



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT WEEK: FOR EVERYONE'S HEALTH

**Kuujuuaq, June 4, 2018** – Established in 1971, Canadian Environment Week (June 4 to 10, 2018) invites the population to play a role in environmental conservation and protection. Protecting the environment means protecting the planet as well as our health and that of others around us.

With goose-hunting season in full swing in Nunavik, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) would like to remind hunters of the importance of avoiding lead-based ammunition; lead is toxic and ends up in our environment in different ways. When an animal is hunted with lead ammunition, lead shot or fragments are deposited in the soil, rivers and lakes. Animals can also ingest these lead fragments. Poisoning of predatory or scavenger birds through ingestion of lead shot is a well-known phenomenon.

Hunters and their families can be exposed when they consume the meat of birds and game hunted with lead-based ammunition.

The health impacts linked to ingestion of lead are serious. Pregnant women (and their fetus) and children are particularly vulnerable to lead toxicity. Even at low doses, lead has harmful consequences on brain development. Other toxic effects can manifest with higher doses among adults, such as high blood pressure. Scientific studies have demonstrated that there is no safe level of exposure to lead.

In Canada, it is forbidden to hunt migratory birds, such as geese with lead shots. A lead-free alternative, steel shot, is easily obtainable in Nunavik and is not costly. For big-game hunting, lead-free ammunition is also available; the bullets of such ammunition are 100% copper.

The NRBHSS Department of Public Health works jointly with the Nunavik Hunting Fishing and Trapping Association to promote the use of lead-free ammunition. The NRBHSS has joined forces with other Canadian organizations to support the ban on lead-based ammunition. A letter was sent in April 2018 to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, to request the creation of a plan of action to gradually eliminate the use of lead in ammunition.

For several weeks now, the Environmental-Health team of the NRBHSS Department of Public Health has been working at raising the population's awareness on the topic of lead. Two animated videos were [posted online](#) and radio messages are presently being broadcast in Nunavik.

*The Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services is a public agency created in 1978 under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. It is responsible for nearly the entire Québec territory located north of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel in terms of the provision of health and social services for the inhabitants of the 14 communities.*

– 30 –

**Source:** Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services

**For information:** Anne Sellès  
Communications Officer, NRBHSS  
Tel.: 819 964-2222, extension 293

Rhéal Séguin  
Communications Officer  
Department of Public Health, NRBHSS  
Tel.: 819 964-2222, extension 223, or 418 564-6974

Sylvie Ricard  
Advisor, Environmental Health  
Department of Public Health, NRBHSS  
Tel.: 418 666-7000, extension 436