

Minister of Health's 2022 Public Health Act Annual Report



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT:

I am pleased to submit the 2022 Public Health Act Annual Report to the Legislative Assembly.

The *Public Health Act* requires the Minister to prepare an annual report within six months of the end of each calendar year and table the report in the Legislative Assembly during the first sitting of the Assembly after each report is prepared.

The report must outline reportable events, outbreaks, public health emergencies, and inspections completed under the *Public Health Act*.

This report covers the period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. John Main Minister of Health



PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

Under the *Public Health Act*, the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO) of Nunavut may recommend to the Minister that a public health emergency be declared if additional special measures, such as public health orders, are needed to protect the public health and prevent, remedy, or mitigate the effects of the emergency.

In March 2020, in response to COVID-19, the Minister of Health declared a State of Public Health Emergency. The public health emergency was subsequently extended every two weeks until April 11, 2022, when it was allowed to lapse.

While the public health emergency was in place, public health orders were issued that restricted travel, mandated self-isolation, physical distancing, and placed limits on capacity gatherings and within food service and licensed establishments.

REPORTABLE EVENTS & OUTBREAKS

In Canada, there are six commonly accepted functions with public health services:

- Population health assessment;
- Health surveillance:
- Health protection;
- Health promotion;
- Disease and injury prevention;
- Emergency preparedness and response.

Recognizing that many of these are interconnected, this annual report focuses on health surveillance and health protection, specifically for communicable disease and environmental health.

Under the *Public Health Act*, reportable events include the occurrence of communicable diseases and zoonotic diseases. Outbreaks are cases of a condition, usually a communicable disease, that are linked by person, place, or time, with a rise in the number of cases.

Table 1 on the following page outlines all the communicable diseases that were reported in Nunavut for 2022. Following the table, the report provides additional details on certain communicable and zoonotic diseases that occurred in 2022.

Table 1: Communicable Disease Count fo	r 2022	
Communicable Disease	Count*	
COVID-19	3203	
Chlamydia	1437	
Influenza A and B	679	
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	500	
Gonorrhea	497	
Methicillin-resistant S. aureus (MRSA)	265	
Syphilis	58	
Campylobacteriosis	19	
Norovirus	17	
C.difficile	16	
Invasive Haemophilus influenzae infections	13	
Invasive Streptococcus pneumoniae infections	10	
Salmonellosis	8	
Chicken Pox (Varicella)	7	
Invasive Group A Streptococcal infections	7	
Shigellosis	6	
Giardiasis	<5**	
Rotavirus	<5	
Hepatitis C	<5	
Typhoid	<5	
Brucellosis	<5	
Neonatal Group B Streptococcal infections	<5	
Hepatitis B	<5	
Trichinosis	<5	
Yersiniosis	<5	
Cryptosporidiosis	<5	
Toxoplasmosis	<5	
*These are preliminary counts. On an annual basis, Health validates its data related to communicable diseases. This process is not complete for 2022. However, major changes are not anticipated.		

**Health does not release case counts under 5 due to privacy

reasons.



COVID-19

For 2022, there were 3203 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nunavut. Cases were reported in all 25 communities during the Omicron variant wave that began in December 2021. Case counts are impacted by testing recommendations and patterns.

Tuberculosis (TB)

There were 52 diagnosed cases of TB in Nunavut in 2022. See Table 2 below for more information.

Table 2: Diagnosed cases of TB in Nunavut by year											
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of Total Cases	80	52	83	44	54	101	57	54	34	77	52
*Health does not release community-level TB data outside of outbreaks, as it could inadvertently identify and											
stigmatize individuals and groups.											

On November 25, 2021, Health declared a TB outbreak in Pangnirtung which remains ongoing. Health issued the public health advisory when contact tracing was no longer adequate to identify all cases involved.

There are public health staff in Pangnirtung dedicated to TB follow-up, including testing people with symptoms of TB, medication administration and TB screening for people who have had close contact with a person with active TB. The team consists of Direct Observation Therapy (DOT) workers, nurses, and paramedics.

