



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Registered Nurse - First Assistant (RNFA)	
Position Number(s)	Community	Division/Region(s)
17-14488	Yellowknife	Surgical & Maternal Child Services/Stanton

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Registered Nurse-First Assistant (RNFA) is responsible for providing operative assistance to the surgeon during major surgeries for patients under anaesthetic procedures in the Operating Room. A Registered Nurse First Assistant (RNFA) is an experienced perioperative nurse who has completed additional education in the role diversity of the first assistant, including intraoperative knowledge and techniques necessary to assuming responsibilities of the first assist. The development of specific technical skills enables the RNFA to assist the surgeon with specific intraoperative procedures that are beyond the scope of practice for registered nurses without RNFA education and training.

SCOPE

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̨chǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-aboriginals. Health and social services includes the full range of primary, secondary and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 health and social services staff.

While the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) will operate under a separate board and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) will in the interim, the NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire Northwest Territories. Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance

requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Under the direction of the Minister of Health and Social Services, the NTHSSA is established to move toward one integrated delivery system as part of the government's transformation strategy.

Stanton Territorial Hospital is an accredited facility in Yellowknife, and is a referral center for approximately 40,000 regional residents of the Western Arctic and Nunavut (Kitikmeot Region). Stanton provides health care services to adults and children on an inpatient, outpatient and outreach basis in order to restore health with dignity.

Located within the operating room and reporting directly to the Manager, Surgical & Maternal Child Services, the RNFA will provide surgical first assist in the operating room. While the RNFA reports to the Manager, they will work under the direction of the surgeon to which they are providing assistance. When providing surgical first assist in the operating room, the RNFA will work under direct supervision of the surgeon.

The Operating Room performs approximately 2500 surgical cases annually. The RNFA works 7:30-15:30, Monday to Friday, and is not obligated to take call; however, the RNFA will have the opportunity to work overtime as cases are added or run late, provided they have the required amount of rest prior to their next scheduled shift. The RNFA has the opportunity to take call in an RN capacity when not scheduled as a first assist on the following day. When not working in the capacity of an RNFA, the RNFA will work in the role of circulating nurse, scrub nurse, or post anesthetic recovery room nurse.

The RNFA will act within the Canadian Nurses Association "Code of Ethics", the RNANT/NU "Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses", the RNANT/NU "Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses", and the confines of this job description. When the RNFA is not available to fill the role of First Assistant in the OR, this function must be performed by a Primary Care Physician,).

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Acts in an intraoperative role, collaborating with the surgeon, anesthetist, and other healthcare professionals for an optimal surgical outcome.

Main Activities:

- Assists with the prepping, positioning, and draping of patients or perform these independently if directed by the surgeon.
- Applies principles of asepsis and infection control.
- Applies knowledge of surgical anatomy, physiology, and operative technique during operative procedures
- Identifies safety hazards and initiate appropriate corrective actions.

- Provides exposure through use of appropriate instruments, retractors, suctioning fluid in the surgeon's view and anticipating retraction needs with knowledge of anatomical structures.
- Conducts digital manipulation of tissues.
- Provides hemostasis by clamping and/or cauterizing vessels or tissue, tying and/or ligating clamped vessels or tissue, placing sponges and local homeostatic agents, applying direct digital pressure, homeostatic clips, tourniquets, vessel loops, non-crushing vessel and tissue clamps, and participating in volume replacement techniques as appropriate.
- Closely observes the operative field at all times, while demonstrating stamina for sustained retraction.
- Retains and manages manually controlled retractors in the position set by the surgeon with regard to surrounding tissue and prevent obstruction of the operative field.
- Performs knot tying utilizing various techniques.
- Performs skin closure as directed by the surgeon.
- Administers subcutaneous injection of local anesthetic agents as directed by the surgeon.
- Assists the surgeon at the completion of the surgical procedure by affixing and stabilizing drains, cleaning the wound and applying the dressing, assisting with cast application, splints, bulky dressings, and abduction devices.
- Evaluates the outcomes of nursing care and ensures continuity of care by communicating pertinent patient information to appropriate postoperative area.

2. **When not working to the full capacity of the RNFA roll, the RNFA will perform in the role of circulating nurse, scrub nurse, or post anesthetic recovery room nurse, as outlined in the job description for the Registered Nurse - Operating Room, Post Anesthesia Recovery Room.**

Main Activities:

- That decision will be made on a day-to day basis, at the discretion of the Manager, OR/PARR or her designate, based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, type of booked cases and staffing compliment. During scheduled OR closures, The RNFA will cover an equitable amount of call per calendar year, as an RN - OR/PARR. Note: (The RNFA does not function concurrently as a scrub nurse while assisting the surgeon).

