



News Release

For Immediate Release

GN and The Ottawa Hospital launch Virtual Critical Care Program to enhance access to specialist support

Iqaluit, Nunavut (May 22, 2025) – The Government of Nunavut (GN) has partnered with The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) to launch the Virtual Critical Care Program (VCCP), aimed at enhancing real-time access to critical care specialists for physicians and health-care providers across the Qikiqtaaluk region.

This innovative service enables frontline physicians at the Qikiqtani General Hospital (QGH) and in all 12 Qikiqtaaluk communities to connect virtually with critical care specialists at TOH and help manage critically-ill patients when seconds count.

The service began April 1, 2025.

“By leveraging technology, we are improving access to specialized medical expertise for Qikiqtaaluk residents young and old,” said Health Minister John Main, emphasizing the importance of this initiative as part of the government’s commitment to provide equitable health-care access and timely care to Nunavummiut regardless of where they live.

Through secure video technology, critical care physicians can directly assess patients, view vital signs and monitors, and provide immediate clinical support in high-acuity situations.

Virtual critical care support is available to physicians in the following critical circumstances:

- New patient arriving in shock or with abnormal vital signs.
- Patients deteriorating despite current treatment.
- Complex cases requiring a second opinion.
- Support in stabilizing patients for medical transport.
- Guidance in establishing goals of care.
- Assistance with ventilator or BiPAP use.

Strengthening Regional Partnerships

This initiative was built upon the longstanding relationship between TOH and the GN and made possible through the coordinated efforts of Health IT teams, The Ottawa Hospital, and Medical Affairs, ensuring compliance with the *Canada Health Act* and all interprovincial healthcare regulations.

“The Ottawa Hospital is proud to continue supporting health care in Nunavut by providing critical care when and where it matters most,” said Dr. Scott Millington, Director of VCCP at TOH. “The first few hours of a critical illness are vital — and with our Virtual Critical Care program, we can connect ICU specialists with remote care teams in real time, ensuring patients receive timely and high-quality support.”

TOH began the VCCP in 2023 as a tool to support patients in regional hospitals needing critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nunavut is TOH’s 13th VCCP partner.

The Department of Health remains committed to improving the quality, accessibility and cultural responsiveness of healthcare across Nunavut. This program is a significant step toward ensuring that every resident — regardless of location — can receive timely, expert care when facing critical illness.

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About the Department of Health, GN

The Department of Health is responsible for health services and social programming in Nunavut. It is mandated to work towards the improvement of the health and well-being of Nunavummiut by addressing the differing needs of each community through culturally appropriate programs and services.

About The Ottawa Hospital

The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) is one of Canada’s top learning and research hospitals where we are guided by our vision to provide the world-class and compassionate care we would all want for our loved ones. Our multi-campus hospital, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, is home to the Regional Trauma Centre and Cancer Centre, and to discoveries that are adopted globally. Backed by generous support from the community, we are focused on reshaping the future of health care to improve the health of our diverse population of patients from Eastern Ontario, Western Quebec and Nunavut.

Media Contact:

Charmaine Deogracias
Manager of Communications
Department of Health
867-975-5712
cdeogracias@gov.nu.ca

Rebecca Abelson
Media Relations Officer
The Ottawa Hospital
343-576-0259
rabelson@toh.ca

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