



TUNGASUVVINGAT INUIT HOLDS COVID-19 POP-UP VACCINATION CLINIC FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS

April 21, 2021

OTTAWA, ON - A successful two-day “pop-up” vaccination clinic to protect urban Indigenous against the COVID-19 infection was held on April 15th and 17th. The clinic was held at the main offices of [Tungasuvvingat Inuit](#) (TI) at 1071 Richmond Road in Ottawa in partnership with [Ottawa Public Health](#) and the [Wabano Centre](#). The event was open to all urban Indigenous and vaccinations were administered to Inuit, Métis, and First Nations community.

As Ontario entered a second declaration of emergency and subsequent stay at home order, the vaccination clinic could not come soon enough. Event organizer, Brittany Hesmer, Manager of Strategic Initiatives for [Mamisarvik Healing Centre](#) stated, “At this small pop-up clinic, we were able to vaccinate 168 First Nations, Inuit and Metis community members and their households. While a small number in comparison to the whole population, this means we continue to take steps forward in protecting the Indigenous community in Ottawa and surrounding areas.”

A health endeavour of this magnitude was expertly navigated, and extreme care and consideration went into the planning. TI Executive Director, Amanda Kilabuk added, “The collaboration between Tungasuvvingat Inuit, Ottawa Public Health and Wabano Centre is an excellent example of what we can accomplish when more people are invited to the table. This clinic is not typical of the kind of the services TI normally provides as an organization, and we were able to lean on the expertise of Wabano as an [AHAC](#) (Aboriginal Health Access Centre) and Ottawa Public Health for the clinical guidance. Our collaboration provided a safe, comfortable, and supportive environment for people and their families to access this life-saving vaccine. “

TI regularly provides programs and services that urban Inuit rely on ranging from food security, mental wellness, family programming and health services. The importance of the vaccination clinic was magnified by the immediate feedback from members of the urban Indigenous community that received the Pfizer vaccinations. Hesmer personally witnessed the vaccinations and shared, “We are seeing a huge sense of relief when Indigenous families and households are offered access to the vaccine. Instead of hesitancy, there is an increasing sense of urgency; especially given the current situation in Ontario. TI is extremely proud of the partnership with Ottawa Public Health and Wabano for this event. TI will be working with public health units across the province to ensure that vaccination plans consider and include the unique needs of urban Inuit throughout Ontario.”

For more information about Inuit-specific COVID-19 vaccinations in Ontario, follow Tungasuvvingat Inuit on social media at <http://www.facebook.com/tiottawa> and on twitter @tiantario.