activities and services, for the remaining years of the 2019–2029 funding agreement. It illustrates our vision and our priorities as we move forward.

Through this process, we aim to demonstrate that these programs are designed and carried out with determination to meet the needs of our population, and that we have a clear and solid plan to put the available resources to their most effective use. This updated vision reinforces the value of long-term, stable funding and the importance of aligning our actions with the evolving health and social challenges faced in Nunavik.

We value the collaborative relationship we have built with Indigenous Services Canada over the years, and we look forward to continuing this partnership. We are grateful for the opportunity to pursue our shared mission: improving health and well-being across Nunavik.

Jennifer Munick-Watkins

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES NETWORK OF NUNAVIK

The health and social services network of Nunavik is structured around the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), established in 1995 in accordance with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). Since its creation, the board has served as the regional authority responsible for the planning, organization, and evaluation of all health and social services delivered to the 14 Inuit communities across the region.

The mission of the NRBHSS is twofold: first, to ensure that health and social services are accessible, continuous, and safe for the population of Nunavik; and second, to guarantee that these services are culturally relevant and adapted to the unique geographic and social realities of the region. The NRBHSS also plays a central role in managing the human, financial, and material resources of the network, while coordinating services with provincial, federal, and community partners.

Each year, the NRBHSS administers a budget of approximately \$315 million, funded primarily by the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) of Québec, complemented by federal contributions, notably through Indigenous Services Canada. This funding supports not only the operations of the institutions and services delivered locally but also the development of preventive and health-promotion programs.

The head office of the NRBHSS is located in Kuujuaq, which serves as both the administrative and logistical centre of the regional system. Nunavik is officially identified as Health Region 17 within Quebec; however, it benefits from a special status that distinguishes it from other administrative regions. This status provides the NRBHSS with greater flexibility to adapt services to the needs of its population, taking into account challenges such as geographic remoteness, the isolation of communities, limited availability of specialized resources, and the importance of integrating Inuit cultural values and traditions into the planning and delivery of care.

The board of directors of the NRBHSS is composed of 20 members, including representatives from the 14 villages, the executive directors of both regional health centres, a representative from the Kativik Regional Government, and the executive director of the NRBHSS. In accordance with the JBNQA, a majority of the seats are held by Inuit members, ensuring governance that is grounded in local priorities and reflective of the population's realities.

The core values guiding the NRBHSS are autonomy, respect, participation, collaboration, and the recognition of human resources. Its vision is a healthy population living in strong, resilient communities, where integrated front-line services are delivered in Inuktitut, French, and English, and provided in a way that respects Inuit traditions and values.

Direct service delivery in Nunavik is provided through two regional health centres: the Inuulitsivik Health Centre (IHC), located in Puvirnituq on the Hudson Bay coast, and the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre (UTHC), located in Kuujuaq on the Ungava Bay coast. Both institutions provide primary-care services to their home communities, as well as secondary services to surrounding villages.

INUULITSIVIK HEALTH CENTRE (IHC)

The IHC serves seven communities along the Hudson Bay coast: Akulivik, Inukjuak, Ivujivik, Kuujuaapik, Puvirnituq, Salluit, and Umiujaq. It operates with 17 short-term beds and 8 long-term care beds, while providing a wide range of services, including emergency care, maternity services, day surgery, laboratory and imaging, dentistry, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, youth protection, social services, and group homes.

In addition to its local responsibilities, the IHC has a regional mandate to manage Ullivik, a patient residence located in Dorval (Montreal). Ullivik accommodates Inuit patients and their escorts who must travel to Montreal for specialized care. The facility, designed with Inuit cultural needs in mind, offers nine rooms and 143 beds, along with dedicated spaces for traditional activities and country-food preparation, ensuring cultural continuity during patients' stays in the South.

UNGAVA TULATTAVIK HEALTH CENTRE (UTHC)

The UTHC serves seven communities along the Ungava Bay coast: Aupaluk, Tasiujaq, Kangirsuk, Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kangiqsujaq, Kuujuaq, and Quaqtaq. It operates with 15 short-term beds and 10 long-term care beds and provides a comprehensive range of services similar to those offered at the IHC, including emergency, maternity, hospitalization, laboratory, imaging, youth protection, and social services.

The UTHC also carries a regional mandate related to the coordination of youth rehabilitation services. These programs, rooted in cultural and community values, provide psychosocial support, social reintegration, and housing for youth facing personal, family, or social difficulties. Their goal is to foster resilience, autonomy, and positive reintegration, while respecting cultural and collective values.

A NETWORK ADAPTED TO NORTHERN REALITIES

Every community in Nunavik has a CLSC (local community service centre) that provides primary-care services, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Permanent physicians are posted in the main centres of Puvirnituk, Kuujuaq, Salluit, and Inukjuak, while in the other villages, physicians provide periodic coverage and are supported through telehealth. The expanded roles of nurses, midwives, and other front-line professionals are essential to ensuring continuity and quality of care across the region.

The Nunavik health and social services network is built on an integrated model that balances prevention and curative care. It is designed to address the region's unique challenges, including geographical isolation, reliance on air transportation, high costs of living and service delivery, and persistent workforce shortages, while firmly embedding Inuit traditions and values into its operations.

This model represents a distinctive approach that aims to ensure a sustainable system of care, one that is population-centered, culturally respectful, and comparable in safety and quality to health and social services offered elsewhere in Quebec.



FEDERAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

The following section presents the programs funded through the Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) contribution agreement. On April 1, 2019, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) entered into a ten-year agreement with ISC (2019–2029) according to a block-funding model. This approach provides the NRBHSS with greater autonomy and flexibility in managing health programs and services, allowing decisions on objectives, priorities and resource allocation to be better aligned with the needs of Nunavik’s population.

The agreement is supported by a multi-year health plan. It was initially developed at the outset of the agreement and covers the period from 2019 to 2024. The present document constitutes an update to that plan, reflecting our continued commitment to reviewing, refining and aligning our actions with regional health and social priorities.

For each program, the following sections describe how it is implemented in the region, its primary goals and the key activities planned to achieve these objectives for the coming years, at least until the end of the current agreement in fiscal 2028–2029.



