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News Release

For Immediate Release

Nunavut's pertussis outbreak over

Iqaluit, Nunavut (April 12, 2017) – Nunavut's pertussis (commonly called whooping cough) outbreak is officially over, the Department of Health declared today.

"I wish to thank residents of Nunavut for being proactive, getting immunized and helping to stop the spread of pertussis," said Dr. Kim Barker, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "I also extend my sincere appreciation to our dedicated health care staff throughout Nunavut; they worked tirelessly to immunize and care for patients with pertussis. Thank you as well to Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada for their ongoing support."

The pertussis outbreak started in Pond Inlet in May 2016, and spread to 11 communities in the Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq regions. At the onset of the outbreak, Nunavummiut were encouraged to check that their immunizations were up-to-date, and to be immunized. The Nunavut Department of Health continues to stress the importance of routine childhood immunizations, including protecting against pertussis. Immunizations are free, and Nunavummiut can check their immunization status at their local health centre.

Though the outbreak is over, Health encourages people to be vigilant against pertussis, and see your health care provider immediately if your child has a cough that is followed by a "whoop" sound, or has a high fever, or vomits after coughing. To help stop the spread of germs and infections, Nunavummiut are reminded to frequently wash hands, cough into a sleeve or tissue, not share food, drink, utensils or toothbrushes, and not to smoke indoors.

For more information about Nunavut's immunization program, please go to the Health's website at http://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/immunization-programs or contact your local health centre or Iqaluit public health.

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