

# Department Health & Social Development

Nunatsiavut Assembly

March 3, 2025

## **NIHB**

- Muriel Edmunds will be retiring in April after 36.5 years of service with the NIHB program. Her knowledge and expertise will definitely be missed. On a happier note we are pleased that Johanna Tuglavina has accepted the permanent position after several months as a casual employee.

## **Health Services**

- The new QNIHS Manager (Inuit Health Survey) has been hired (Shannon Webb) and she started this week. We are very excited to have this project back on track after an extended time with the position vacant. We are ready to report initial results back to communities and a schedule will be shared soon.
- Inuit Health Liaison Committee – partnership with DHSD & LGH meets quarterly and the most recent meeting was held January 21, 2025. There were many agenda items but a couple of interest were: concerns with pharmacies/delivery to community, overflow situation at LHC and diversion of patients to Labrador City and need for improved communication between senior LGH leadership and DHSD.

## **Family Services**

### Inuit Child First Initiative

Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries are experiencing a lag in approval time for applications for services/supports under the Inuit Child First Initiative (ICFI). This is due to the application backlog at Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and the change in approach made by ISC in October 2024. ISC fund the ICFI, and the funding flows to the Nunatsiavut Government (NG).

The NG can only administer the services and supports as the funding is allocated to NG. If Beneficiaries have questions or concerns about the long wait times, please reach out directly to Indigenous Services Canada.

The NG are working diligently in partnership with the other 3 Inuit regions and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) to get answers and a timely service of the ICFI. We understand this is an issue across Canada and we continue to lobby on behalf of Nunatsiavut Beneficiaries to Indigenous Services Canada.

Of notable mention, Inuit are in the last year of our 5-year proposal to ISC for the administration of the ICFI.

It is uncertain what the ICFI will look like after March 31, 2025 until we get a commitment from Canada.

However, we are active in working toward a plan that is consistent with gaps in services and supports, and our unique determinants of health.

If beneficiaries are concerned or have questions regarding the status of their application or the process in general, we urge beneficiaries to reach out to ISC for more information.

#### Indigenous Representative

- The position is still vacant and the Director of Family Services is the Acting Indigenous Representative until the position is filled

We have begun discussions on an information sharing agreement with CSSD that will assist with more information sharing between Family Services staff and CSSD. We continue to have trouble in working with the Department CSSD as a whole and hope that by developing a concrete mechanism it will allow for better information sharing as we strive for proactive case planning and better outcomes for children and youth. NG is leading this work and it is our goal to have a first draft submitted to CSSD by the winter of 2025.

#### **Mental Wellness & Healing**

- The Men's conference in November was a huge success with many recommendations coming forward to assist with planning men's programs & services. We are waiting on the final report which we will be sharing once received.
- We are planning some events in communities to support MH with all the impacts of climate change, inability to access land based activities as normal. The first event focused on anti-bullying/pink shirt day on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The second event will focus on anti-Indigenous racism on March 21 and there is a special event planned for all household in April so stay tuned.
- Jessica & Kelly Ann delivered Inuit Mental Health First Aid in Rigolet in February.

#### **Community Programs**

- Rigolet is piloting a school lunch program for Nunatsiavut. Currently DHSD staff are cooking 2 hot lunches per week which are delivered to the school and the children/youth take them home with them. We have advertised for a temporary worker to assist. We will be looking at expanding this program to other communities.
- Funding from the Harvesters Support Grant (HSG) will support the Nunatsiavut Government (NG) to deliver a Meal Kit Program (MKP) to all families in Nunatsiavut with at least one beneficiary living in the household. The program aims to improve food literacy skills for all beneficiaries by providing a nutritional meal with educational material once a month. A monthly advertisement of the program will be distributed to raise awareness of the monthly meal box. For the duration of the program, a communications campaign will run to raise awareness and promote engagement and learning beyond the meal kit. Households will be encouraged to participate in a monthly contest where prizes will be awarded.

#### **Mental Wellness & Healing**

#### Youth Services

- The Nunatsiavut Youth Symposium will be held March 17-21 in Nain and the theme is land based healing
- The Caribou North trip will be taking place April 1-4, 2025 with 7 youth from Nunatsiavut, ULM & Canadian Constituency over the age of 18 years participating. Individuals will be selected through an application process.

#### Trauma & Addictions

- The Trauma & Addictions Team launched their mobile treatment program in Nain in February, and will continue to travel to Nain one week a month for the next 5 months. The T&A team will also host treatment programming in Hopedale once this 6 week program is complete.
- The Harm Reduction Specialist and the Sexual Violence Prevention Outreach Counsellor have plans to offer Seeking Safety & Repair programming in Nain, in partnership with the Trauma & Addictions program.

#### Justice Services

- The FASD coordinator position is filled with Georgia Abel (Hopedale)
- Staff continue to provide services/programming to inmates at the Labrador Correctional Centre.
- A presentation re: Inuit culture, intergenerational trauma impacts on Inuit within the justice system.
- On February 6, 2025 myself (Melva), President Lampe and DHSD staff met with Robin Fowler (Chief Justice of Provincial Courts NL) met to discuss challenges within the court system and how we can be working more closely together for change. This was an initial meeting and there are plans to meet on a regular basis as we move forward.

#### **Social Development**

- For the past two years the province of NL has provided \$100,000 to Nunatsiavut Government for outreach activities in HVGB in connection with the Housing Hub (shelter). Effective April 1, 2025 NLHC has allocated an annualized commitment of \$100,000 to support the outreach team. This will allow more stability for staff, program planning activities, etc... so is a welcomed announcement.
- We have received confirmation of a funding extension from Reaching Home until 2027/28 which will provide operational funding for the shelters in Nain & Hopedale.

