MEDIA RELEASE

Inuit from across the Arctic met in Yellowknife this week to focus on the health and wellness challenges confronting circumpolar Inuit.

Organized by the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), this first-ever Circumpolar Inuit Health Summit provided participants an opportunity to share information on national initiatives in Inuit health and to promote promising practices.

“This Summit is important for all Inuit because it aims to find ways for the ICC to support improvement to Inuit health and wellness,” Mr Duane Smith, President of ICC Canada, said in opening the Summit on Thursday July 9.

“It’s easy to say that our health and the health of our children is very important – we know that. But we have some big health problems confronting us and many of them are common to our people right across the Arctic.”

The Summit brought together Inuit health professionals from Alaska, Canada, Chukotka (Russia) and Greenland as part of the ICC’s ongoing efforts to highlight major health and wellness challenges facing Inuit.

The aim of the meeting is to develop a set of recommendations on possible ICC action to promote better Inuit health and wellness.

“Many of the health challenges we face in our different countries are similar because they are shaped in part by our shared experiences although local conditions contribute to differences.

“But whatever the differences, there’s one overarching fact which remains the same - the stark gap between the key health indicators for our people and those of the broader populations in our countries,” Mr Smith said.

“ICC has an important role to play in identifying ways to address that gap.”

The Inuit Summit was held just prior to the International Conference on Circumpolar Health which is also being held in Yellowknife starting on July 11.

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