

A scenic photograph of a rocky coastline with a small boat in the water. The foreground shows dark, wet rocks and patches of green moss. The water is calm, reflecting the sky. In the background, there are more rocky islands and a clear sky.

Towards Health Equity for Inuit

*Creating a health system that supports
Inuit-specific approaches*



Inuit Population

- **60,000** Inuit in Canada
- Population increase from **18%** from 2006 – 2011
- Median age of **23**



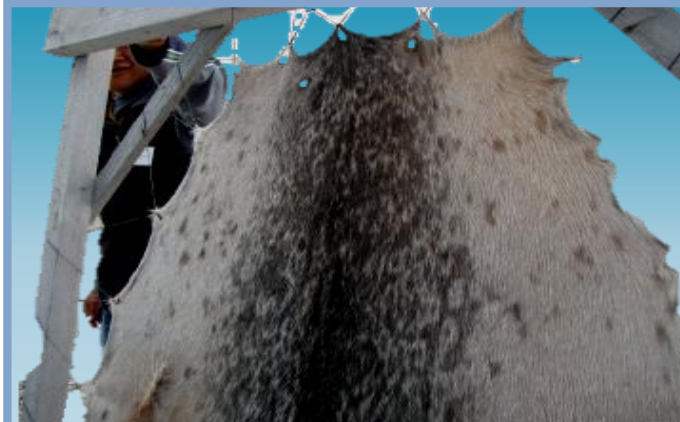
Inuit Nunangat (Homeland)

- The majority of Inuit live in Inuit Nunangat
- **53** Inuit communities in Canada
- **Four** Inuit Land Claim Regions
 - Inuvialuit Settlement Region
 - Nunavut
 - Nunavik
 - Nunatsiavut



Inuit Culture

- Strong culture and language
- A foundational connection to the land, sea, and ice
- Holistic view of the relationships between all living and non-living things
- Strong family and social networks



Inuit Communities

- Remote coastal communities
- Many communities created in the middle of the 20th century
- Most Inuit communities lack adequate infrastructure such as roads, ports, Internet, health facilities, education facilities, and housing
- Can only be reached by air and sea



Inuit Societal Changes

- Dramatic socio-cultural changes have occurred in the past 60 years
- Forced relocation and adoption of southern values altered Inuit society
- Imposition of residential schools led to inter-generational trauma that continues to affect health & well-being



ITK History

- Established in 1971 as Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
- Has played an active role in settling four Inuit land claims:
 - James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
 - Inuvialuit Final Agreement
 - Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
 - Nunatsiavut Land Claims Agreement



