

Akausivik Inuit

## Family Health Team

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### News Release

Sunday February 21st, 2021

The Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team (AIFHT) in Ottawa has begun vaccinating one of the country's highest risk populations. The first Covid-19 vaccines were given on Wednesday February 17, 2021, at the Inuit Health Centre's facility in Ottawa. *(For video on YouTube please link [here](#). Broadcast links available at the bottom of this release)*

The Health Centre has been working intensely with federal, provincial, and local health authorities to help secure Covid-19 vaccines on a priority basis for urban Inuit. The delivery of the Covid-19 vaccine at Akausivik is a significant milestone in its pandemic response for Inuit locally, regionally, and for those on inter-provincial transit to and from the north.

Covid -19 risk among Inuit, is recognized as extreme. During the previous H1N1 pandemic Inuit suffered rates of mortality and complications 14 times higher than mainstream.

The priorities for Covid-19 vaccinations, reflect the Inuit health realities. Everyone over the age of 55 and those with risk morbidities are given priority. This is consistent with life expectancy amongst Inuit in Canada which is 10 to 17 years shorter than the general population.

Presently, Ottawa is home to Canada's largest Inuit population outside of the north.

Akausivik clients and Inuit in general are burdened with more health disparities than the general Canadian population. The reasons are varied and complex. Inuit arrive from communities where there are no doctors, no regular checkups, and too often living conditions that do not foster good health.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team has continued to treat clients face-to-face, in its work as a designated essential service and Covid-19 Assessment Centre for Inuit. As well, AIFHT has maintained its practice of delivering direct care for urgent care needs, maternal infant care, chronic disease management, mental health services, and in-person primary care, involving physicians, nurses, and Inuit medical navigators. AIFHT also provides service to the homebound, homeless, hard to reach, high risk, and those in medical travel isolation.

Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team (AIFHT) also reaches out to Inuit outside of Ontario to support any Covid-19 vaccination needs identified.



The Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team's dedication to treating Inuit in Ottawa, surrounding regions, within the province, and those in transition to and from up north, is unique in Canada, if not the world.

Covid-19 presents new challenges for everyone at AIFHT and our patients.

With our continued determination to maintain the Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team (AIFHT) Covid-19 vaccination clinic, we hope to provide further protection and safeguard as many Inuit as possible.

- FAQs:
- How do Inuit book an appointment?  
**Call Akausivik at 613-740-0999**
  - When is it open?  
**Clinic/appointment hours 10:30am to 4:30pm Monday-Friday**
  - Who is eligible?  
**All Inuit adults, including family and caregivers  
Starting with aged 55 and older, and those at risk**
  - Is the Covid-19 vaccine safe?  
**Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines are Health Canada approved  
The vaccine does not contain the virus, it can't give you COVID-19**
  - Why get vaccinated?  
**It is free  
Helps prevent disease severity and death**

The Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team (AIFHT) Covid-19 vaccination clinic is provided in partnership with Ottawa Public Health.

Special thanks to The Ottawa Hospital and Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

*High resolution video links via Dropbox  
Executive Director, Connie Siedule addressing client's concerns - [here](#)  
and the challenges of vaccinating urban Inuit [here](#)*

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