PROGRAMS

**HEALTH-SYSTEM
CAPACITY**

AIR-PATIENT NAVIGATORS

OVERVIEW

This funding aims to support the deployment of Indigenous health-system navigators, who can accompany patients through their journeys with federal, provincial and territorial health services.

It also provides the necessary flexibility to ensure the implementation of various measures to support this assistance, including cultural safety measures, by establishing or strengthening Indigenous patient-advocacy services.

These roles are essential to enabling Indigenous patients to navigate health systems more safely and effectively, while promoting culturally safe and appropriate care.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve access to and navigation of federal, provincial and territorial health-care systems for Indigenous patients by ensuring personalized and culturally safe support throughout their care journey.
- Strengthen the capacity of Indigenous organizations to provide patient-advocacy services by implementing culturally safe measures and promoting a better understanding of available rights and services.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Hire and train Indigenous health-system navigators: recruit individuals from Indigenous communities and provide them with training on health systems, patient rights and cultural safety practices.
- Establish or enhance Indigenous patient-advocacy services: develop support, mediation and assistance services for patients facing barriers to accessing care.

HEALTH HUMAN-RESOURCES INITIATIVES

OVERVIEW

The Human Resources Department ensures the planning, coordination and evaluation of training programs that meet the needs in terms of service provision in the health and social services network. It contributes to improving attraction and retention of personnel and the development of the Inuit succession plan. In collaboration with the Executive Management Department, the department supports the efforts to hire, maintain, train and mobilize Inuit personnel towards a sustainable workforce. The funding agreement with ISC provides an opportunity to enhance and support the work of the department. In particular, it will contribute by:

- Supporting training initiatives tailored to the needs of the Nunavik health and social services network;
- Strengthening staff retention and development efforts;
- Ensuring workforce stability to improve services.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop the skills of Inuit employees in the health and social services sectors.
- Contribute to the addition of qualified workers in those sectors.
- Provide opportunities for more people to take well-paying jobs in those sectors.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- In collaboration with both health centres, identify the next credited training program we should offer to support their efforts to hire, maintain, train and mobilize Inuit personnel towards a sustainable workforce.
- Develop strategies to attract workers from communities outside Kuujuaq and Puvirnituk.

PLANNING AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

Since the beginning of this agreement, a team was hired to ensure efficient management of the federal-government agreement. As part of their mandate, they developed internal capacity to ensure the compliance of activities and programs as well as developed accountability and performance-management tools. Their role as a liaison with the federal government has proven effective for both parties. Various initiatives are currently in place to improve the overall governance of the NRBHSS. In the coming years, these resources will continue to shape the way the federal agreement is managed and, more particularly, integrated with provincial funding.

A team has also been established to implement the necessary measures to ensure that health care and health practices are culturally appropriate for Nunavimmiut. This team also works to ensure that the organization's cultural-safety obligations are met and provides support to other departments and the health centres in this area.

A coordinator ensures the implementation and proper functioning of the team as well as compliance with the various obligations related to these responsibilities.

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen accountability and performance management through standardized tools.
- Ensure consistent data collection and careful monitoring of program spending, including surplus management.
- Improve integration of federal and provincial programs and foster stronger interdepartmental collaboration.
- Promote cultural safety in health-care services.
- Implement principles of governance and secure cultural practices in the area of cultural safety.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Develop and implement standardized evaluation, financial-management and reporting tools.
- Monitor spending closely to simplify surplus management and prepare for federal audits.
- Collaborate with and support the various departments of the NRBHSS to integrate federal data, identify gaps and overlaps, and harmonize services.
- Encourage the integration of cultural-safety principles into professional practices in order to improve the experience of users from diverse communities.

NATIONAL INUIT HEALTH SURVEY

OVERVIEW

The Qanuippitaa? National Inuit Health Survey (QNIHS) is a collaborative Inuit-led initiative that prioritizes Inuit well-being. The QNIHS collects information from Inuit in Canada which remains Inuit-owned, empowering individuals and informing policies, programs, and services that impact Inuit health and wellness.

The purpose of the QNIHS is to improve the health and social well-being of Inuit in Nunavik by influencing Inuit health and social development policies and programs. It is the first survey of its kind and is truly unique. It is Inuit-led, Inuit-specific, and developed and delivered entirely by the QNIHS regional project managers who represent the land-claims organizations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Inuit-determined
- Focussed on Inuit health, well-being and social equity
- Strengths-based
- Collaborative
- Rigorous in methods
- Trailblazing (innovative)

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the QNIHS are to:

- Provide high quality, Inuit-determined and Inuit-owned data to monitor change;
- Identify strengths and gaps in Inuit health and well-being;
- Inform decision making, leading to improved health and wellness among Inuit in Nunavik.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Analyze the data from the QNIHS first cycle and disseminate the results (data collection completed in 2024).
- Finalize the methodology and the national and the regional questionnaires for the QNIHS second cycle.
- Complete the field-work plan and the communication strategy for the QNIHS second cycle (data collection).
- Complete the data collection for the QNIHS second cycle.
- Process and analyze the data and disseminate the results from the QNIHS second cycle.



PROGRAMS

HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CANADA PRENATAL NUTRITION PROGRAM (CPNP)

OVERVIEW

This program aims at improving access to healthy foods for pregnant women and new mothers until the child is one year old to alleviate the impact of food insecurity in the region. Both health centres use most of the funds for the distribution of food coupons to pregnant women and mothers. For the past three years, funds were also made available for pregnant women to get food coupons to buy healthy food when staying at Ullivik (lodging facility located in Dorval for patients needing health care outside of the region).

The CPNP provides multiple opportunities for support and education on various topics, including consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs during pregnancy, healthy nutrition, prevention of anemia, postnatal depression, breast-feeding, introducing solid foods and vaccination. Early intervention, during pregnancy and the postnatal period, is key to fostering optimal development of children and improving their overall health.

An NRBHSS public-health officer coordinates the CPNP file to ensure continuity and integration of the program with the other maternal and child-health initiatives. The team at the NRBHSS also coordinates regional initiatives for the program, such as program evaluations, training and the development of adapted tools.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve maternal and infant overall health and optimal development.
- Reduce the incidence of low birth weights.
- Improve breast-feeding initiation and maintenance rates.
- Increase access to healthy store-bought food during pregnancy and the postnatal period to reduce the impacts of food insecurity on mothers and children.
- Support healthy eating habits during pregnancy and the postnatal period.

