

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PUTTAUTIIT CONFERENCE UNITES NUNAVIMMIUT

**Puvirnituuq, October 13, 2015** – The closing ceremony on Saturday night marked the end of the first regional suicide prevention and healing conference in Nunavik, an event that brought together Nunavimmiut from across the region to address this important issue and work together to better support one another. The room was filled with positive energy and a sense of unity, the result of a very successful week.

The week-long conference saw over one hundred people take part in a variety of workshops focused on developing skills to become more willing, ready and able to intervene with someone at risk of suicide, gaining a greater understanding of the effects traumatic history has had on Inuit, and having access to tools and a space for healing. “This conference has been a long time coming and we, as Inuit, have made this conference happen,” said Valerie Lock, Chairperson of the Regional Suicide Prevention Committee (RSPC). “This week has been an empowering experience for all those involved and I know that we will continue to work together towards the same goal of preventing suicide in our region.” The well-being network exhibition was also an excellent occasion for organizations around the region to share what they have to offer.

The contribution and support of the Puttautiit Conference local organizing committee and the community of Puvirnituuq was outstanding. Evening activities were planned throughout the week, giving participants and community members alike the opportunity to learn new skills such as meat cutting to make nikkuk, massage and relaxation classes. Land survival skills and discussions amongst women were held at a qarmaq built by community members for the purpose of the conference, making it a gathering place where experiences were shared and advice given. “The timing of this conference could not have been more perfect for the community of Puvirnituuq,” said Maina Beaulne, Head of Prevention and Promotion Programs at Inuulitsivik Health Centre and coordinator of the local organizing committee. “It immediately followed a month-long alcohol ban, a time when people had the chance to reflect on their lives and consider their hopes for the future, so having this conference now was just the right timing.”

This event was made possible with the effort of many partners in the region that together form the Regional Suicide Prevention Committee (RSPC), an entity created through the Ilusiliriniqmi Pigutjiutini Qimirruniq (IPQ) ([www.ipqnunavik.com](http://www.ipqnunavik.com)). On behalf of the RSPC, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) would like to thank the NV of Puvirnituuq, Inuulitsivik Health Centre, Iguarsivik and the Adult Education schools in Puvirnituuq, and Air Inuit for their support during the conference.

*The NRBHSS is a public agency created in 1978 under the **James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement**. It is responsible for nearly the entire 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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