



Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing
Association canadienne des écoles de sciences infirmières

Nunavut's Conservative MP Leona Aglukkaq Appointed as Canada's Health Minister

OTTAWA - Nunavut's Leona Aglukkaq was sworn in as Canada's Health Minister on Thursday, Oct. 30 2008. Making historical headlines, she is the first ever Inuk to become a senior federal cabinet minister.

Aglukkaq has an extensive career in government and politics. A former civil servant from Thom Bay and Gjoa Haven in Nunavut, she was elected to the territory's Legislative Assembly for Nattilik in 2004.

The politician later shifted to health and social services, where she stayed until resigning on Sept. 10 2008 to run for the federal Tories.

Also, Aglukkaq briefly served as Nunavut's Minister of Finance, and House Leader.

Since she was appointed to run in the recent federal campaign, Aglukkaq stepped down from the territory's Cabinet position this past September.

Defeating her opponent, Kirt Ejesiak, with 447 votes and 35 per cent of the popular votes, Leona Aglukkaq claims victory at the Oct. 14 federal election.

Establishing an end to 20 years of Liberal representation in Nunavut, the new Minister of Health was sworn in at a ceremony on Oct 30 2008 at Rideau Hall.

Aglukkaq also becomes the most senior cabinet minister from Canada's northern areas since the late Erik Nielsen of the Yukon was Deputy Prime Minister in Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government in the 1980s.

"Appointing Leona Aglukkaq as Minister of Health is great news for Canada's healthcare system," said Dr. Ellen Rukholm, Executive Director for Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.

"Leona Aglukkaq will now be working hand in hand with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which hopefully means a better representation and visibility for healthcare in Nunavut and northern regions of Canada. This is a very positive shift since she understands Nunavut's healthcare needs."

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