ACTIVITIES

- Support the Ilagiilluta (ISPEC) workers in the delivery of the program by providing funds, training and relevant teaching materials.
- Work with grocery stores in the region to ensure understanding of the program and availability of eligible foods.
- Promote country food during pregnancy and as the first food for babies and optimize our post-natal offer by adding healthy food options.
- Provide nutritional support to pregnant women and new mothers (until the child is one year old) and create adapted tools in collaboration with health centres.
- Collaborate with the OLO Foundation to adapt some of their tools for the region.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The initiatives that are part of the Maternal and Child Health program are meant to promote the physical, emotional and cognitive development of mothers and children.

Through comprehensive, community-based initiatives, collaborative work and support networks, they focus on early intervention to enhance protective factors that contribute to lifelong well-being.

This program involves many different service providers in order to ensure culturally relevant and safe services.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve the health of young children and mothers by implementing an integrated continuum of services for prevention and health promotion in partnership with Nunavignmi Ilagiit Papatauvunga.
- Improve the collaborative work by gathering key partners in an official collaborative network.
- Promote breast-feeding and healthy infant-feeding practices to support optimal growth and development.

ACTIVITIES

- Offer breast-feeding training and support the development of a supportive network for mothers.
- Support the Ilagiilluta early-childhood program's ongoing development in partnership with Nunavignmi Ilagiit Papatauvunga.

MIDWIFERY

OVERVIEW

This program supports midwifery services through:

- Improving health outcomes associated with Inuit maternal, infant, child and family health. The areas of focus include prenatal health, postnatal health and newborn care, nutrition, early literacy and learning, and physical, emotional and mental health;
- Supporting access to a continuum of culturally safe prenatal, postnatal and birth services and supports by providing distinctions-based funding to expand midwifery and doula projects and services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

OBJECTIVES

- Return birthing to the community, with a priority on rural, remote, isolated or northern communities, where there is no local or culturally safe birthing option.
- Establish new community-based, self-determined midwifery practices responsive to community needs across the spectrum of prenatal, natal and postnatal care.
- Integrate Indigenous traditions and knowledge with modern medicine to reframe existing maternal- and child-health policies and programs.
- Build partnerships that help to create, sustain and support innovation to bring birthing closer to the community or in the community.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Diversify pathways to becoming a qualified Indigenous midwife (e.g., creating new community-based apprenticeship/mentoring programs or partnerships with universities to develop bridging programs for Indigenous students).
- Recruit and retain Indigenous midwives (e.g., innovative cost-sharing/service-delivery agreements with health authorities or communities hiring their own salaried midwives and doulas).
- Develop infrastructure projects (e.g., completing pre-capital planning, completion of renovations, potential construction of new spaces, such as birthing centres).
- Address jurisdictional issues (provincial/territorial partnerships to address legislative or regulatory barriers to restoring Indigenous midwifery to communities).

FETAL ALCOHOLISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

OVERVIEW

This program addresses the prevention of fetal alcoholism spectrum disorder (FASD) by raising awareness, educating communities and promoting healthy pregnancies. The NRBHSS supports existing services with some federal funds in order to offer a more integrated and complete variety of services. Prevention efforts start prior to birth and intend to promote healthy and alcohol-free pregnancies as well as reduce harm caused by alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

OBJECTIVES

- Build strong collaborations between all stakeholders to ensure a continuum of services in prevention of FASD and promotion of healthy pregnancies.
- Open dialogue and raise awareness around FASD with all service providers and community members.
- Ensure prevention and promotion efforts are aligned with rapidly evolving best practices in the field of pregnancy and alcohol.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Organize and deliver brief intervention training to partners and front-line workers.
- Support and fund community-based activities aimed at developing strong support networks around pregnant women.
- Have ongoing communications with communities and partners to open dialogue and raise awareness.



PROGRAMS

**MENTAL
WELLNESS**

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

OVERVIEW

The Building Healthy Communities program is built on community involvement and Inuit cultural values, recognizing that a decentralized and bottom-up approach is essential for effective prevention and care in Nunavik. The NRBHSS Community Support Team, within the Public Health Department, supports the development of local capacity and access to culturally safe services, programs and activities requested by communities. Funding, tools, training and community support visits are offered to any community organization wanting to start their own public-health initiative, and are also available through the two established prevention programs in the region. Community liaison wellness workers (CLWWs) and locally hired hospital employees are responsible for health promotion, prevention activities and improving the delivery of services by strengthening ties with CLSC professionals and wellness committees (locally elected committees in each community who are responsible for identifying local priorities and organizing health-promotion activities by partnering with community organizations).

OBJECTIVES

- Support the development of community work and outreach services in Nunavik.
- Develop the local capacity to maintain a structured and sustainable wellness-committee program.
- Contribute to improving access to culturally safe services and programs within the health and social services system in Nunavik.
- Activities and services
- Produce a reference framework to provide regional orientations and guidance on the development of outreach/community work in Nunavik.
- Provide guidance, support and funding to local wellness committees and CLWWs.
- Advocate in favour of integrating the IQI model of health and well-being in the development of health and social services.
- Develop tools and training to support community-work needs in the region.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Produce a reference framework to provide regional orientations and guidance on the development of outreach/community work in Nunavik
- Provide guidance, support and funding to local wellness committees and CLWWs
- Advocate in favor of integrating the IQI model of health and well-being in the development of health and social services
- Develop tools and trainings to support community work needs in the region

BRIGHTER FUTURES

OVERVIEW

The Brighter Futures Program in Nunavik supports Inuit traditional and community-based approaches to mental wellness and healthy development. Adapted to the Nunavik context, the program contributes to enhancing well-being through initiatives that are locally designed, culturally grounded and community-driven.

Nunavik communities face complex and interrelated social, emotional and developmental challenges that affect children, youth and families. Within this context, Brighter Futures emphasizes preventive, holistic and intersectoral action across five key components: mental health, child development, parenting skills, healthy babies and injury prevention.