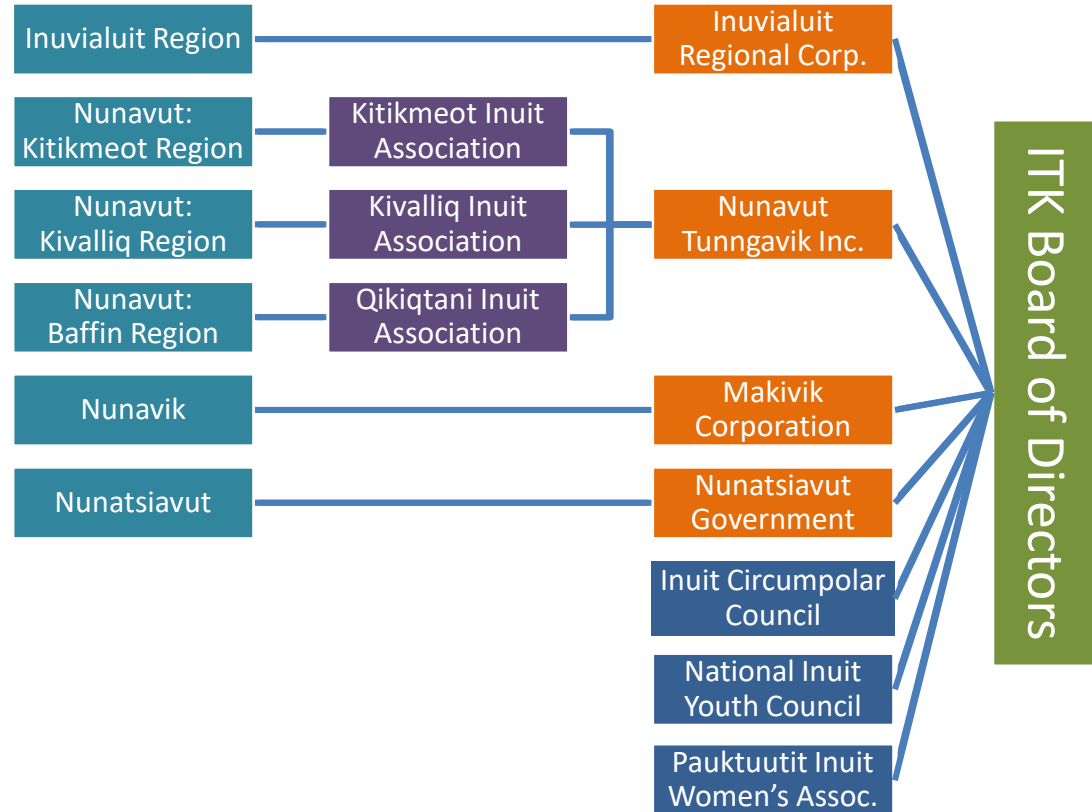
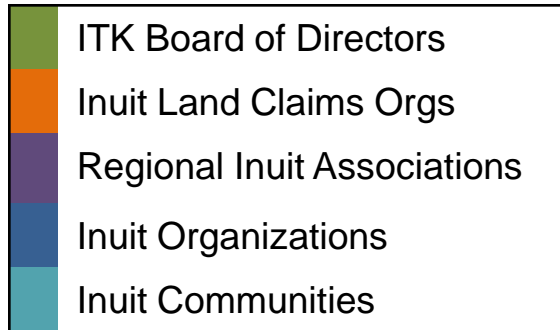
ITK Today

- In 2001 became Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- National organization for Inuit in Canada
- Democratically elected governance model with all Canadian Inuit at its base
- The counterpoint for the Government of Canada for national-level interactions with Inuit



Inuit Governance Process

LEGEND



Department of Health and Social Development



Inuit Health Challenges

- Lower life expectancy
- Higher rates of infant mortality
- Disproportionately higher rates of infectious diseases
- Highest suicide rates of any group in Canada



Photo Credit: David Murphy

Social and Economic Inequities

Inuit Nunangat

39% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes¹

29% of Inuit aged 25 to 64 in Inuit Nunangat have earned a high school diploma¹

70% of Inuit households in Nunavut do not have enough to eat²

\$17,778 the median individual income for Inuit in Inuit Nunangat⁴

30 the number of physicians per 100,000 population in Nunavut⁵

45.6% of Inuit in Inuit Nunangat are employed¹

70.8 the average life expectancy for residents of Inuit Nunangat*⁶



All Canadians

4% of non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat live in crowded homes¹

