



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Ophthalmic Technician	
Position Number(s)	Community	Division/Region(s)
17-9519	Yellowknife	Ambulatory Care and Medical Affairs/Stanton

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As an independent practitioner/consultant, the Ophthalmic Technician applies specialized knowledge to examine, assess, diagnose and prescribe treatments in accordance with current ophthalmological techniques and practices and the objectives of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (THSSA) for the ocular conditions of the people of the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut (NU), in order to prevent loss of vision and provide maximum vision for clients.

## SCOPE

Stanton is an accredited facility, located in Yellowknife, NWT. Stanton is the referral center for approximately 43,000 NWT residents and 5,900 residents from the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. Stanton provides health care services to adults and children on an inpatient/outpatient and outreach basis in order to restore health with dignity. Stanton maintains a tobacco free environment within the building and throughout the property, recognizing the health hazards associated with tobacco in the workplace, both to smokers and non-smokers alike.

Located in the Goga Cho Building and reporting to the Supervisor, Ophthalmology Clinic, the incumbent is one of nine Ophthalmic Technicians responsible for providing service to all 56 communities in NWT and NU. This is done through contracts with Non-Insured Health Benefits and regional Health and Social Services Authorities that are worth over \$950,000 annually. The Technicians see 15,000-20,000 patients annually.

The Technicians act as consultants to family practitioners, southern ophthalmologists, community health nurses, community health boards, teachers, social services workers and other health personnel, as well as providing advice to the general public.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Operating as an independent practitioner, the incumbent performs and records patients' ocular examinations in order to obtain necessary information and data for proper diagnoses and treatment.**

- Obtains a pertinent medical history, determines what tests are necessary for the patient and performs those tests (this involves direct patient contact). This may include invasive procedures and the use of diagnostic pharmaceuticals.
- Evaluates test results to make a diagnosis and develops an individualized treatment plan which may involve the use of pharmaceuticals.
- Provides patients with information and education about their diagnosis and treatment.
- Assesses, plans, implements, documents and evaluates care to ensure a treatment plan that best meets the needs of the patient.
- Assists patients to achieve their optimum level of ocular health.
- Makes decisions necessary to promote change and ultimate outcome of goal attainment.
- Advocates for the dignity and self-respect of patients.
- Safeguards the trust of patients that information learned in the context of a professional relationship is shared outside the health care team only with the patient's permissions or as legally required.
- Applies and promotes principles of equity and fairness to assist patients in receiving unbiased treatment and a share of health services and resources proportionate to their needs.
- Acts in a manner consistent with their professional code of ethics, responsibilities and standards of practice.

### **2. Provides consultation and expert advice, in the diagnosis and treatment of conditions affecting the eye, to family physicians, community health nurses, hospital staff, other health professionals and the general public.**

- Accepts referrals, from physicians, community health nurses and patients, for assessment, diagnosis, treatment and advice for follow-up care of patients.
- Instructs community health nurses and doctors in ophthalmic technique.
- Reports urgent cases to the Ophthalmologist.

### **3. Assists the Ophthalmologist in the Operating Room.**

- Prepares patients for surgery by performing pre op ultrasounds and other diagnostic examinations.
- Acts as scrub nurse or surgical assistant, handles ophthalmic surgical equipment and performs post-op exams.

#### **4. Assists with Stanton Ophthalmic Medical Technician Training Program (OMTIP).**

- Prepares and delivers lectures to the OMTIP students.
- Acts as a clinical preceptor to students, both in Yellowknife and while providing service during NWT and NU outreach clinics.

### **WORKING CONDITIONS**

*(Working Conditions identify the **unusual and unavoidable**, externally imposed conditions under which the work must be performed and which create hardship for the incumbent.)*

#### **Physical Demands**

During outreach travel clinics the incumbent must carry heavy equipment, with a total weight of approximately 200 lbs., to and from the airport and set the equipment up in the designated clinic site.

Workspace provided in the communities is awkward and uncomfortable due to the lack of proper ophthalmic examining chairs. Work is done mostly in dim conditions with a considerable amount of reaching, stooping over patients and physically assisting disabled patients. While in the Yellowknife clinic, work is mostly a combination of sitting, standing and leaning over patients.

