



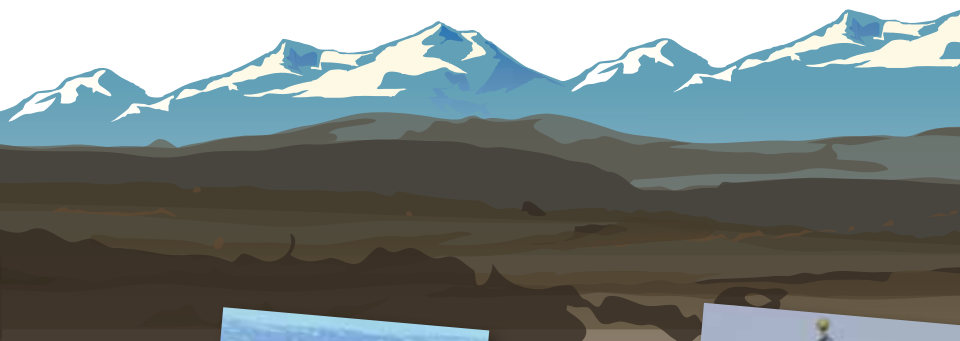
Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

*Your health and  
safety... our priority.*

# *Health Canada Northern Region*

*A Snapshot of Our  
Accomplishments  
2008-2011*



Canada

Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. We assess the safety of drugs and many consumer products, help improve the safety of food, and provide information to Canadians to help them make healthy decisions. We provide health services to First Nations people and to Inuit communities. We work with the provinces and territories to ensure our health care system serves the needs of Canadians.

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# Health Canada

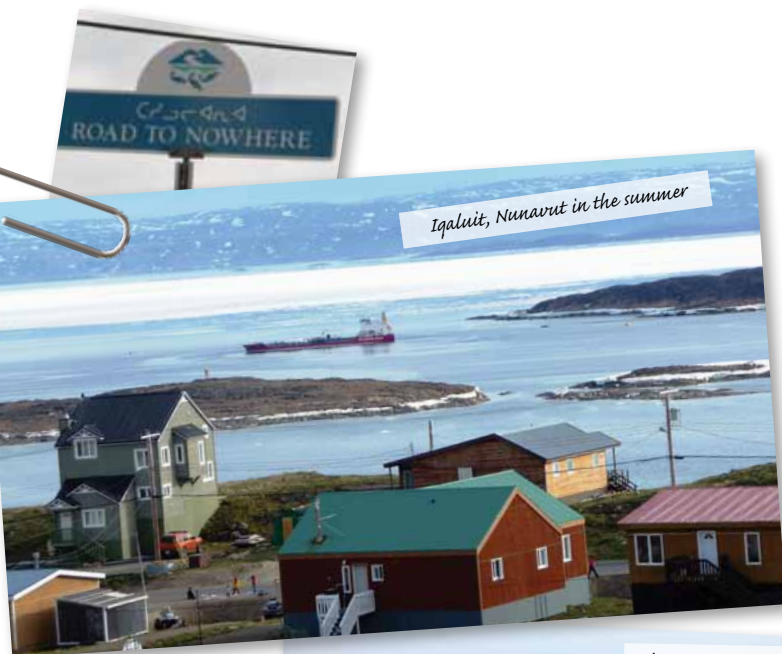
Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health. Health Canada is committed to improving the lives of all of Canada's people and to making this country's population among the healthiest in the world as measured by longevity, lifestyle and effective use of the public health care system.

## The Northern Region – a single window to the North

Based in Ottawa, with an office in Whitehorse, Yukon, the Northern Region is Health Canada's centre of expertise for collaboration and integration of federal government health initiatives among federal and territorial governments and partners to support the health of Northerners.

## The Northern Region's Mission Statement

To work with territorial governments and partners to address their health needs while informing and influencing integrated Health Canada planning and policy development, and effectively and efficiently managing programs and resources.





# Excellence in program and service delivery

*Responsive, accessible  
health portfolio programs  
aligned with territorial priorities*

The Northern Region does not deliver primary health care services to the people living in the North. That responsibility was transferred to the territorial governments. Health Canada does, however, fund health promotion and disease prevention initiatives and pays for the cost of non-insured health benefits such as medical transportation, prescription drugs, dental, medical equipment and vision care for eligible First Nations and Inuit.

## Improving health through community-based health promotion programs

The Northern Region provides funding through contribution agreements for health promotion and disease prevention programming in the Territories. Over the past three years, the Northern Region has managed approximately \$134 million in Contribution Agreements with Territorial Governments, Yukon First Nations and community groups to deliver Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada programs.



