A CALL FOR HELP

NUNAVIK

Infection Control in a Pandemic in Remote Communities
COVID-19 outbreaks are alarming and unsettling no matter where they occur, but when they happen in the remote region of northern Quebec, the concern is amplified. With infection numbers on the rise in Nunavik, public health officials sent out a call for help to the MUHC.
Within 2 days, I found myself on a small plane making the four-hour flight to Nunavik.
Inuulitsivik Health Centre (IHC)

Located in Puvirnituq, the Inuulitsivik Health Centre is responsible for the seven villages along the Hudson Bay coast: Akulivik, Inukjuak, Ivujivik, Kuujjuaraapik, Puvirnituq, Salluit and Umiujaq.

The medical department serves seven villages in the Hudson Bay. There are four permanent doctors in Puvirnituq, two doctors in Inukjuak and one in Salluit. For the smaller villages (Umiujaq, Akulivik and Ivujivik), a permanent doctor visits them monthly.

Specialties:
- Pediatrics
- General medicine
- Emergency
- Trauma
- Psychiatry
- Maternity
- Long-term care
- Day surgery

Medical evacuation: Transfer between the villages to the hospital department and / or awaiting transfer with the challenger.
During the week I spent in Nunavik, I recommended ways to improve screening and the trajectory of patients, as well as ways to minimize transmission of the virus. The environment in Puvi is extremely different than what we are used to. The availability of equipment and material reminds me of the beginning of the pandemic when resources, PPE and testing availability were lacking.
Interesting Questions

What do we do if the pipe freezes and all of the hand sanitizer has been drunken?

Is it true you cannot get COVID through breathing in through your nose? Only your mouth?

Is there a better way than the ski-doo to relay information?

How do we visit children at homes with multiple sick children?
“Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings in heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shines down upon us, to let us know they are happy.”

—Inuit Proverb
THANKS!
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