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Building *Nunavut* Together  
*Nunavut* iuuqatigiingniq  
Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

# News Release

For Immediate Release

## Nunavut plans for continuity of healthcare services over the summer

**Iqaluit, Nunavut (July 16, 2021)** –Several Nunavut communities can expect their health centres to be temporarily closed or see a reduction in services over the summer. The Department of Health is working with government and territorial partners to ensure Nunavummiut have access to necessary health services while addressing staff shortages.

“The COVID-19 pandemic and a nationwide shortage of health care staff have made the recruitment of nurses into the territory very difficult,” said Minister of Health, Lorne Kusugak. “My department developed contingency plans that will allow continuity of health services in affected communities while aggressively pursuing recruitment efforts throughout the summer.”

Throughout the summer, the Department of Health will be assisted by its new contract with Bayshore Healthcare Agency, who were contracted on March 23 to provide nurse and midwifery services to Nunavut. While this partnership and the hiring efforts over the past few weeks have allowed the Department of Health to avoid having to close more health centres for certain periods during this summer, some closures may be necessary if staffing levels change.

In communities where health centre services will be unavailable or limited, the Department of Health will use a combination of virtual health, fly-in clinics and paramedic services to support clients. Calls will continue to go to the health centres and be directed to virtual support services. Calls may be automatically forwarded to other communities, and callers are asked to not hang up if there are delays while the call is connecting. Support staff will continue services such as filling prescriptions, but Nunavummiut in affected communities are reminded there could be delays.

Virtual public health staff, paramedics and other health staff will allow for continued response to COVID-19 and can respond to introduction of the virus to a community, provide testing, and conduct contact tracing and monitoring. Vaccines will continue to

be available by appointment and will be administered by paramedics or a licensed nurse practitioner.

Service reductions or closures are subject to change based on staff availability. There may be changes to services if staffing levels change.

**Health centre closures:**

Grise Fiord: Mid-August

Resolute: Mid-August

**Health centres closed except to emergency services:**

Kugaruuk: August 1 to 15

Taloyoak: July 30 to August 13

Clyde River: August 9 to August 24

Sanikiluaq: July 26 to August 31

Naujaat: August 12 to August 31

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