



**Press Release**  
***For immediate release***

## **IMPORTANT MEASURE TO CONTAIN COVID-19 IN NUNAVIK**

**Kuujuaq, April 2, 2020** – An important decision for the well-being of Nunavimmiut was taken by Public Health Director, Dr. Marie Rochette and the Director of Public Security, Jean-Pierre Larose, under the Nunavik Regional Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee (NREPAC). A lockdown will be imposed on the 14 communities of Nunavik, as of April 3rd. This means regular flights in and out of Nunavik, as well as between communities are cancelled until further notice.

“This decision was not taken lightly. We strongly believe it is the best way to reduce the risk of community transmission. Collectively, we have to work together to protect elders and the more vulnerable members of all the communities” says Dr. Marie Rochette, Director of the Public Health at the NRBHSS.

Mr. Larose said “The measure allows local emergency response teams to keep the current situation under control and give everyone time to prepare for any potential increase in active cases.”

The lockdown means that there are no more passenger flights in and out of Nunavik villages and from the South. The only flights allowed are charters transporting cargo (including medical supplies and Canada Post), patients traveling for medical appointments, health care workers and other critical workers such as police officers. Patients travelling for medical appointments, either to Kuujuaq, Puvirnituk or Montreal, will have to travel alone, without an escort, unless the patient is a minor, in which case an escort is allowed. Upon returning to the region, everyone will have to self-isolate for 14 days, by staying home, in their room as much as possible. These measures are essential as Kuujuaq and Puvirnituk have regional hospitals where there are more frequent flights. Health authorities insist that compliance of the no-contact directive, where people are being asked to stay at home and remain two meters apart from one another needs to be strictly followed by all residents.

There have been two confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus in Nunavik. Ongoing efforts to increase the region’s capacity to handle an increase in COVID-19 cases continues. The two Health Centres in Kuujuaq and Puvirnituk have increased the number of beds and acquired the necessary equipment to meet the present and foreseeable needs.

Each municipality has been instructed to create an emergency response team to evaluate the needs of their community in order to properly respond to the potential spread of the virus. Again,

residents are being told to abide by the current curfew, avoid gatherings and to comply with the social distancing directives issued by the Health Board.

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*The Kativik Regional Government is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel in areas such as municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use planning, civil security and economic development.*

*The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is a public agency created in 1978 under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. It is responsible for nearly the entire Quebec 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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