85% of all Canadians aged 25 to 64 have earned a high school diploma¹

8.3% of all households in Canada do not have enough to eat³

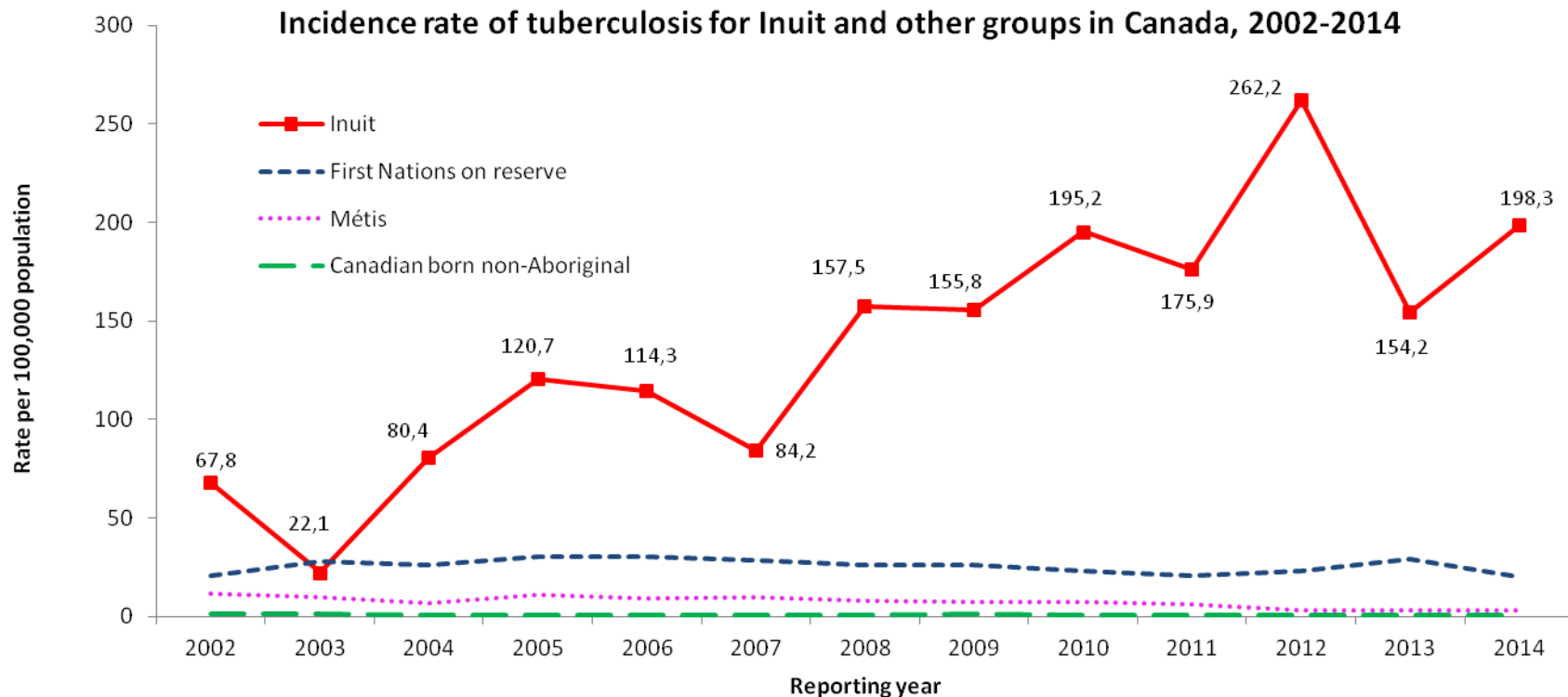
\$77,683 the median individual income for non-Indigenous people in Inuit Nunangat⁴

119 the mean number of physicians per 100,000 population in Urban Health Authorities⁵

