



## Backgrounder:

### New continuing care service approved for Nunavut

#### **Why is continuing care a priority for the Government of Nunavut?**

The GN has committed to enhancing the health and well-being of Nunavummiut by providing health care closer to home. It is much better for patients and their families to receive quality medical care in their home community or region, close to their language and culture and with minimal disruption. It also makes economic sense for the GN to invest in jobs and facilities in Nunavut, along with the training that will allow Nunavummiut to hold those jobs.

#### **What is the current range of care services available in Nunavut?**

- Community care (wellness) – for people willing to go to a health care center or public health clinic for counseling, training and minor medical procedures (e.g. vaccinations)
- Home care – for people still able to live at home (minor medical assistance, house cleaning, other wellness services)
- Residential care – for people who need 24-hour assistance, with reasonable access to health care professionals (facilities range from supportive housing to assisted living)
- Acute care – for people in need of surgery or immediate medical attention (hospital)

#### **How will the new service add to this range?**

The new service will help people who need not just 24-hour assistance but also constant access to health care professionals. These people would have more complicated medical needs than those who currently use residential care services and require continuing care.

#### **How did the GN decide on this new approach to continuing care?**

A special Task Force was established in October 2004 to look into what the health needs of Nunavummiut are and the options for meeting them. The *Interdepartmental Continuing Care Task Force* included not just staff from H&SS, CLEY and Education, but also Helen Maksagak (Elder Representative) and representation from Nunavut Housing Corporation and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. The Task Force took hard research, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, and current trends into account in its deliberations. Its recommendations were presented to Cabinet

#### **Why were Gjoa Haven and Igloolik chosen for these facilities?**

The Task Force found that these communities have the greatest need at this time for a residential service for people with complicated medical conditions. A needs-based approach will also be used when choosing the next communities to host a continuing care service facility. (The Throne Speech in 2004 promised that a total of four facilities would be built over the coming four years.)

#### **Is there a need for more advanced facilities?**

Yes. Currently 42 adults with significant medical needs are placed in Nunavut facilities. However a further 55 are in out-of-territory placements because the more advanced medical service they need isn't yet available here.