



June 9, 2025

Ministre Christian Dubé  
Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux  
Édifice Catherine-De Longpré  
1075, chemin Sainte-Foy  
Québec (Quebec) G1S 2M1

Dear Minister Dubé,

We, the mayors of Nunavik's 14 Inuit communities, demand the Government of Quebec declare a **PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY** due to the escalating tuberculosis (TB) crisis in our region. This demand follows two alarming developments: (1) Quebec's intention to considerably reduce infectious disease resources recently announced in Nunavik, and (2) the unprecedented surge in TB cases threatening the lives and well-being of our people.

In 2024, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) confirmed 94 active TB cases — the highest number ever reported in the region. The crisis is growing: 7 of our 14 communities have been affected by TB increasingly since 2022, while 6 are currently facing TB outbreaks, as reported by CBC Radio Canada.

The numbers are staggering. According to the NRBHSS, Inuit living in Nunavik face TB rates that are over 1000-times the most recently reported rate amongst the non-Indigenous population of Canadian-born Quebec residents. To date in 2025, Nunavik has seen 40 cases, which is already over 40% of the total reported in 2024 and is still climbing. These statistics are a direct reflection of colonial systemic racism that continues to dictate health policy and resource allocation in Quebec.

Inuit in Nunavik are not treated as equal citizens under Quebec's health system. The 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action were clear: governments must bridge the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. This includes closing the disparities in disease rates, access to health care, and life expectancy. The Viens Commission confirmed that Indigenous peoples in Quebec face systemic discrimination in health care. Its Calls to Action, particularly 10 through 15, demanded structural changes to eliminate health inequities and strengthen Indigenous-led services. Yet six years later, those commitments have not been fulfilled. The province has not invested in community-based TB infrastructure, nor in Inuit public health leadership. Nunavik health services continue to be systemically underfunded, under-resourced, and neglected. The announced cuts to infectious disease prevention resources — in the middle of a TB crisis — represent a profound failure of responsibility on the part of the Quebec Government.

The capacity of the NRBHSS and Nunavik's two health networks to address TB must be increased – not decreased. The state of healthcare services in Nunavik is abhorrent:

- There is insufficient qualified staff
- Healthcare workers face burnout and high turnover
- Most of the communities do not have functioning digital x-ray machines,
  - even when equipment is available, clinics lack the technicians needed to operate them
- Basic needs for TB care such as testing kits, isolation rooms, lab services, transport for patient samples, and supportive measures for affected Inuit are either limited, inconsistent, or unavailable.

Essentially, medical resources currently in place are insufficient to maintain regular large-scale screening needed to slow the spread. The crisis in Nunavik is not only unjust — it is dangerous. Inuit from Nunavik have died of TB in very recent years, and according to physicians working in the region, we will see more severe cases and more deaths unless the crisis is addressed with the resources needed. The recent temporary closure of the hospital in Puvirnituq, which leaves one hospital with now double the load, will also exacerbate the dire situation.

During recent TB outbreaks in Montreal, where TB is 70-times less common than Nunavik, the resources and personnel provided swift and comprehensive responses to stop the spread in its tracks. However, in Nunavik, we have been met with silence, neglect, and withdrawal of funds.

Quebec has clear responsibilities to protect the health of all residents of Quebec – and this includes the Inuit of Nunavik as mandated under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Land Claim Agreement. Moreover, multiple frameworks endorsed by the government of Canada obligate provincial governments to eliminate TB and provide equitable, culturally appropriate health care to Indigenous communities: the World Health Organization's End TB Strategy, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Government of Canada's 2018 TB Elimination Framework. Quebec is failing to meet these obligations.

This is not just about policy. It is about the lives of Inuit in Nunavik. We are human beings, with the same rights and dignity as every other Quebec and Canadian citizen. TB has been left to steadily rise in Nunavik over the past decade, and this will no longer be tolerated.

We are hereby issuing to the Quebec Government, the following urgent **CALLS TO ACTION**:

- 1. Declare Tuberculosis as a Public Health Emergency in Nunavik;**
- 2. Deploy emergency medical resources to Nunavik, including mobile x-ray units, diagnostic testing supplies, and surge staffing for active and latent tuberculosis, to strengthen diagnosis and care including regular community-wide screening without compromising other services;**
- 3. Provide communities with sufficient resources to end the colonial acts of separating Inuit from their families when flown out to undergo screening or diagnostic testing for TB;**
- 4. Immediately reverse the announced budget and resource cuts to the NRBHSS, the Inuulitsivik Health Centre, and the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre, and exempt these institutions from future budget and resource cuts until TB is eliminated from Nunavik;**
- 5. Equip the NRBHSS, the Inuulitsivik Health Centre, and the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre with adequate funding to meet the region's urgent medical needs;**

6. Urgently fund essential infrastructure—water, housing, and utilities—so Nunavik communities can effectively prevent and respond to TB;
7. Recognize the Nunavik Public Health Officer position within the MSSS with a salary scale, and fund two Public Health Officers per village;
8. Commit to Inuit health sovereignty by investing in Inuit-specific training, education and recruitment pathways to sustainable careers in nursing, medicine, medical imaging technologists, medical laboratory technologists, and community health workers – to ensure a robust, Inuit-led public health workforce;
9. Work in full collaboration with Inuit leadership to co-develop and fund a long-term TB elimination plan for Nunavik.

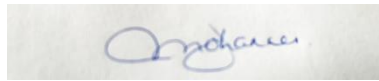
We will not accept further delay. It is time for the Government of Quebec to act with the urgency, respect, and responsibility this crisis demands.

Sincerely,

The undersigned mayors,



Larry Hubert  
Mayor of Akulivik



Mary Johannes  
Mayor of Kuujjuaq



Maggie Akpahatak  
Mayor of Aupaluk



Raymond Mickpegak  
Mayor of Kuujjuaraapik



Bobby Epoo  
Mayor of Inukjuak



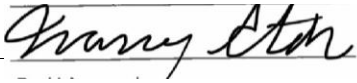
Lucy Qalingo  
Mayor of Puvirnituk



Adamie Kalingo  
Mayor of Ivujivik



Charlie Tukkiapik  
Mayor of Quaqtaq



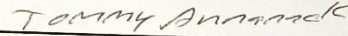
Nancy Etok  
Deputy Mayor of Kangiqsualujuaq



Maggie Q. Saviakjuk  
Mayor of Salluit



Qiallak Nappaluk  
Mayor of Kangiqsujaq



Tommy Annanack  
Mayor of Tasiujaq



Etua Kaukai  
Mayor of Kangirsuk



Jack Niviaxie  
Mayor of Umiujaq

Cc:

François Legault, Premier ministre  
Geneviève Biron, Présidente et cheffe de la direction, Santé Québec  
Luc Boileau, Directeur national de la santé publique  
Jennifer Munick-Watkins, Executive Director, Nunavik Regional Board of Health & Social Services  
Larry Watt, Executive Director, Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre  
Sarah Beaulne, Executive Director, Inuulitsivik Health Centre  
Radio Canada, TNI, La Presse, Le Devoir, Nunatsiaq News