In Nunavik, the program operates under the principles of self-determination, community empowerment and traditional-knowledge transmission. Each of the 14 communities is eligible to apply for funding with the support of their local council through resolution. Projects are reviewed by an internal committee to ensure alignment with regional priorities, complementarity with existing services and responsiveness to community-identified needs.

Brighter Futures thus acts as a flexible support mechanism allowing communities to explore, design and implement initiatives that strengthen family resilience, enhance parenting capacity, promote early childhood development and sustain culturally safe approaches to mental wellness.

OBJECTIVES

- Support Inuit community initiatives that promote mental wellness, child development, parenting skills, healthy babies and injury prevention through locally driven and culturally relevant approaches.
- Facilitate access to funding and technical support for community-led projects that respond to locally identified priorities and contribute to improving the well-being of children, youth and families.
- Strengthen community capacity and autonomy by assisting local organizations in developing, implementing and evaluating their initiatives in alignment with the five components of the Brighter Futures Program.
- Promote collaboration and complementarity among community stakeholders, local organizations and other sectors (health, education, justice, employment) to enhance the impact and sustainability of funded activities.
- Ensure accountability and continuous improvement through guidance, evaluation and knowledge-sharing mechanisms that help communities document, reflect and build on their successes.

BRIGHTER FUTURES

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

To achieve these objectives, the NRBHSS, through the Brighter Futures Program, will undertake the following types of activities:

- Provide financial and technical support Inuit communities to design, plan, and implement locally led projects in one or more Brighter Futures components: mental health, child development, healthy babies, parenting skills, and injury prevention.
- Offer guidance and mentorship to community representatives in project proposal development, reporting, and evaluation, ensuring alignment with program objectives and community needs.
- Facilitate capacity-building opportunities to strengthen the knowledge and skills of community-based workers and coordinators involved in Brighter Futures projects.
- Promote the sharing of best practices and culturally relevant approaches through communication tools, meetings, and networking among communities.
- Monitor and evaluate program outcomes regionally to document achievements, identify challenges, and inform continuous improvement and accountability to both communities and federal partners.

CANADIAN DRUGS AND SUBSTANCES STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

The overdose-prevention program in Nunavik aims to reduce deaths and the multiple harms (traumas, psychosocial issues, others) associated with the use of psychoactive substances, particularly opioids and alcohol, but also crack and crystal meth, whose presence has intensified in the region since 2023. This program is grounded in an approach adapted to the northern and cultural context of Nunavik, taking into account geographic realities (14 communities accessible only by plane), linguistic realities (Inuktitut and English) and cultural realities (Inuit culture).

Particular attention is given to youth and pregnant women, who are vulnerable to the use of new substances. Crack use has surged, worsened by misinformation about its supposed safety compared to alcohol. The program includes targeted actions to correct these false beliefs and to offer tailored support to these at-risk groups.

It is based on collaboration with Inuit communities, health services, maternity services and regional partners to offer interventions that are accessible, culturally safe and focussed on harm reduction.

OBJECTIVES

- Reduce mortality and complications related to overdoses.
- Respond to overdose events presenting a potential threat to the population.
- Improve surveillance and analysis of regional trends in substance use and overdoses.
- Correct misinformation about substances (e.g., crack vs. alcohol) among users, youth and pregnant women.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- Develop and deploy a regional distribution system for safer consumption supplies, as well as adapted training for on-the-ground distributors. Strengthen naloxone distribution.
- Increase awareness among front-line workers about the importance of reporting overdose incidents and strengthen their skills to intervene effectively.
- Collaborate with the surveillance team to develop an overdose-data dashboard and identify relevant data sources.
- Develop targeted and adapted awareness campaigns and/or tools for the various at-risk populations.

INDIAN DAY SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW

The Indian Day School Program aims to support survivors in their healing process through accessible, safe and culturally appropriate mental health support services.

The psychological impacts associated with Indian Day School may be similar to those experienced by residential school survivors, similar to post-traumatic stress disorders and might be characterized by one or more symptoms.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide training, capacity-building and development opportunities for health and cultural support workers.
- Provide ongoing support for health and cultural support workers to ensure that they are able to continue to work in safe and healthy ways (debriefings and opportunities to discuss casework and other issues in a structured way, clinical supervision).

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Organize outreach activities over the radio to inform about the child-welfare system, the justice system, the education system and the health system in order to raise awareness but also act on the reconciliation between systems.
- Hire and collaborate with natural helpers from all across Nunavik or seek elders' support when deemed appropriate, to support activities such as the Puttautiit Suicide Prevention Conference.
- Enhance emotional and cultural supports through complementary culturally relevant and safe approaches to mental wellness including on-the-land activities and ceremonies, workshops (grief and loss, intergenerational trauma), cultural activities.

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS RESOLUTION HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

This program provides psychological and emotional support services to eligible Indian residential school survivors and their families and loved ones.

Local support workers offer emotional support to former students of residential schools and their families. In addition to scheduled yearly visits to the communities, the team also visits communities that need support for crisis or trauma upon request.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote healing and reconciliation among intergenerational-trauma survivors, community members and organizations of Nunavik.
- Help Nunavimmiut to understand the impacts that the legacy of Indian residential schools has had on them and the communities in order to promote the development of new partnerships for the future.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Visit the communities and Ullivik according to the planned schedule, to offer therapeutic activities and counselling opportunities.
- When requested by the leaders of a community or in support of the health centres and the Inuulitsivik Health Centre's (IHC) natural helpers' team, provide counselling after traumatic events or crises.
- Increase awareness through regular radio shows or public speaking.
- Facilitate healing sessions and support groups, starting in Kuujuaq as the team is physically in this community; then replicate the model in other communities.

MENTAL WELLNESS TEAMS

OVERVIEW

This program supports mental health and well-being through community-based initiatives, reconciliation efforts and culturally appropriate mental wellness services. Natural helpers will become part of a formal network supported and coordinated by the program.

The program provides the region with the opportunity to work closely with communities to develop an approach that increases local services and fills existing gaps.

