

# Collaboration Between National and Territorial Infection Prevention and Control Programmes Through COVID-19 Response Strengthens Both IPC Practice and Professional Networks

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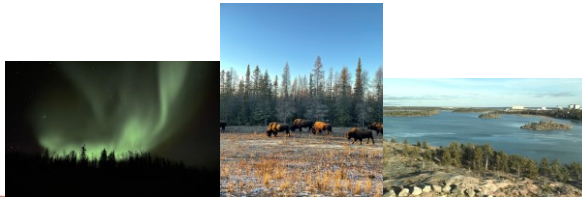
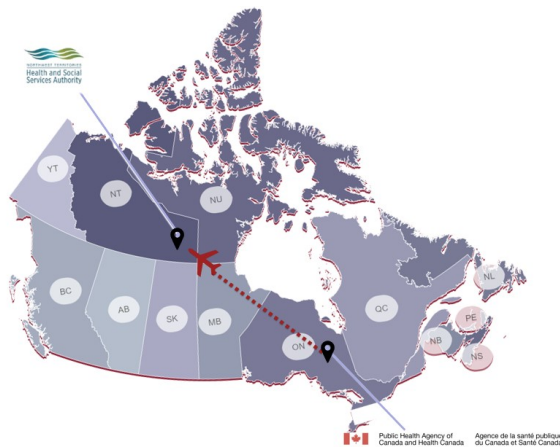
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## Background

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Healthcare Associated Infection Prevention and Control programme (HAIPC) develops national infection prevention and control (IPC) guidelines for healthcare settings, and regularly provides IPC advice to jurisdictions and stakeholders.
- COVID-19 pandemic response provided an opportunity for PHAC HAIPC to directly collaborate with provinces and territories to provide on-site assistance in implementing IPC practices in health care settings.
- In 2021, PHAC received requests from the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) for COVID-19 outbreak management and IPC support.
- Our objective is to describe on-site IPC collaborations established between PHAC HAIPC and NTHSSA.

## Project

- In the fall of 2021, an initial virtual planning meeting was held between PHAC HAIPC and the NTHSSA to determine the scope of requested IPC needs.
- PHAC HAIPC deployed IPC specialists to Northwest Territories, from October 2021 to February 2022, to work with the NTHSSA territorial IPC team.
- Together a rapid needs assessment was completed to identify IPC priorities. Co-joint observations and discussions were held to review and evaluate IPC practices.



## Outcomes

- The collaborative IPC work included on-site visits to acute care and long-term care settings, COVID-19 testing and isolation sites, and a correctional facility.
- IPC priorities were identified through the rapid needs assessment.
- PHAC HAIPC and NTHSSA teams collaborated on IPC practice reviews in both the acute care and long-term care settings.
- Working together allowed both PHAC HAIPC and NTHSSA to learn from one another.
- Although the focus of the deployment was COVID-19 IPC support the relationships established between PHAC HAIPC and NTHSSA led to ongoing IPC discussions, PHAC network connections and collaboration on HAI surveillance.

## Lessons Learned

- This deployment provided the PHAC HAIPC programme the unique opportunity to directly collaborate on-site with the NTHSSA territorial IPC team.
- Although virtual meetings have become standard work practice especially since the pandemic there are times when on-site, in-person collaborations are more productive and enhance working relationships.
- Further evaluation is needed to measure the impact of similar collaborations on IPC implementation in Canada.