

The Arctic Health Declaration

Representatives of the governments of seven Arctic States joined by representatives from the governments of the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and representatives of the Gwich'in Council International and Inuit Circumpolar Council, convening in Nuuk Greenland, for the first Arctic Health Ministers' Meeting,

Welcome the close collaboration already existing among Arctic States and Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council and its working groups, and the increased focus on circumpolar cooperation on health,

Taking note of the calls for cooperation on health issues expressed in the Tromsø Declaration of the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers' Arctic Cooperation Program and the Nuuk Declaration of the Inuit Circumpolar Council,

Affirming our shared continued efforts to protect and enhance the health and well-being of Arctic residents through effective interventions to address the emergence of lifestyle related diseases, the persistence of infectious diseases, and the problems of mental illness, substance abuse and suicides,

Recognizing shared priorities and the significant health system challenges faced by national and regional governments; **Supporting** continued international cooperation in health delivery innovation; and **Taking advantage** of and strengthening the knowledge and capacity of other regional intergovernmental bodies to achieve synergies,

Recognizing that proactive health promotion activities and capacity building are important tools in addressing challenges in Arctic communities,

Acknowledging the importance of strong health strategy initiatives of Arctic indigenous peoples,

Appreciating the importance of intercultural understanding and culturally appropriate health care delivery, while bearing in mind unique requirements and health challenges based on gender and age,

Anticipating further health and social impacts resulting from the rapid economic and environmental changes associated with increased resource development, contaminants, and Arctic warming, particularly with regard to food safety and security, but also to traditional values, culture and resilience of Arctic residents,

Concerned by the disparities in health between Arctic and non-arctic residents in several Arctic States, as well as health discrepancies within the circumpolar region due to differences in living conditions,

Emphasizing the need to continue and expand circumpolar health research, including research on mental and behavioral health,

We declare our intention to

- Strengthen circumpolar collaboration in health promotion, disease surveillance and culturally appropriate health care delivery,
- Increase circumpolar sharing of knowledge regarding common health opportunities and challenges such as lifestyle related wellbeing, health and ill-health,
- Continue empowerment of indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents through health promotion and disease prevention, including increased participation in health research by indigenous peoples and other Arctic residents,
- Enhance mental health and prevention of substance abuse and suicides through exchange of experiences and good practices,
- Extend use of e-health applications including telemedicine as a means of improving health and health care,
- Continue efforts to improve and sustain long term observation, monitoring and surveillance of diseases and changes in Arctic health including circumpolar comparative studies to identify lessons learned, best practices, and innovative models and approaches for improving health,
- Increase circumpolar cooperation on assessing, mitigating and adapting to the health impacts of climate change and environmental impacts on health,
- Enhance cooperation regarding health promotion and research with relevant Arctic Council observer organizations, regional bodies, and the World Health Organization.

Signed in Nuuk on the 16th of February 2011:

For the Government of Canada

For the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark

For the Government of Iceland

For the Government of the Kingdom of Norway

For the Government of the Russian Federation

For the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden

For the Government of the United States of America

For the Government of the Faroe Islands

For the Government of Greenland