



For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Canadian Dental Hygienists Association Supports the Inuit Oral Health Action Plan

December 9, 2014 (Ottawa, ON) –Healthier teeth are leading to healthier lives across Inuit Nunangat, thanks to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's continued commitment to oral health. The latest initiative of *Healthy Teeth, Healthy Lives: The Inuit Oral Health Action Plan* saw the distribution of Inuit-specific handouts and activity sheets in English and Inuktitut. The materials, now available for download on ITK's website at <https://www.itk.ca/media/media-release/update-itk%E2%80%99s-healthy-teeth-healthy-lives-inuit-oral-health-action-plan>, include tips and facts on baby, toddler, and adult tooth care. The materials were adapted from oral health promotion material produced by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association, a long-time partner in creating healthier smiles in Inuit communities.

"The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) applauds ITK for its efforts to improve the oral health of Inuit peoples. Improving Inuit oral health requires collaboration among many oral health stakeholders, and CDHA is pleased to be included in this group," states Mandy Hayre, CDHA President. She adds, "CDHA is proud that our collaboration with ITK has resulted in some new oral health promotional resources specifically designed for an Inuit audience. We trust that as these resources are launched today, they will be embraced by Inuit communities in Canada. CDHA is committed to improving the oral health status of Inuit and looks forward to continued work with ITK."

In partnership with the Inuit Land Claims Organizations, health centres, community health representatives, dental clinics, community oral health workers, and the Children's Oral Health Initiative, ITK identified sites for the distribution earlier this year of approximately 13,000 copies of three pamphlets which were printed in three Inuit languages, as well as English. Other initiatives have included the distribution of *Healthy Teeth, Healthy Lives: The Inuit Oral Health Action Plan* across most of Inuit Nunangat in 2013 and 2014. Approximately 10,000 oral health promotion kits, containing oral hygiene products and water bottles, were also distributed alongside the documents.

"Inuit have a rate of oral disease two to three times higher than other Canadians, according to the results of the Inuit Oral Health Survey published in 2011. It is my hope that through this initiative we can continue to reverse that trend and see an increase in healthier smiles on all Inuit faces, young and old." – Terry Audla, ITK President.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), formerly Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, is the national voice of close to 60,000 Inuit living in 53 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Inuit call this vast region Inuit Nunangat. Founded in 1971, ITK represents and promotes the interests of

Inuit on a wide variety of health, environmental, social, cultural, and political issues and challenges facing Inuit. ITK does not deliver or fund programs; rather it is a national advocacy organization governed by a board of directors.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 26,800 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing more than 17,000 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the sixth largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information on oral health, visit: www.dentalhygienecanada.ca.

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