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the value of natural helpers, promote and formalize their role.
- Support Inuit traditional approaches to mental wellness through community-based and -led initiatives.
- Increase local mental-wellness services by creating and supporting a natural helpers' network.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Host healing circles and cultural workshops in communities.
- Train and support natural helpers to provide quality mental-wellness services in communities.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

OVERVIEW

This program aims to support survivors, families and individuals affected by the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls crisis by ensuring safe access to mental-wellness services and strengthening awareness of available supports across communities. It also seeks to enhance the capacity of workers through workshops and support groups, and to improve coordination of regional services to better respond to the needs of those impacted.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that survivors, family members and those affected by the issue of MMIWG have access to an appropriate level of mental-wellness support services.
- Ensure that survivors, family members and those affected by the issue of MMIWG can safely address mental-wellness issues related to the impacts of MMIWG.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Inform community members about available support, including other victim-support services, and eligibility criteria.
- Organize workshops and support groups in three communities per year.
- Provide training opportunities to community workers on topics relevant to MMIWG.
- Inform partners of the Nunavik health and social services network regarding the MMIWG initiative.
- Develop linkages with relevant partners in order to ensure a continuum of services for survivors and family members.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

The NRBHSS now has the Inuuguminaq Strategy (Nunavik Regional Suicide Prevention Strategy) that consists of five themes to address the reality of suicide in the region of Nunavik and target the efforts:

- Healthy development for children and youth;
- Comprehensive mental-health support;
- Healing from grief and historical trauma;
- Inuit-knowledge mobilization;
- Inuit self-determination and collaboration across Nunavik.

This strategy has helped Nunavik, under the leadership of the NRBHSS but with the close collaboration of regional partners, shape our priorities and direct our efforts to implement actions that are led by more than 20 stakeholders who feel the need to work together to address this ever-present concern for Nunavik.

The actions that were initially part of the 2019-2029 Health Plan are now organized under a theme, which helps us better plan, organize and assess the impact of the efforts.

The funding also covers concurrent expenses that are related to suicide prevention. Suicide is rooted in intergenerational trauma, which underlies multiple risk factors at the individual, community and societal levels, many of them affecting Nunavimmiut: historical trauma, discrimination, housing, family or loved one's history of suicide or struggle with psychological issues, difficulty accessing specialized services.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop and implement culturally relevant suicide-prevention actions, in accordance with the Inuuguminaq Strategy.
- Develop a culturally appropriate response to traumatic losses and suicide events.
- Reinforce protective factors against suicide such as access to traditional activities and support in relation to concurrent risk factors (for example, substance misuse, history of familial or sexual violence).

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Finalize the development of a regional postvention protocol and implement said protocol locally in at least seven communities.
- Organize one regional Puttautiit Suicide Conference every two years and at least one subregional Puttautiit Suicide Conference per year, on each coast.
- Implement in at least two other communities the peer-mentoring activity program for at-risk youth already initiated on the Hudson Coast.
- Support the implementation of a crisis-response team in both health centres providing services in the region.

RESPONDING REGIONAL NEEDS

OVERVIEW

The Responding Regional Needs program provides Nunavik with essential flexibility to address local priorities in mental health and wellness.

In a region where needs are diverse and evolving, this program allows the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services to support initiatives that improve and complement the existing health services.

These funds make it possible to implement actions that are adapted to the northern reality, while maintaining the flexibility required to address emerging regional needs of the population.

OBJECTIVES

- Address emerging mental health needs identified by communities and the NRBHSS.
- Provide opportunities for services and activities that complement and reinforce the existing service network.
- Support community participation and promote culturally relevant approaches to mental wellness.
- Encourage regional and intersectoral collaboration to improve access and continuity of wellness services.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Community mobilization and awareness through gatherings, workshops or information campaigns
- Capacity building opportunities
- Culturally adapted wellness services such as support interventions and integration of traditional approaches
- Development of special projects according to regional priorities
- Knowledge sharing and networking initiatives

TRAUMA-INFORMED HEALTH AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS

OVERVIEW

The primary purpose of this funding is to increase the number of community-based, Indigenous health and cultural support providers in order to reduce the burden on existing health and cultural support workers, and to improve access to culturally grounded supports for new clients who might be triggered by the more recent events impacting the Inuit of Nunavik.

OBJECTIVES

- Support Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program (RRHSSP) workers through wellness activities, cultural connections and self-care opportunities.
- Support RRHSSP workers through professional-development and training opportunities.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Coordinate and cover expenses related to worker participation in the yearly National Residential School gatherings.
- Provide capacity-building and -development training for the health and cultural support workers, such as clinical training on topics like trauma-informed care and workshop facilitation and animation, training for personal development and mentoring opportunities.
- Improve access to mental-wellness supports for those impacted by the ongoing investigations and confirmation of unmarked burials at the sites of former Indian Residential Schools.
- Closely collaborate on the activities in accordance with the trauma-informed approach and care.

VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

OVERVIEW

This program supports the efforts in prevention of family violence and in protection among Nunavimmiut, through:

- Support for the operationalization of services offered by the health centres to families affected by violence;
- Improvement of rehabilitation services for youth exposed to family violence;
- Sharing knowledge and action strategies on family violence with both the general population and intervention workers;
- Fostering collaboration among stakeholders working in the area of family violence in Nunavik, through the sharing of knowledge and action strategies.

Community involvement in the development and delivery of services is a key element to ensure the relevance and success of the activities. In other words, actions based on community members' involvement and on traditional Inuit culture will optimize the well-being of the communities.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage the development of initiatives and the empowerment of local services in the prevention of family violence, in order to best serve the communities of Nunavik.
- Facilitate the implementation of new practices in the rehabilitation of youth exposed to violence in Nunavik. Engage key stakeholders, share best practices and create a support network to combat family violence.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Provide funds for regional coordination on family violence in Nunavik. The coordination will take the form of in-person meetings (one to two meetings during the reference year) to help break down existing silos among different professionals and to promote opportunities for collaboration and knowledge transfer in the region. These meetings may take place in Nunavik or in southern Quebec (Montréal, Québec City).
- Provide funds to support the implementation of ad hoc projects by the IHC (Hudson) and the Tulattavik Health Centre (Ungava) related to family violence in the communities. These funds may be used to hire a dedicated person to implement these projects at each health centre, according to the needs expressed by the institutions. The NRBHSS may also hire a person to ensure coordination with the health centres on family-violence issues and to facilitate collaboration with community partners in the region.
- Allow for the inventory and review of existing rehabilitation procedures in the region in order to enhance the range of services offered to youth in difficulty based on a trauma-informed approach. This will involve the recruitment of a programming and planning officer specialized in this area. Further, support for youth under the YCJA (Youth Criminal Justice Act) who commit acts of violence will be ensured with the implementation of clinical procedures intended for minors.
- Organize the awareness and promotion campaign around the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence (November 25 to December 10, 2024).
- Provide relevant training for the various professionals involved in the territory. A set of high-quality training sessions can be reviewed and offered to northern stakeholders on topics related to family violence.