Most TB infections in Nunavut involve the lungs (pulmonary). High TB rates in the territory are significantly worsened by socio-economic factors such as:

- Overcrowded housing;
- Population demographics (younger population), poor nutrition, and high rates of smoking;
- A colder climate that can lead to more time indoors, increasing the chances of spreading the infection to others.

Syphilis

The syphilis outbreak in Nunavut is ongoing. For 2022, there were 58 new cases of syphilis infections reported. Health continues to follow the rates of syphilis closely and implements public health follow-up of all cases to keep the rates as low as possible.

While new infections of syphilis appear to have somewhat reduced from 2020-2022, this must be considered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel and gathering restrictions, and possible changes to health care service delivery during COVID-19.

See Table 3 for more information.

	Table 3: Syphilis cases by region from 2012 to 2022					
Year	Qikiqtani	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Total		
2012	30	<5*	<5*	30+		
2013	59	<5*	<5*	59+		
2014	94	<5*	<5*	94+		
2015	37	8	23	68		
2016	23	10	88	121		
2017	16	6	87	109		
2018	34	0	76	110		
2019	63	0	45	108		
2020	26	<5*	20+	50+		
2021	41	<5*	8+	53+		
2022	48	<5*	9+	58+		

^{*}Health does not release case counts under 5 due to privacy reasons and a + is included to account for these in the total.

Reportable Zoonotic Diseases in Animals

Zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans. These include foodborne illnesses transmitted by handling or eating meat from an infected animal, and other diseases such as influenza and rabies that can be transmitted through contact.

Rabies

There were 16 confirmed cases of rabies in animals in 2022. Cases were identified in foxes and dogs in seven communities across the territory.

Trichinellosis

Trichinella parasites can be found in the meat of mammals, and the disease can be passed to people who eat this raw meat. Testing of meat samples (walrus, polar bear, whale) is carried out in Iqaluit by the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) under a partnership between NRI, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) and Health.

In 2022, 56 samples were tested with three samples found positive for trichinella.

Avian influenza

The Government of Canada records cases of high pathogenicity avian influenza in wildlife, from animal carcasses sent from across the country, including Nunavut. One

Counts may be underestimated due to ongoing follow-up required for some case report forms.



confirmed and two suspect cases of avian influenza were detected in wild birds in Nunavut during 2022.

FACILITY INSPECTIONS

Health is committed to the protection and promotion of public health through education, regular inspection of facilities, and investigation of environmental health hazards. During a community visit from an environmental health officer (EHO), all public facilities are inspected, complaints are investigated, and relevant education is provided.

In 2022, EHOs conducted 35 community visits and carried out a total of 594 facility inspections. Health aims to conduct environmental health inspections of facilities twice a year. However, as shown in the table below, some facilities were inspected only once in 2022. This is largely because of staffing challenges and/or delays that occur due to weather conditions.

See Table 4 for visits that took place in 2022.

Tabl	e 4: Site visi	ts conducted	by community in 2022			
Community	Visits					
Qikiqtani						
Arctic Bay	March	October				
Clyde River	May	August				
Grise Fiord	March	November				
lgloolik	March	November				
Iqaluit	Position is b	Position is based in Iqaluit, and inspections are conducted regularly				
Kimmirut	April					
Kinngait	March	April				
Pangnirtung	Position is b regularly	ased in Pangnirtu	ing, and inspections are conducted			
Pond Inlet	March	October				
Qikiqtarjuaq	March					
Resolute Bay	March	November				
Sanirajak	February	November				
Kivalliq						
Arviat	February	August				
Baker Lake	January	July	November			
Chesterfield Inlet	February	June	October			
Coral Harbour	July					
Naujaat	February	October				
Rankin Inlet	Position is b regularly	ased in Rankin In	llet, and inspections are conducted			
Sanikiluaq	April					

Whale Cove	May	November
Kitikmeot		
Cambridge Bay	Position is regularly	based in Cambridge Bay, and inspections are conducted
Gjoa Haven	March	
Kugaaruk	March	
Kugluktuk	March	
Taloyoak	March	