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Between 50% and 75% of the RNFA's day will be spent in a standing position during surgical procedures, with no opportunity to leave, and minimal opportunity to change physical position until the surgery is complete. In addition to prolonged standing, the RNFA will be lifting, moving, and supporting unconscious and semi-conscious patients who require total care perioperatively, as well as heavy equipment which may cause significant levels of

physical stress on the RNFA. Lifting and physical support of patients within the OR may be done on an individual basis or as a group. In addition, the RNFA will be required to bend and stand in awkward position while performing their duties in patient care. Due to the nature of the work, which is unpredictable and fluctuating, the RNFA is often unable to eat meals or access washroom facilities at regular intervals.

Patients awakening from the effects of anesthetic may need to be physically restrained as many (25%-50%) of these patients are disoriented and can be physically aggressive towards staff. Restraint of these patients can be very physical and draining for the RNFA.

Environmental Conditions

During their shift (100% of the time), the RNFA will be exposed to communicable diseases splashing blood, body fluids, or other hazardous materials (sharps, bone cement, anesthetic gases, toxic cleaning and sterilizing solutions) during surgical procedures that results in significant risk to the RNFA's health and well-being.

Sensory Demands

Patients undergoing surgery are anesthetized and unable to communicate with the surgeon or nurses and will be connected to several monitors and life support systems that require constant monitoring. As a result, the RNFA must constantly use the combined senses of sight, touch, hearing, and smell to monitor patient health and well-being which may cause significant levels of stress on the senses. The RNFA must be able to recognize and address the different warning and monitoring indicators to ensure appropriate and timely patient care.

Within the OR there is a significant amount of "white noise" which may hinder the RNFA's ability to monitor life support systems, which requires a high level of focused concentration in order to avoid missing any critical information.

Mental Demands

The RNFA works in an atmosphere of change, critical patient flow, and moment-to moment readiness for emergencies. The RNFA must be prepared for all procedures and unanticipated aspects of the surgical and anesthetic procedure.

The RNFA is exposed on a frequent basis to emotionally disturbing experiences. The RNFA is expected to remain calm, controlled, and professional regardless of the situation and demonstrates compassionate care to the patient, family, and other members of the healthcare team.

The RNFA is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education and practice to encourage professional growth of self as an example to others.

In addition, within the healthcare setting there can be significant lack of control over the workplace, with frequent interruptions that may lead to mental fatigue or stress.

When on stand-by, the RNFA will often be called in to work with little or no advance notice. That has a substantial impact on family and social life.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Apply the nursing process in all facets of the nurse first assist role
- Exercise critical thinking skills in all aspects of the nurse first assist role
- Establish and maintain a safe perioperative environment
- Provide technical first assist to the primary surgeon in the operating room and throughout the perioperative period
- Work as a professional within the surgical team to enhance the effectiveness of patient care
- Promote professionalism and model professional behaviors to other health care providers

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

Graduation from an accredited college/university nursing program, a minimum of 5 years' experience in Perioperative Nursing and graduation from a credentialed Registered Nurse First Assistant Program.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Stanton Territorial Hospital Requirements

Within the Stanton Territorial Hospital, all Registered Nurses must be registered with the RNANT/NU and have successfully cleared a criminal records check.

Within Stanton, all Registered Nurses must be able to acquire within a reasonable length of time and remain current in the following mandatory certifications:

- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training
- Biohazardous Waste Training
- Biosafety & Biosecurity 1
- Blood Glucose Monitoring
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- Emergency Response
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- Fire Training
- Fit Testing
- Infection Control
- IV Therapy
- Medication Administration
- NISS charting
- Plum A Inservice
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Pyxis
- Social Media

- Workplace Bullying/Respectful Workplace
- Workplace Safety Awareness Training
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

In addition, the RNFA must be able to acquire within a reasonable time frame and remain current with the following training and/or certifications:

- Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
- IV Push/Emergency drugs
- Current certification with the Canadian Nursing Association – Perioperative specialty CPN(C)
- Current ORNAC membership

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 if applicable)

French required (must identify required level below)
 Level required for this Designated Position is:
 ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
 Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
 READING COMPREHENSION:
 Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
 WRITING SKILLS:
 Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)
 French preferred

Indigenous language: To choose a language, click [here](#).

Required
 Preferred