PROGRAMS

HEALTHY LIVING

ABORIGINAL DIABETES INITIATIVE (ADI) & FOOD SECURITY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

OVERVIEW

The program plays a central role in promoting healthy lifestyles, preventing chronic diseases, diabetes and their related complications, and addressing food security in Nunavik. Priorities include strengthening partnerships to improve access to healthy store-bought and country foods, raising awareness of healthy living and supporting people living with diabetes.

The program is coordinated by the NRBHSS Health Promotion and Prevention team, with funding shared between the NRBHSS and the health centres. The ADI supports both prevention services (screening, training, nutritionist and the diabetes nurse's visits to the communities, foot care, creating supportive educational materials for health professionals) and community-led activities such as cooking workshops, nutrition education, country-food promotion and local food projects. It also funds community activities related to health and well-being.

OBJECTIVES

- Support community-based and -led healthy-living initiatives.
- Improve individual management of chronic diseases and diabetes and diminish complications.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Work with the health centres to ensure individual and group counselling is provided to people with diabetes and chronic diseases. (Provide and develop tools and teaching materials, share knowledge-structured approaches, build workshops, organize activities, create a training guide, etc.).
- Increase knowledge and skills regarding nutrition, as well as access to food through activities such as cooking classes, community kitchens, grocery-store kiosks, greenhouses, etc.
- Provide financial and technical support to community partners wishing to provide culturally relevant activities promoting healthy lifestyles and physical health, develop local activities aimed at preventing diabetes and other chronic diseases, provide peer support, improve emotional well-being and foster healthy relationships.
- Increase the service offer for physical activity (e.g., cross-country ski clubs, fitness training, yoga sessions, walking clubs, etc.).

NUTRITION NORTH CANADA (NNC)

OVERVIEW

The Nutrition North Canada Nutrition Education Initiatives program aims to support nutrition-education initiatives or culturally relevant activities focussed on communities and retail food markets. Those activities aim to complement the contributions granted to the retail sector in the form of subsidies for healthy perishable items, in order to encourage the adoption of healthy eating habits in remote northern communities. The goal of these initiatives is to improve knowledge and skills regarding nutrition and food security, improve access to healthy and affordable store-bought food and country food, and support the needs of the communities in terms of food security and nutrition.

Among the current priorities in terms of nutrition and food security in Nunavik are to contribute to the Nunavik Food Security Strategy, support the development and sustainability of the local food projects, and support programs aiming to improve food environments in Nunavik. At the NRBHSS, the NNC program also works closely with the other team members from the Department of Public Health and in collaboration with both health centres, regional organizations and community organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve knowledge and skills on nutrition and food security with a focus on both country food and store-bought food.
- Improve access to healthy and affordable food.
- Support community needs in nutrition and food security.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Contribute to the development of the Nunavik Food Security Strategy.
- Support the development and sustainability of local food projects (community kitchens, gardening projects, sharing of knowledge on country food, etc.).
- Implement and support programs to improve the food environment (Imatsiaq water-promotion program, store nutrition program, school food and beverage policy, etc.).
- Provide adequate and adapted nutrition and food-security training, campaigns and tools.

CANADA'S TOBACCO STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

In 2019-2024, the NRBHSS Public Health Department received funding through the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy to develop and implement a multi-component tobacco-control and -prevention plan. Because smoking is strongly influenced by cultural and social norms, all interventions must be adapted to Nunavik's specific context.

Recommendations from the social-marketing analysis that was conducted in 2016-2017 will be considered in the present action plan.

Within the Health Promotion and Prevention team, two positions are dedicated to this initiative, with responsibilities that include building partnerships in communities, supporting the implementation of provincial laws and deploying WHO-recommended health-promotion strategies. Activities include a regional communication campaign (developed with NRBHSS Communications), strategies for schools and community-based interventions with the collaboration of the health centres to support smoking-cessation services (OMSC model: Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation). A physician also supports cessation treatment one day a week.

OBJECTIVES

Reduce prevalence of smoking in Nunavik by:

- Providing tools and support for people who want to stop smoking;
- Supporting the application of provincial laws;
- Increasing opportunities to access smoking-cessation services;
- Increasing awareness regarding tobacco use and vaping among youth and the general population.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Clinical and community-based cessation services
 - Support the development and adaptation of the OMSC at the UTHC.
 - Finance a local position at the UTHC dedicated to tobacco cessation and provide training.
 - Encourage and support community nurses, such as in Puvirnituq, in delivering smoking-cessation and prevention activities.
 - Support the health centres in developing and implementing smoke-free policies.
- Targeted support for specific populations
 - Explore partnerships with the ISPEC program to promote cessation services among pregnant women and new mothers.
 - Explore collaboration with the Hors-Piste program to integrate coping skills and emotional regulation strategies for youth.
 - Explore collaboration with the Oral Health Team to align messaging and tools.

CANADA'S TOBACCO STRATEGY

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Youth-focussed prevention and empowerment
 - Co-develop age-appropriate prevention tools for children and youth (ages 8–17), pilot test them and support their implementation.
 - Contribute to the development of a youth-oriented website focussed on prevention and health promotion, with a focus on smoking and vaping.
 - Produce and distribute educational materials for schools, such as radio clips and video capsules.
- Promotion, awareness and engagement
 - Define and implement a promotional strategy for cessation services and tools.
 - Develop and share a social-media campaign focussed on vaping prevention.
 - Promote, fund and coordinate activities for World No-Tobacco Day.
 - Facilitate the creation of peer-support networks, if communities express interest.
 - Adapt and implement prevention activities based on community requests, in collaboration with local partners.



