

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

President Kotierk calls for Substantive Equality on World TB Day

(March 24, 2022, Cambridge Bay, Nunavut) NTI President Aluki Kotierk proclaims March 24 as World Tuberculosis (TB) Day in Nunavut and seeks additional federal investments towards substantive equality to save Inuit lives.

"TB is a preventable and curable disease. We must work together expeditiously to meet Canada's 2030 target date for TB elimination in Inuit Nunangat. This will require federal investments towards true equality in outcomes," said Aluki Kotierk, President of NTI.

"Social infrastructure must be built such as housing, daycares, addictions treatment, assisted living facilities and community centres. Food security must be addressed. Health services must be delivered in Inuktitut by Inuit. All of this work will strengthen immune systems and make health services safe for Inuit patients," said James Eetoolook, Vice-President of NTI.

Since 2018, NTI has been working with the Government of Nunavut (GN) to develop and implement a TB Elimination Action Plan. The Savikataaq government refused to endorse the reduction and elimination targets, to endorse the plan it had co-developed and to provide data on the incidence of TB in communities.

NTI has begun implementing components of the TB Elimination Action Plan, including programs to support communities and households impacted by TB outbreaks, investment in existing food security programs, and a health and housing forum.

Treatment for active and sleeping TB is available in every community in Nunavut. Get tested for TB if you have been coughing for longer than 3 weeks or have spent time with someone who is sick with TB. Finish treatment if it is recommended for you.

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Background

The *Nunavut Tuberculosis Elimination Action Plan, 2020-2023* was created through a collaborative process led by NTI, in partnership with the Government of Nunavut.

The 10 focus areas of Nunavut's TB action plan are:

- Partnership, collaboration and advocacy
- Strengthening the health system
- Housing
- Nutrition, food security and food sovereignty
- Strengthening families and communities
- Eliminating TB stigma
- Strengthening the Nunavut TB Program
- Community TB screening and treatment
- Inuit education and employment
- Inuit governed research

Through these focus areas we will:

1. Improve access to healthcare by increasing Inuit employment and use of Inuktitut in health and TB programs.
2. Support our partners at the Government of Nunavut to make the Nunavut TB Program stronger and to continue community-based TB screening and testing clinics to reduce the number of Nunavummiut with active TB and latent TB infection (sleeping TB).
3. Invest in new and existing programs to provide additional support to people and communities affected by TB.
4. Work across sectors to connect the TB Action Plan with efforts towards healing from historical traumas, reducing poverty, closing the public housing gap, and strengthening our social infrastructure.
5. Implement a TB research strategy that meaningfully involves Inuit to answer our questions and inform our way forward.
6. Implement community-based and community-led initiatives to eliminate TB and to end the stigma and discrimination often faced by those with TB.
7. Maintain political will and secure additional resources and investments we need to achieve a strong and TB-free Nunavut by 2030.
8. Form the Nunavut Tuberculosis Elimination Advisory Committee to ensure implementation of the TB Action Plan is inclusive, transparent, and effective.
9. Develop tools that will enable us to monitor, to evaluate and as needed, to adjust the TB Action Plan to help us achieve our goals.
10. Demonstrate accountability to Nunavummiut by reporting on Nunavut's progress toward achieving TB elimination.