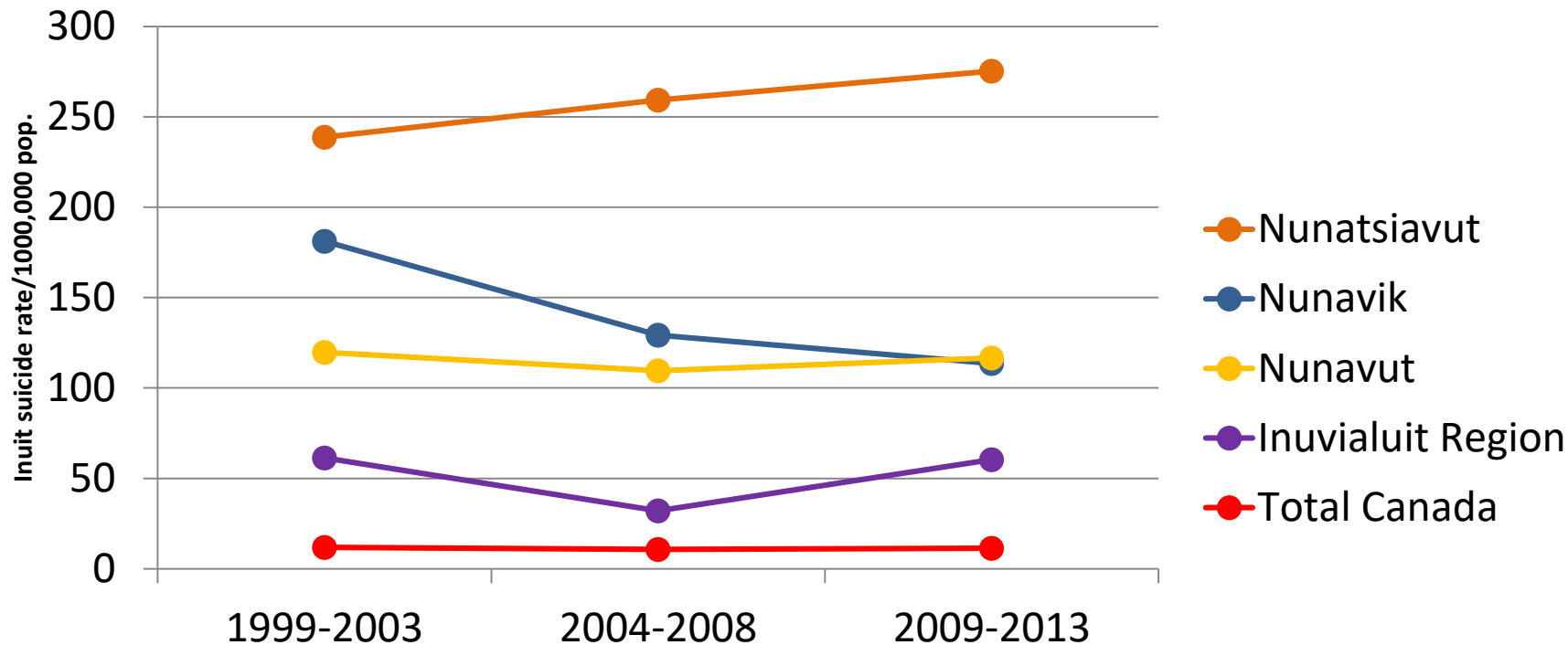
60.9% of all Canadians are employed¹

80.6 the average life expectancy for all Canadians⁶

Tuberculosis Rates



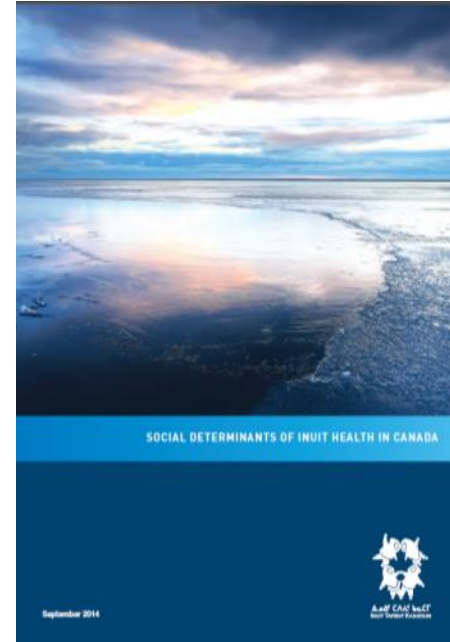
Suicide Among Inuit by Region



Information from: National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy

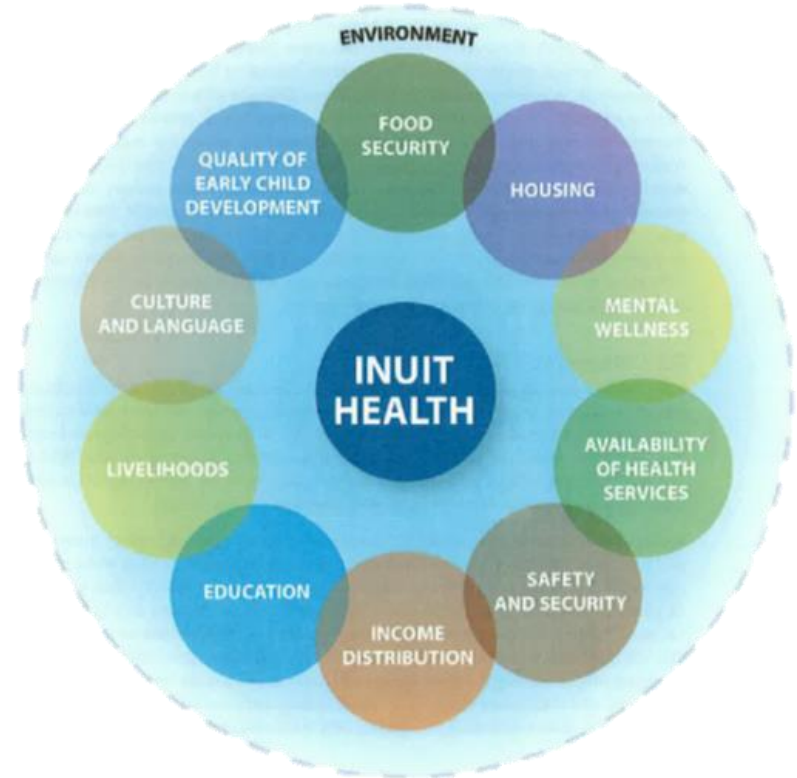
Social Determinants of Health

- Conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, play, and age, including the health system
- Shaped by distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels
- Determinants are highly interconnected