PROGRAMS

COMMUNICABLE-DISEASE CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

TUBERCULOSIS

OVERVIEW

The NRBHSS has a regional action plan on tuberculosis, aligned with the work of the ITK TB Elimination Working Group and the regional public-health plan. Key initiatives focus on community-mobilization projects to fight tuberculosis (TB), as well as prevention and health promotion.

The NRBHSS Public Health team is responsible for surveillance, epidemiological investigations, risk assessment, and providing recommendations on isolation and contact follow-up, while the health centres are responsible for diagnosing and treating active and latent cases. In the event of major outbreaks, additional resources, including external expertise, may be mobilized to support the health centres.

This program also aims to:

- Support the implementation of policies, programs, and services of partners, health-care providers, and others serving Nunavimmiut, ensuring alignment with the needs, recommendations, and priority actions expressed in the Inuit Tuberculosis Elimination Framework and by the Inuit communities;
- Mobilize stakeholders involved in the efforts against tuberculosis and serving Nunavimmiut to establish and maintain strong relationships that enable coordination and collaboration on tuberculosis care and prevention.

OBJECTIVES

- Prevent and manage tuberculosis (TB) cases
 - Stop the spread and prevent new cases and complications of TB.
 - Support the delivery of culturally appropriate care and services in communities.
- Promote awareness and community engagement
 - Limit the resurgence of TB.
 - Raise awareness about TB and reduce stigma.
 - Support communities in addressing the social determinants of health related to TB.
- Strengthen monitoring and coordination
 - Monitor interventions and program performance through ongoing surveillance.
 - Standardize information-sharing mechanisms across stakeholders.
- Build and sustain capacity
 - Develop tools and support TB training.
 - Sustain scientific monitoring capacity.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Strengthen TB-detection and response systems
 - Develop and implement screening strategies, support deployment in communities, and coordinate epidemiological investigations for TB cases and contacts in collaboration with the health centres.
 - Issue public-health recommendations based on surveillance data and support clinical teams in case management.
 - Advocate for access to diagnostic tools, including chest X-rays, sputum collection and QuantiFERON (QFT) testing.

TUBERCULOSIS

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Enhance community-based and culturally safe TB services
 - Support the implementation of community-based health services and adapt public-health tools to Nunavik's cultural, geographic and linguistic contexts.
 - Support the development of Inuit public-health officers (PHOs) through capacity building, training, and advocating for an accredited program and the recognition of working conditions.
 - Promote Inuit leadership and representation at all levels of TB interventions.
 - Support alternative and flexible approaches to directly observed therapy (DOT) and assist providers in delivering person-centred care.
- Strengthen TB-prevention and -vaccination programs
 - Maintain universal BCG vaccination and related SCID screening in collaboration with immunization teams.
 - Recommend and support TB preventive treatment, therapy and TBI screening for at-risk populations.
 - Monitor and evaluate the impact of preventive strategies and follow up long-term clinical outcomes.
- Promote awareness, education and community engagement
 - Implement TB-specific communications at the regional and community levels and participate in the TB Regional Committee.
 - Develop Nunavik TB-specific training with the INSPQ (module available on the ENA).
 - Advocate for TB education in schools and support local awareness initiatives with educational materials.
 - Collaborate with partners on nutrition and indoor air-quality initiatives that address social determinants of health.
- Strengthen surveillance, data and coordination
 - Define and monitor key indicators across the TB care continuum and produce regular epidemiological and performance reports.
 - Collaborate with the health centres to clarify roles and responsibilities and share periodic situation updates.
 - Disseminate knowledge through newsletters and reports to leadership, clinicians and communities.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED AND BLOOD-BORNE INFECTIONS

OVERVIEW

The pandemic has intensified the erosion of an already fragile front line in Nunavik, characterized by significant turnover among nursing staff and a weak transfer of competencies, particularly in STI screening and case management. This situation compromises the ability of local teams to ensure continuity of services, manage case contacts and deliver basic STI care, which is often perceived as less of a priority but requires specialized clinical knowledge and skills. It also complicates our role and forces us to rethink our intervention strategies.

To address these challenges, it is essential to maintain our advisory and support role for the front line, and even to strengthen it, and to consider the development of training adapted to field realities, in order to maintain the quality of services and improve STI case management.

The program allows us to address these issues by consolidating local competencies and supporting continuity of care. The funds will be used in particular for STI-prevention activities, screening promotion and the enhancement of sexual-health services, in order to ensure a sustainable and culturally adapted response to the needs of the Inuit population of Nunavik.

OBJECTIVES

- Eliminate congenital syphilis and reduce the incidence rate of syphilis to fewer than 50 per 100,000 inhabitants (incidence rate of 469 in 2024).
- Reduce the incidence rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea by at least 50%.
- Increase STI screening (syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, HIV) as well as reduce the stigma associated with it.
- Prevent an outbreak of hepatitis C and HIV in Nunavik.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Improve our STI surveillance data through the analysis of positivity rates.
- Promote rapid screening and screening in non-traditional settings and using low-threshold and outreach-type approaches.
- Continue social marketing and prevention/promotion activities among youth in Nunavik (through sports and cultural events).
- Implement a system for distributing safer substance-use consumption supplies (target population: psychoactive-substance users).
- Develop practical and adapted training for case management and contact management, targeting health professionals authorized to treat STIs (clinical nurses, midwives, physicians).



PROGRAMS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

CLIMATE CHANGE

OVERVIEW

Climate change has an impact on several determinants of health: food security, housing, air quality, transportation and access to water are concerns for communities, in addition to physical and mental health issues, which have been identified by Nunavik organizations and professionals from the Regional Public Health Department.

The overall goal of the program is to improve the resilience of Nunavimmiut to climate change (through adaptation and mitigation measures).