*Children from the Hay River, NWT  
Aboriginal Head Start program perform*



*Arviat, Nunavut's Aboriginal  
Head Start program playroom*

## A seamless delivery of Non-Insured Health Benefits

To deliver some non-insured benefits services in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut such as prescription drugs,

medical transportation benefits, and vision care, the Northern Region has partnered with territorial governments.

This innovative approach provides a seamless system for clients who would otherwise have to deal with two different systems for reimbursement. In the Yukon, the Northern Region's Whitehorse staff is directly responsible for managing NIHB benefits. Across the territories, from 2008-09 to 2010-11, the Northern Region managed NIHB benefit claims totaling more than \$231M.



*Sarah Doak, a Northern Region  
program consultant, visits an  
Aboriginal Head Start program  
in Arviat, Nunavut*



*The Northern Region's  
Non-Insured Health Benefits  
dental benefits team*

## *Responding to growing mental health needs*

On June 11, 2008, the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Canada, delivered a formal apology to former Indian Residential School students, their families, and communities for Canada's role in the operation of these government-funded, church-run schools set up to eliminate parental and community involvement in the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development of Aboriginal children.

That landmark event led to the Northern Region establishing in 2009 a dedicated Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program Unit to respond to the growing need for professional counseling and cultural and emotional support.

The Region also provided support to territorial participants in the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) National Event in Winnipeg in 2010 and the TRC's Northern Tour of 16 territorial communities leading up to the TRC's National Event in Inuvik in June 2011.



*The TRC National Event in Inuvik, NWT drew participants from across the North*

- *Regional expenditures for the Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program*
  - 2008-09 – \$4.4 million.
  - 2009-10 – \$5.9 million.
  - 2010-11 – \$9.2 million.
- *Since 2009, approximately 1,400 clients have accessed professional counselling services.*
- *Contribution Agreements with 19 Aboriginal organizations to provide culturally appropriate assistance to former students and their families.*



*Health Support Workers meet during the June 2011 TRC National Event in Inuvik, NWT*



## Enhancing inspection and product safety activities in the North

For greater consistency in the delivery of healthy environments and consumer safety programs in the North, the Northern Region successfully developed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with the Alberta Region. Since April 1, 2010, Tobacco Control, Product Safety, Pesticide Compliance, and Environmental Health programs in the territories have been delivered by the Alberta Region on behalf of the Northern Region. This best practice approach illustrates how the Northern Region champions program integration to better deliver services to its 76 remote communities in an area that represents 40% of Canada's land mass.

*In 2010, Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq announced new tobacco labeling requirements with larger health warning messages and a toll-free quitline on cigarette and little cigar packages as part of a social marketing campaign encouraging smokers to quit.*



# strengthening strategic partnerships

*collaborative priorities and agendas that address northern health issues*

## Working together to improve health systems

To help the territories transform the delivery of health care across the North, the Government of Canada established the Territorial Health System Sustainability Initiative (THSSI) in 2005. THSSI funding allowed the Territorial Governments to address critical health human resources shortages, difficulties servicing widely dispersed communities, changing demographics and reducing reliance on outside health services. In its first five years, the \$150-million Initiative supported approximately 90 projects. In 2010, the Northern Region successfully negotiated a two-year, \$60-million extension of THSSI in order to consolidate the progress made in the first five years.

## Improving access and increasing participation in Aboriginal health

Increasing the number of Aboriginal people working in health and improving the retention of health care workers in Aboriginal communities is the goal of the Aboriginal Health Human Resources Initiative (AHHRI).



Similarly, the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund (AHTF) aims to improve the quality of, and access to, health services for Aboriginal people. The Northern Region helped adapt these national initiatives to meet northern realities.

- Across the territories, the Northern Region supported 11 AHHRI projects including one by the Council of Yukon First Nations that led to the creation of the popular Dream Catcher Health Careers Resource Manual.
- As one of the 10 AHTF projects supported by the Northern Region, the Nunavut Community Wellness Project helped six communities develop long-term community wellness plans – an initiative that will provide a blueprint for other communities across the territory.





A public awareness campaign helped stop the spread of H1N1 in Nunavut

## Providing support during the H1N1 crisis

Working in close partnership with the Territorial Governments and the Public Health Agency of Canada during the H1N1 pandemic of 2009, the Northern Region provided critical and time-sensitive information and advice for dealing with a rapidly escalating health crisis.