Social Determinants of Inuit Health

- Food security
- Housing
- Mental Wellness
- Availability of health services
- Safety and security
- Income distribution
- Education
- Livelihoods
- Culture and language
- Quality of early child development



Mental Wellness

- Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellness as well as strong cultural identity
 - Historical and intergenerational trauma
 - Socio-economic conditions and employment opportunities
 - Access to continuum of culturally relevant mental wellness, medical, and social services
- Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development in 2012 offered a 12-week Inuit Intergenerational Trauma and Addictions Healing Program

Rates of Inuit youth suicide are

11X

the Canadian national average

Quality of Early Childhood Development

- Maternal, fetal, infant, and children's health and wellness
 - Nutrition and food security
 - Environments for healthier pregnancy
 - Access to appropriate and culturally relevant health care services
 - Inuit early childhood development programs
- A multidisciplinary Regional FASD Diagnostic Team in Nunatsiavut – example of Inuit-specific programming that supports early identification of children at risk through FASD screening

The most crucial period of life is between **0-6** years of age. Creates the foundation for lifelong optimum growth, development, health and wellness



Culture and Language

- Unique culture and language
 - Intergenerational trauma associated with the legacy of residential schools
 - Inuit youth participating in cultural activities such as on-the-land camps
 - Inuit language as the primary language of instruction in schools
- In Nunatsiavut, culture and language programs have been developed for youth including Cultural Days to highlight the uniqueness of Inuit culture

83%

of Inuit in Inuit
Nunangat can
converse in
Inuktitut

Livelihoods

- A range of social factors beyond employment including all ways in which families are generating income and supporting themselves
 - Employment opportunities
 - Participation in traditional practices
 - Consumption and sharing of country foods
- Harvester Support Programs such as the Atugaksiat Program in Nunavut, which provides financial assistance to harvesters for hunting equipment and sewing supplies

75%

of Inuit
households share
their country food
with others in their
community



Food Security

- When people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life
- High levels of food insecurity through the regions
 - Barriers to harvesting and consuming country foods
 - High cost, quality and availability of store-bought food
- “Feeding My Family” has been successful at showing the high cost of food in the North