OBJECTIVES

- Communicate the impacts of climate change on health determinants.
- Support local initiatives for implementation of climate change-adaptation and -mitigation measures across the 14 communities in Nunavik (evaluation of the projects done with pre-established criteria by the Environmental Health team).
- Develop indoor and outdoor air-quality interventions through a sustainable approach adapted to the social context.
- Develop communication tools and activities for contaminants.
- Promote capacity building among key actors.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Inform and raise awareness among the general population, workers and employers about the causes, consequences and preventive measures related to climate change and air quality.
- Engage and mobilize partners and communities to implement or improve interventions addressing climate change and air quality.
- Ensure maintenance and replacement of Purple Air sensors (devices to measure particulate matters—or PM_{2.5}—as an indicator of outdoor air quality), as needed.
- Develop communication and awareness-raising tools and activities for mercury, biotoxins and other contaminants whose concentrations could increase as a result of climate change.
- Provide continuous professional development for team members on climate change and air-quality issues.



PROGRAMS

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

OVERVIEW

The program is meant to improve access to home and community-based services for individuals with loss of autonomy. At the regional level, program administration is coordinated by an officer who supports the health centres in implementation, while most of the funding is decentralized to the health centres for service delivery. Federal resources mainly cover salaries of nurses and specialists (e.g., respiratory and physical therapists) as well as specialized medical equipment.

The program's vision is to prioritize home as the first option for care, broadly defined to include elders' residences, family homes or other non-institutional settings. Services available in every community include assessment and care planning, long-term care coordination, nursing, home support, personal-hygiene assistance, psychosocial services, rehabilitation (physiotherapy, occupational therapy) and medical services at home. This approach fosters proximity care while supporting autonomy and quality of life for individuals across Nunavik.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure equitable access to care and services in each community of Nunavik.
- Provide support of good quality adapted to the individual's condition, in a patient-partner approach.
- Foster maintaining the individual in the living environment of his choice, according to his condition.
- Support the individual's family.

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Provide daily-living support services that help individuals maintain autonomy in their home environment. These services include assisting with personal hygiene, preparing meals, performing housekeeping tasks, managing medications, and lending assistive devices to support safe and independent living.
- Facilitate orientation toward adapted living environments by assessing individual needs and guiding individuals to appropriate housing options that support their autonomy, safety and well-being.
- Support initiatives that meet the needs of individuals within their home environment, focussing on promoting physical and mental well-being for both patients and their caregivers. These activities aim to foster independence, enhance quality of life, and enable people to continue living safely and with dignity in their own homes.



PROGRAMS

CHILD FIRST INITIATIVE

CHILD FIRST INITIATIVE

OVERVIEW

The Child First Initiative (CFI) – Nunavik is a service coordination and support initiative administered by the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) which aims to ensure that Inuit children have equitable and timely access to essential health, social and educational services and supports when their needs cannot be met through existing programs and services. In addition to promoting access to services, the CFI also contributes to identifying service gaps, reducing barriers to care and addressing inequities affecting Inuit children both within and outside Nunavik.

Between 2025 and 2029, the CFI will continue to focus on improving accessibility, strengthening service navigation, enhancing collaboration with community, regional, provincial, federal and Inuit partners, and guiding Nunavimmiut children through increasingly complex service systems. Particular attention will be paid to culturally responsive approaches, digital accessibility, community outreach, partnership development, and the identification of emerging needs and systemic barriers affecting Inuit children.

The CFI will also continue to support innovative community-based solutions, foster evidence-informed planning and decision-making, and contribute to the co-development and transition toward the long-term Inuit-led Pirutsiagutiit Framework while ensuring ongoing support for Inuit children throughout the transition period.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve equitable and timely access to culturally appropriate health, social, and educational services, products and supports for Inuit children by reducing administrative, geographic and systemic barriers.
- Strengthen service navigation and coordinated approaches to help Inuit children and families access appropriate services across federal, provincial, regional, community and Inuit-led systems.
- Promote culturally safe, Inuit-informed and community-informed approaches that reflect the realities, priorities, languages and strengths of Nunavimmiut children, youth and families.
- Increase awareness, understanding and accessibility of the CFI through outreach, communications, digital innovation and community engagement initiatives across Nunavik in urban centres serving Inuit children.
- Strengthen data collection, evaluation, accountability and knowledge-sharing practices to support evidence-informed planning, continuous improvement and the transition toward long-term Inuit-led solutions through the Pirutsiagutiit Framework.

CHILD FIRST INITIATIVE

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

- Implement outreach, communication and engagement initiatives to increase awareness, understanding and accessibility of the CFI among Inuit children, families, communities, organizations and service providers throughout Nunavik and in urban centres serving Inuit populations.
- Provide service navigation, coordination and advocacy support to help Inuit children and families identify unmet needs, navigate service systems, access appropriate services and supports, and address barriers to care in the health, social and educational sectors.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaborative approaches with Inuit organizations, communities, service providers, educational institutions and federal, provincial and regional partners to improve service integration, coordination and accessibility.
- Support the development, implementation and evaluation of community-based and collective initiatives that respond to identified needs, address service gaps and promote the well-being of Inuit children, youth and families.
- Maintain and enhance digital tools, online platforms and multilingual resources to improve service accessibility, administrative efficiency and the overall experience of beneficiaries, families and service providers.
- Conduct ongoing follow-up with beneficiaries, families and service providers to ensure approved services and supports are effectively delivered and maintained.
- Collect, analyze and make use of program data to monitor emerging needs, service gaps, accessibility challenges and program outcomes, as well as to support evaluation, reporting and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Participate in regional, national and Inuit-led governance, planning and co-development activities that support continuous program improvement and the transition toward the Inuit-led Pirutsiagutiit Framework.
- Promote culturally safe, respectful and Inuit-informed approaches that recognize the linguistic, cultural and geographic realities of Inuit children and families and support equitable access to services.
- Ensure the responsible collection, management and protection of personal information and maintain accountability practices that support program integrity, transparency and compliance with applicable policies and legislation.

EVALUATION

The NRBHSS ensures accountability for all of its funding sources, both federal and provincial, by documenting activities and reporting results in line with the requirements of each funder. This commitment to transparency applies across the organization's programs and reflects its responsibility to demonstrate how funds are managed and used to benefit the population of Nunavik.

With respect to Indigenous Services Canada, the NRBHSS submits annual activity reports to demonstrate progress toward planned objectives and highlight achievements. In addition, it produces an annual financial report, which undergoes an external audit. The audited statement provides a clear and reliable account of how funds are managed in keeping with established financial requirements, while showing how they support program activities for the population.

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