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# News Release

**For Immediate Release**

## Baby box program in Nunavut, a first in Canada

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (October 25, 2016) –** In its continued effort to reduce infant mortality in Nunavut, the Department of Health is giving baby boxes to parents of every newborn in the territory over the next year.

“Nunavut has the highest rate of infant mortality in Canada, and reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and infant mortality is a priority,” said Minister of Health George Hickes. “I’m thrilled that Nunavut is taking the lead on this baby box initiative – the first publicly funded universal program of its kind in Canada.”

Nunavut’s infant mortality rate is nearly five times higher than the national average. The baby box is a concept borrowed from Finland, where it originated in 1939. Finland’s infant mortality rate was 90 in 1,000 live births, and has seen a dramatic drop to less than two in 1,000 births due to its famous Finnish Maternity Package (baby boxes).

The Department of Health is delivering more than 800 boxes to Nunavut’s 25 community health centres in 2016-2017. Expectant parents can register for a baby box during prenatal appointments or by contacting their community health centre.

The baby box, which is approved by Health Canada for infant sleep, supports maternal and child health by encouraging early prenatal care, promoting safe sleep environments and breastfeeding, and is endorsed by the Department of Education’s Early Childhood Education program. The baby boxes are filled with products for baby and parents in addition to information kits.

Various stakeholders, including the Department of Education, collaborated to support the baby boxes.

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