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News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Nunavut response to COVID-19

IQALUIT, Nunavut (March 13, 2020) – Dr. Michael Patterson, Nunavut's Chief Public Health Officer, today outlined additional preventive measures and the Government of Nunavut's (GN) current preparation in response to COVID-19.

"While there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nunavut, it is important that all measures are taken to minimize risks for Nunavummiut," said Dr. Patterson. "The additional preventive steps we are taking today and our whole-of-government approach are aligned with nation-wide initiatives and will ensure the GN is ready should the situation change."

Until further notice, Nunavummiut are asked to avoid international travel and reduce non-essential travel within Canada. In-territory travel is not restricted at this time. All non-essential duty travel for GN employees is cancelled, effective immediately. International school-sponsored trips have been cancelled.

GN public events will be cancelled. Nunavummiut should avoid mass gatherings and refrain from going to community airports unless required. Nunavummiut are encouraged to limit visiting.

As of today, sick notes will no longer be issued by Health until further notice. Health also recommends that organizations in Nunavut waive the requirement for sick notes. The GN waived sick notes requirements for employees last week.

The Department of Health has a long-standing territorial pandemic plan. Health centres in all communities have the necessary supplies and are ready to respond. Increased sanitary measures are in effect in GN departments and airports. Schools across the territory have been directed on enhanced cleaning protocols, hygiene and disinfecting measures and implementing non-sharing protocols.

The Territorial Emergency Management Committee made up of senior Health staff, representatives in all regions of Nunavut, along with Nunavut Emergency Management,

monitors the status of all territorial health facilities and coordinates Health's response to COVID-19 within the territory.

Additionally, GN departments are meeting daily to coordinate their preparedness efforts. Health is actively working with partners across the country to ensure a coordinated response.

"I understand this is an uncertain, evolving situation. It is normal to be concerned, but we are prepared. The best course of action is to stay aware and use preventive measures: if you are sick, stay home; observe travel restrictions and listen to the advice of health professionals." said Dr. Patterson.

For information on preventive measures, go to:
https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus

For information on travel and related advisories go to:
https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories

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