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## MAJOR REFORMS TO YOUTH SERVICES IN NUNAVIK

**Kuuujuaq, March 21, 2018** – The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) has undertaken major reforms to youth services in an effort to provide the best possible services for Nunavik children and families. Emphasis is on the organization of more efficient services and on family and community involvement for the purposes of culturally adapted practices.

Serious efforts were invested in shoring up prevention and front-line services in order to offer the necessary support to parents and families. Several programs and services were developed to better equip parents to deal with problems, whether in the network’s institutions or through support offered to the family houses. These community organizations, supported by the NRBHSS, offer essential support to Nunavik families through the community interveners.

However, over the past year, 444 Nunavik children had to be placed under youth-protection services (DYP) in close to 385 different foster families. Placement with Inuit families is highly recommended and preferred, out of concern to maintain a child’s ties to culture and language. Unfortunately, major obstacles complicate that choice: Inuit foster families notably offer their services in a generalized context of overcrowded housing. They should receive greater financial support from the health and social services network.

Major reforms have been undertaken to improve youth-protection services that are now positioned appropriately—as last resort—in the network, through reinforcement of prevention and front-line services. Moreover, the NRBHSS has committed to review the eligibility criteria for becoming a foster family in order to ensure foster families receive the support they need.

The work of Mina Beaulne, Advisor for Integrated Youth and Family Services in Nunavik, with the various communities and organizations merits the spotlight. Her efforts have enabled the commitment of all the communities and regional organizations to the process under section 37.5 of the *Youth Protection Act* aimed at application of that statute in a culturally adapted manner. Ideally, the process should enable dejudicializing youth-protection measures and thus fostering family and community interventions.

The NRBHSS is therefore pursuing its efforts to change and improve youth services, efforts that have been deployed these past 10 years. Governmental support is necessary to sustain these efforts, which in themselves cannot repair the damage done for over 50 years. This community approach, based on self-determination, should enable empowerment in terms of youth-protection services and foster broad consensus relative to their application.

# NEWS RELEASE

*The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services 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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**Source:** Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services

**For information:** Anne Sellès  
Communications Officer, NRBHSS  
Tel.: 819 964-2222, extension 293