



ISUARSIVIK REGIONAL RECOVERY CENTRE /// IMMEDIATE NEWS RELEASE /// 2018 11 15

New Inuit substance-abuse recovery centre in Nunavik: construction begins in summer 2019

Timely \$ 6M announcement by Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services, ensures no further delay in the project to build the new Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre in Kuujjuaq, Northern Province of Québec

The scope and intensity of the problems related to substance abuse in Nunavik are affecting the entire Inuit society.

Isuarsivik, an Inuit community organization offering culturally relevant inpatient addictions services, is currently operating from one of the oldest building in Kuujjuaq built in the 1940s by the American Air Force. The facility's age, size and layout prevent Isuarsivik from offering its program in an optimal manner.

The current 9-beds facility does not meet the present needs and an average of 10 applicants are denied admission at each cycle.

Since 2016, Isuarsivik has promoted a project to build a new regional recovery centre to:

- answer the needs for adult specialised inpatient services for trauma and substance abuse in Nunavik
- develop specialised inpatient services for families dealing with abuse of substance (FASD prevention, prevention of addictions for youths, decrease harm of parental substance abuse, family preservation, family reunification)
- strengthen the cultural component to increase protective factors

Towards the new Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre

The project provides for the construction of:

- a 22-bed facility for individual adults and up to 32 clients during a family program
- office space
- daycare and school tutoring area for clients' children
- 12 2-bedroom units for staff

Regional, provincial and federal partners have rallied around Isuarsivik's project as a major positive initiative to address the root causes of substance abuse, violence and suicide amongst Inuit of Nunavik.

Operational funding for the new Centre has been fully secured thanks to the funding from the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS)' resource envelope for community organizations and the Ungaluk Safer Communities Program managed by Makivik Corporation and the Kativik Regional Government (KRG). As a community organization, securing funding for the infrastructure aspect of the project has proven challenging. After completion of the Schematic Design Phase, the construction budget is estimated at \$37M.

"Of course that's a lot of money said David Forrest, Isuarsivik Chairperson, but the cost of inaction will continue to be much much higher!".

Mr. Forrest points to a study conducted by the NRBHSS in 2015 that calculates alcohol abuse is a shocking 72-million-dollar per year financial drain on the region's economy when the costs of incarceration, health problems, policing, and lost employment are factored in.



Regional and provincial partners commit \$11,5M towards the construction of the new Centre

In 2017, KRG and Makivik Corporation have committed \$1M each towards the new Centre. In April 2018, the Québec government has committed \$8,5M towards the construction project. Other regional initiatives and fundraising activities have enabled Isuarsivik to commit close to \$1M.

As of October 2018, despite early verbal support from the Indigenous Services Department, the federal government had yet to financially commit towards the construction project. The regional and provincial partners were confident to secure the remaining funds through the *Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure Program* managed by Infrastructure Canada. However, Mr. Forrest became increasingly anxious with the administrative delays associated with Infrastructure Canada's process:

“The project was already delayed by 1 year due to the lack of financial commitment on the part of Ottawa in the last federal budget. In the face of the current suicide-related crisis affecting our region, we reached out to Indigenous Services to see if they could quickly release funds that would allow us to move ahead with critical steps for the construction project. That would buy us time while the Province of Québec finalizes an agreement with Infrastructure Canada to complete the global construction budget”.

Minister Philpott announces \$6M towards the construction of the new Centre

On October 29th, Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services, announced that her department was committing \$6M towards the construction of the new Centre. On November 5th, Richard Budgell, Regional Executive of Indigenous Services' First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, confirmed to Isuarsivik that the announced funds would be made available in time to keep up with the project's calendar.

Alicia Aragutak, Isuarsivik Executive Director, stated:

“We are so pleased to be able to go ahead with the preliminary steps of the construction project this coming summer. Nothing will prevent the realization of this priority project now. We are happy that our provincial and federal partners have understood that no one can afford to further delay the construction of the new Centre and delivery of the services that are so critically needed by our fellow Inuit”.

Isuarsivik wants to thank NRBHSS, Makivik Corporation, KRG, Société du Plan Nord, Mary Simon, Senator Dennis Patterson and Indigenous Services' First Nations and Inuit Health Branch's Québec Region and the Northern Village of Kuujuaq for their active support.

Further inquiries can be directed to communications@isuarsivik.ca.

Additional information about Isuarsivik is also available on the following web site: www.isuarsivik.ca.

See Appendix for additional information on the context of substance abuse in Nunavik

Appendix: Quick facts on substance abuse in Nunavik and the response of regional partners

The strengthening of the continuum of care for addiction has been identified as a regional priority in Nunavik since 2010. The scope and intensity of the problems related to substance abuse in Nunavik are affecting the entire Inuit society:

- Mortality rates due to alcohol four times higher in Nunavik than in the rest of Quebec/Canada;
- High rates of binge drinking sprees;
- The preoccupying prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) according to the observations of health professionals and communities;
- An alarming level of recorded crime and an over-representation of Inuit within correction services and;
- A severely disproportionate level of reports to the DYP and placement of children.

The colonization and subsequent changes, both radical and swift, experienced by the Inuit of Nunavik over the past decades had grave repercussions. These effects are manifested in the wide-ranging psychosocial and health problems currently afflicting Nunavimmiut, including the abuse of substances.

In 2014, the Nunavik Advisory Committee for Addictions recommended the building of a new regional recovery centre under the leadership of Isuarsivik Treatment Centre to respond to the needs for inpatient addictions services for adults and to create a family inpatient program to lessen the impact of parental abuse on children as well as prevent FASD and substance abuse by youths.

In 2016, the NRBHSS has supported Isuarsivik in its process to design a development plan to meet the region's need for adult and family inpatient addiction services.

Since then, Isuarsivik has built support from the regional, provincial and federal partners to build the new Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre, increase its capacity to welcome adult clients, develop a family program and deploy community-based Inuit addictions counsellors across Nunavik to support Nunavimmiut in their own community.

Since 2017, Isuarsivik has joined its regional partners and relevant departments of the government of Quebec under *Saqijjuq*, a word meaning change in wind direction. The Saqijjuq partners have designed a global action plan to enhance the capacity of Nunavik's communities to reduce the impact of substance abuse, support its members with a grassroots approach and strengthen specialized addiction services, including Isuarsivik. This project also aims at adjusting how the justice system works in Nunavik to encourage social regulation.

