**ICC Press Release**

**2021 ICC Health Summit Begins Online for a Month -**

**Focusses on Links Between Inuit Culture and Health**

September 20, 2021 – Anchorage, Alaska – The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is pleased to announce the virtual Inuit Health Summit taking place from September 20 to October 26, 2021. The Circumpolar Inuit Health Steering Committee (CIHSC) has been planning this summit for over two years.

“As Inuit, we know cultural continuity is a protective factor against suicide,” said ICC Chair Delee Sambo Dorough. “The Inuit Health Summit is a space where youth can openly discuss what supports and doesn’t support their connection to culture and foster a space where we all belong. Youth are joined by Elders and senior Inuit leaders eager to hear their perspective and support them in this journey to carry Inuit culture forward for our collective wellbeing. I commend the organizers of this summit for their creativity and persistence in holding the 2021 ICC Health Summit virtually.”

The 2021 ICC Health Summit begins today with over 50 Inuit from across Inuit Nunaat (Alaska, Canada, Chukotka, Greenland). They include youth, Elders, CIHSC members, and ICC leaders. Their words will be graphically recorded so they can be shared widely and help guide the work of policy makers, program managers and other leaders in mental wellness.

“I am looking forward to welcoming all participants to the 2021 ICC Health Summit,” stated CIHSC Chair Minnie Grey. “We’ve all been through a lot over the past 18 months and we have found new ways to connect Inuit from various communities. This virtual format has proven to be very effective during the Local 2 Global Virtual Knowledge Exchange held online in February and March 2021. Over the next weeks participants can look forward to a summit that is tailored to Inuit needs and cultural values.”

Three groups of 18 people will participate in six sessions from September 20 to October 26, 2021. The three-hour sessions will be held on Zoom. The summit is accessible to Greenlandic, Inuktitut, Russian, and English speakers. The final session on October 26th will bring everyone together in a cultural celebration and discussion of next steps.

The summit will see participants in activities such as “Tree of Life”, “the Cultural Iceberg”, “Parenting with Inuit Values”, “Cultural Reclamation”, and actionable items in suicide prevention.

This summit is a direct result of the 2018 Utqiaġvik Declaration, which mandated ICC to “host a Circumpolar Inuit Summit on Health and Well-being focusing on efforts and initiatives to reduce and eradicate health disparities harming our families and prioritizing mental wellness, addictions, and suicide prevention.”

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*The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is an Indigenous Peoples’ Organization (IPO), founded in 1977 to promote and celebrate the unity of 160,000 Inuit from Alaska (USA), Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka (Russia). ICC works to promote Inuit rights, safeguard the Arctic environment, and protect and promote the Inuit way of life. In regard to climate change, we believe that it is crucial for world leaders and governments to recognize, respect and fully implement the human rights of Inuit and all other Indigenous peoples across the globe.*