At the request of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Public Health Agency, the Northern Region provided short-term, on-the-ground assistance in Yellowknife to aid the GNWT with their pandemic influenza planning.

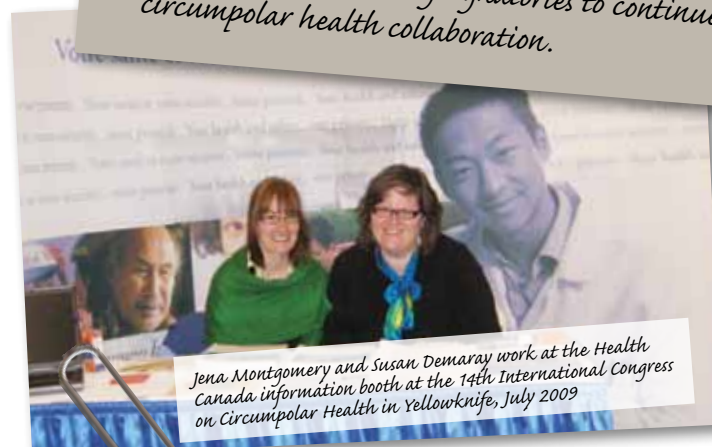
Hardest hit by the virus was Nunavut, and the Northern Region responded by providing 10 consecutive weeks of on-the-ground communications support to the Government of Nunavut – assistance the Chief Medical Officer of Health described as “more valuable than you might possibly imagine”. In addition to strategic communications advice, the Northern Region helped Nunavut develop an integrated public awareness campaign that included posters, newspaper and television ads, public service announcements, and “flu awareness” teams.

## Advancing Canada's Circumpolar Interests Abroad

Since its beginnings as the Northern Secretariat more than ten years ago, the Northern Region has been an active player in the circumpolar world. Through work with various domestic and international tables such as the Arctic Council, International Polar Year, and the International Congress on Circumpolar Health, the Northern Region advances key policy issues related to the health of Canadians in the North and helps demonstrate Canada's commitment to circumpolar collaboration.

*Recent accomplishments include:*

- Funding and coordinating the Department's participation at the 14th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Yellowknife, 2009 - attended by over 650 participants from 10 circumpolar countries. Proceedings have been published in the *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*.
- Developing and leading a Best Brains Exchange on Health Science and Research in Canada's Arctic - the results of which are being used to help inform how the Department moves forward to address Northern priorities.
- Coordinating and supporting a strong Canadian presence at the 2011 Arctic Health Ministers Meeting in Nuuk, Greenland - which culminated in a declaration committing signatories to continued circumpolar health collaboration.



Jena Montgomery and Susan Demaray work at the Health Canada information booth at the 14th International Congress on Circumpolar Health in Yellowknife, July 2009



## Results and accountability

*shared planning to ensure federal efforts  
serve territorial needs & objectives*

### Tackling the high costs of medical travel

In the North, getting a patient to where he or she can be treated represents a major health care expense. Nowhere is that more true than in Nunavut, which has no road access and a total population of about 33,000 dispersed over three time zones in 26 small and isolated communities. To tackle escalating costs, the Northern Region partnered with the territorial government on the Nunavut Medical Transportation Project - a detailed analysis of the Territory's medical travel records and a synthesis/analysis of existing reports.

### Streamlining reporting and increasing flexibility

The Northern Wellness Approach is intended to recognize the uniqueness of northern communities by streamlining administrative processes and ensuring community-based programming efforts are not duplicated by federal, territorial and community partners.



As part of this approach, the Northern Region introduced in 2011 a new, streamlined reporting tool for territorial recipients of health promotion

and disease prevention grants and contributions.

The NORTH Report (Northern Outcome Reporting Template for Health) lightens the administrative load for communities by reducing reporting requirements from what could be 125 pages to approximately 15. Developed collaboratively by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, this approach also saw the consolidation of community-based programs into three clusters – Mental Health and Addictions, Healthy Child and Youth Development, and Healthy Living and Disease Prevention – providing more flexibility for recipients to meet individual community needs.



# Supporting collaborative and innovative pilot projects

## *The Pangnirtung Project*

Making Connections for Youth stands as an example of how the Northern Region is working within the federal family to improve health in the north. The project is a horizontal initiative led by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Six federal departments provide youth program funding to the Hamlet of Pangnirtung, under a single contribution agreement. This coordinated and streamlined method of federal funding has reduced the reporting requirements for the hamlet by 76% since the project's start and can hopefully serve as a model for other remote communities that have limited administrative resources and extensive needs.