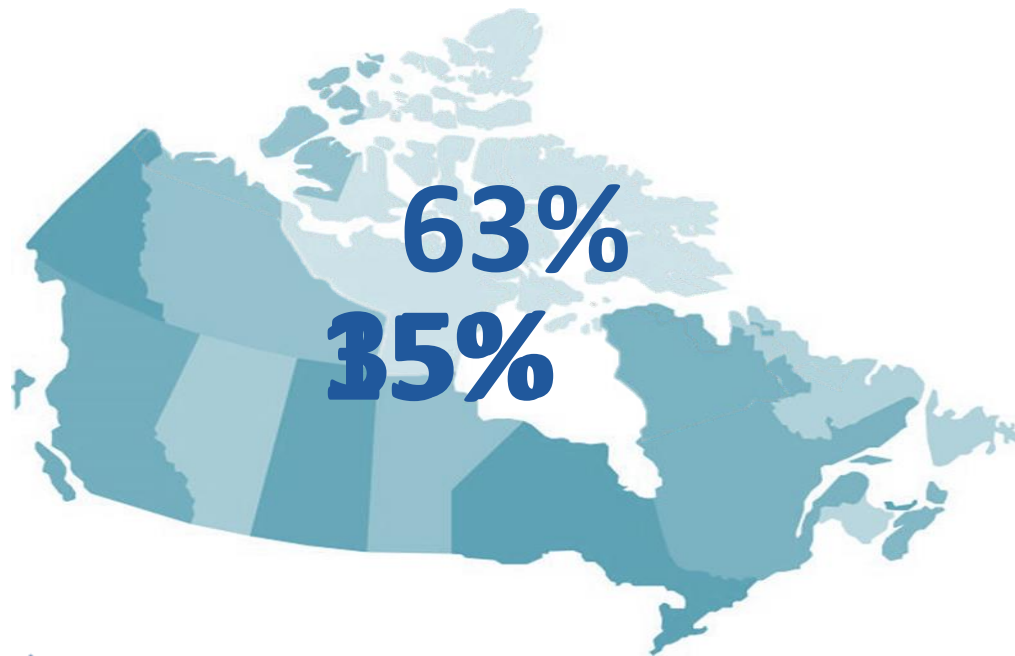
A family of four in
Nunavut will
spend



**\$395 -
\$460/week**

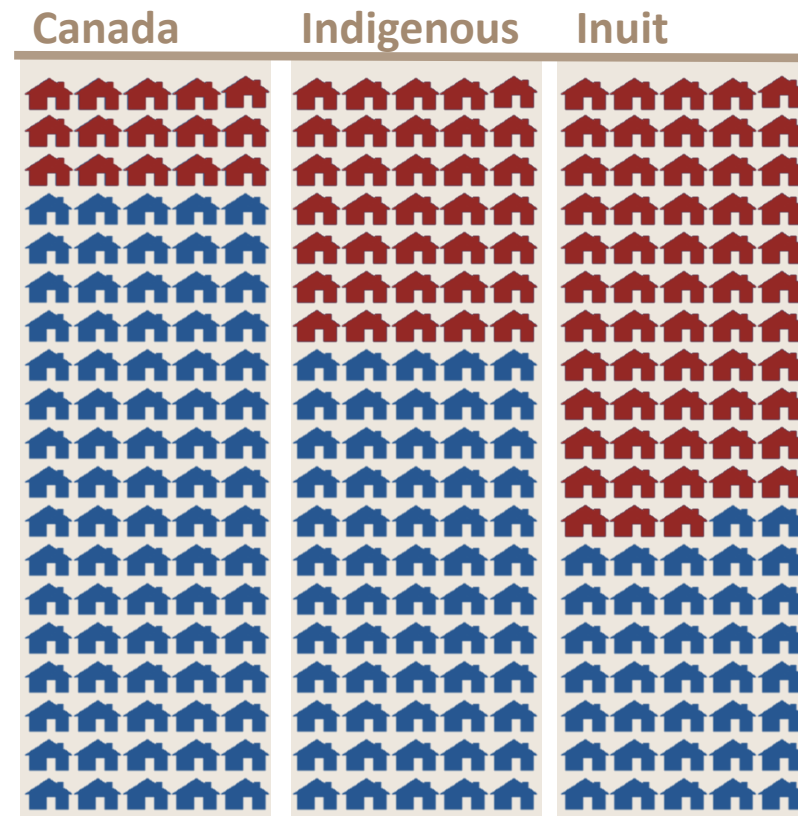
to buy a basic
nutritious diet

Food Security

Food Insecurity Crisis in Inuit Nunangat



-  Represents 1% of food secure households
-  Represents 1% of food insecure households



Housing

- Housing Crisis in Inuit Nunangat:
 - Housing shortage
 - Crowded homes
 - Homes in need of major repairs
 - Poor ventilation
- Inuit Housing Forum (October 2016) led to Inuit-specific recommendations toward the development of the National Housing Strategy
- ITK will work with Canada on the development of an Inuit specific housing strategy as part of the National Housing Strategy