#### **Environmental Conditions**

Frequent travel (monthly) to communities is required, which may include smaller aircraft as well as driving. There are frequent delays and long waits in airports due to unreliable airline schedules, weather conditions and aircraft problems.

While on duty travel the incumbent will, at times, be required to stay in accommodation that often has shared bathroom facilities, shared rooms, varying degrees of general cleanliness and personal security. It is very difficult in the communities to eat a balanced diet.

On a daily basis, the incumbent is in close physical contact with patients potentially infected with communicable diseases. Working directly with clients the incumbent may be exposed to blood and body fluids that may result in a health risk to the incumbent. Often patients have very poor personal hygiene, or may be intoxicated.

#### **Sensory Demands**

This position places a continually high level of demand on the visual senses. Each patient has to be examined on a microscopic level in order to detect subtle changes to ocular tissue. This work is made even more demanding by the dim lighting required in the room together with the technician looking through small aperture equipment with bright lights.

Listening and comprehension skills are needed to obtain a medical history and to try to help patients describe ailments for which they may not know the words. This is often done through an untrained interpreter.

For almost every patient some contact with the tissue of the eye or surrounding area is required. This may range from putting drops in an eye to the steady hand and very delicate touch needed to remove a foreign body embedded in the eye, or to assist in surgery.

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of sight, smell, touch and hearing while assessing clients.

### **Mental Demands**

When working in the communities the incumbent works in isolation with very limited access to medical backup. There is no other technician or ophthalmologist with whom to discuss a case.

The incumbent often has to deal with the emotional stress of telling a patient that they have permanently lost vision, or need surgery, or may lose their eye. They may also be exposed to death and other emotionally disturbing experiences.

Frequent travel is very disruptive to the incumbent's personal life.

The Ophthalmic Technician is expected to remain calm, controlled and professional, regardless of the situation and to demonstrate care and compassion to the client, family and other members of the health care team.

Additionally, within the health care setting, there can be significant lack of control over the work pace, with frequent interruptions that may lead to mental fatigue or stress.

The Ophthalmic Technician is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education to encourage professional growth of self and others.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- The Ophthalmic Technician must have specialized medical and technical knowledge of ophthalmology and be able to use both the modern highly technical ophthalmic equipment and low-tech portable equipment that requires extensive knowledge of ophthalmic theory.
- Ability to display self-control.
- Ability to be flexible and alter normal procedures or ways of working to fit a specific situation to get the job done and/or to meet THSSA goals.
- Ability to persist which may mean taking two or more steps to overcome obstacles or rejection.
- Ability to analyze problems and sort in order of importance.
- Demonstrated skills in listening, understanding and responding.

- Demonstrated client service orientation.
- Ability to participate willingly and support team decisions. This includes doing one's own share of the work and sharing all relevant and useful information.
- Ability to answer questions as an expert when asked. This includes telling people about current understanding of technical issues.
- Ability to give specific positive or mixed feedback for developmental purposes. This includes giving negative feedback in behavioural rather than personal terms and expresses positive expectations for future performance.
- Demonstrates an understanding of patient safety principle and practices into all day to day activities. Follows all safe work practices and procedures and immediately communicates any activity or action which may constitute a risk to patient safety.
- Ability to promote the autonomy of patients and help them to express their health needs and values to obtain appropriate information and services.
- Demonstrated understanding of confidentiality requirements.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

This level of knowledge is most commonly acquired through Stanton Ophthalmic Medical Technology Training Program or through other accredited Ophthalmic Medical Technology Training Programs.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Stanton Regional Requirements**

- Be certified to practice as an Ophthalmic Medical Technician through the Joint Commission of Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO).
- Obtain 27 credits (Technician level) or 36 hours (Technologist level) of continuing education every three years In order to maintain a license, as required under JCAHPO.
- Acquire within a reasonable time frame and remain current in all Stanton mandatory certifications, including:
  - Basic Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
  - Non-Violent Crisis Intervention
  - Fire Training
  - FIT Testing
  - Privacy and Confidentiality
  - Social Media Training
  - Workplace Bullying/Respectful Workplace
  - Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

**Position Security** (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

**French language** (check one)

- ☐ French required
- ☐ French preferred
- ☒ French not required