Inuit are

8X



more likely than
non-Indigenous
Canadians to live
in crowded homes



Housing

The Challenge of Overcrowding

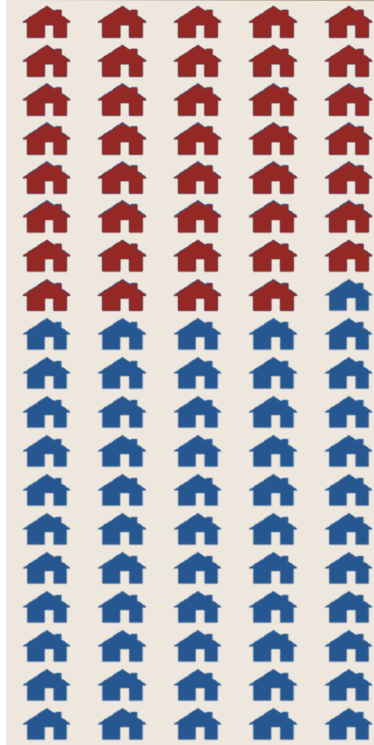


 Represents 1% of households
 Represents 1% of overcrowded households

Canada



Inuit Nunangat



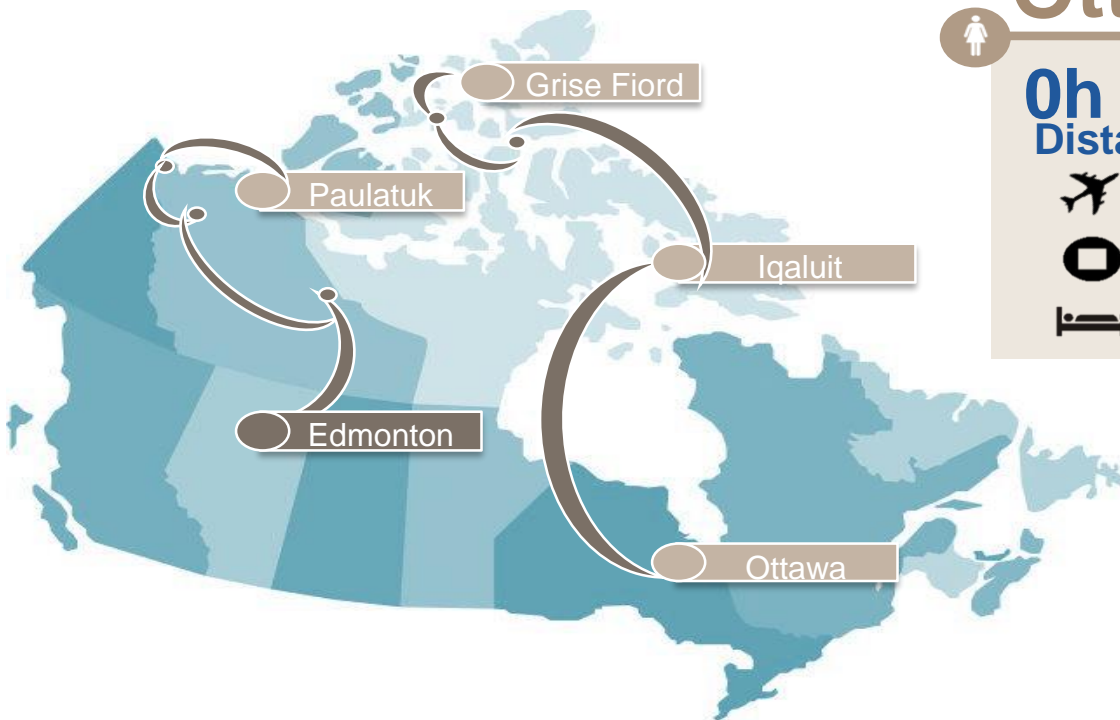
Availability of Health Services

- Access to culturally-appropriate, high quality health services
 - Need to leave communities for medical care
 - Inuit values, approaches, and perspectives
 - High turnover/shortages of health care professionals
- Nunavut Arctic College offers a nursing program with Inuit graduates in partnership with Dalhousie University

56%

of Inuit adults had contact with a medical doctor in the previous year compared to **79%** of the total Canadian population

A Patient's Journey



Ottawa



0h 14 min

Distance: 6 km



0 flights



0 stops



0 overnights

Paulatuk



29h 0 min

Distance: 1,869 km



2 flights



4 stops



1 overnight

Grise Fiord



29h 22 min

Distance: 3,481 km



3 flights



4 stops



1 overnight

Table Breakout Discussions

Please join one of our table breakout discussions to learn more!

- Food Security
- Housing
- Early Childhood Development
- Education and Training
- Mental Wellness
- Culture and Language



A Path Forward

- Existing evidence to inform new Inuit-specific programs or interventions
- Inuit willingness to work with governments through partnership
- Show Canada what is possible through a common vision on shared health priorities



A Path Forward

- Inuit-specific approaches
- Address the root causes
- Sustainable investment
- Collaboration – We need to work together





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INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI

Nakummek
Quana

Qujannamiik
Nakurmiik

Thank you
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