



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Hearing Aid Practitioner	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-12499	Yellowknife	Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services/Yellowknife Region

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

As an independent practitioner, the Hearing Aid Practitioner (Practitioner) applies specialized knowledge to perform basic audiometric testing and recommend assistive hearing devices; conduct minor hearing aid repairs; in accordance with current Hearing Aid Practitioners practices and the philosophy and objective of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) to ensure that the patient realizes and maintains maximum audiological functioning.

## SCOPE

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-indigenous. Health and social services include 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) and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) operate under separate boards, 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 NTHSSA.

NTHSSA administers health and social services to the residents of the Yellowknife Region in the NWT. NTHSSA directly and contractually employs over 300 staff who deliver these services in



Yellowknife, Ft. Resolution, Lutselk'e, N'dilo, and Dettah for the Yellowknife Region. NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of services to adults, children, and seniors on an inpatient, outpatient, and outreach basis at multiple sites across the city of Yellowknife and the Communities of Lutselk'e, N'dilo, Dettah, and Ft. Resolution. These services include community-based social services, a public health clinic, primary care services, rehabilitation services, home and community care services, and long-term care/extended care services.

The legacies of colonization and residential schools have impacted Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered and accessed. The incumbent is required to always honor and promote a culturally safe environment. Practicing from a trauma informed care perspective is expected and the position requires that interaction with clients and families is tactful, respectful, and humble.

There are four regional rehabilitation teams located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife. Rehabilitation services consist of audiology, occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy (PT) and speech language pathology (SLP). All teams provide PT, OT and SLP services; the Yellowknife and Inuvik teams provide audiology services. Each regional team is responsible for delivering services within the community where they are located as well as other smaller communities. The provision of regional services is achieved using various methods of delivery including community travel clinics, telehealth, telephone, etc. Child Development Teams (CDT) are located within the Yellowknife and Inuvik rehabilitation teams. Additionally, a territorial Youth Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Diagnostic and Family/Community Support program is embedded in the Yellowknife CDT.

Located within Yellowknife and reporting directly to the Territorial Manager, Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (Manager) the incumbent, along with Audiologists, independently provides diagnostic, intervention, preventative, educational, counseling and referral services to in- and out-patients, ranging from community infant screening to adult/geriatric assessment and intervention. The Audiology Unit consists of the Manager, Territorial Specialist Audiology, Audiologists, Hearing Aid Practitioner(s), Rehabilitation Assistant, Hearing and Speech Aide and Program Assistant(s).

The Audiology Unit has approximately 5,500 encounters a year. Patients of the Audiology Unit may access services directly or may be referred by physicians, public health nurses, teachers, parents, social workers, etc. The Practitioner provides direct care (e.g., assessment, diagnosis, intervention, etc.), monitors the delivery of treatment delegated to the client and/or family and acts as an educational resource to clients, family, other healthcare professionals, etc. in various locations that include but are not limited to the hospital, community health centers, the workplace, etc.

The incumbent will design and implement (deliver directly or monitor the delivery of) programs, educational material and deliver workshops on topics related to hearing difficulties.



The Practitioner works with patients aged eighteen years and up (some exceptions made for travel clinics) who have hearing disorders. Services are provided to people who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons at risk of hearing loss due to noise exposure, genetic causes, exposure to certain drugs or middle ear infections. Diagnostic assessment includes, but is not limited to, pre and post-operative assessments, infant hearing screening, etc. The Practitioner will assess the extent of hearing loss and related disorders and recommend and/or prescribe interventions (e.g., hearing aids).

Types of care delivered to the patient may include but not be limited to hearing aid prescription and fitting, troubleshooting, and maintaining hearing aids, designing, and implementing rehabilitation strategies, consultation regarding noise exposure, etc. The focus of the intervention is to maximize and maintain the patient's ability to communicate effectively in home, social or professional settings as well as to improve quality of life. Some of the incumbent's patients have communication disorders and therefore may not be able to request assistance or communicate needs when required.

The Practitioner evaluates the patient's need based on presenting impairment, disability, and handicap. The Practitioner prescribes an intervention that meets the specific needs of the patient, keeping in mind evidence-based information, relevant best practice, and clinical expertise. The intervention will contain but not be limited to identifying other necessary resources (both human and material) and educational needs (i.e., alternative communication) and cost-effective intervention strategies. The incumbent may recommend further diagnostic investigation or cross referral to other healthcare providers (e.g., ENT specialists, and social workers, audiologists, etc.).

The incumbent educates the patient, family/care givers, and the healthcare team involved in the healthcare plan on the nature of the diagnosis, purpose of the interventions and self-management strategies. The Hearing Aid Practitioner also links the patient and family with appropriate community partners/services.

As a Practitioner within NTHSSA, the incumbent also provides functional expertise and direction to other healthcare providers on the delivery of audiological intervention to clients.

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

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Performs basic audiometric testing on adults to provide information on hearing and middle ear status to medical practitioners:**

- Performs case history interview to obtain basic data on client pertinent medical history, communication difficulties.



- Performs speech and pure tone air conduction threshold tests and impedance screening.
- Determines if further bone conduction threshold testing is required and performs this test.
- Performs speech discrimination testing.
- Determines if masking is required and using appropriate levels of masking to obtain masked results where necessary.
- Refers to Audiologist cases that fall outside of the scope of practice of a Hearing Aid Practitioner (e.g., developmentally delayed patients that require testing techniques normally used for children or patients who are cochlear implant candidates).
- Interprets basic test results used to determine probable type of loss and recommendations for further assessment by Audiologist, medical assessment, etc.
- Informs client of basic results in straightforward cases or refers to following criteria set by the Audiologist.
- Composes and prints reports of audiometric results and recommendations for physicians, teachers, etc. where necessary.
- Records relevant information re: testing and recommendations made on the client's file.
- These functions are performed independently for the most part, requesting assistance in testing, or presenting the results to the Audiologist only in cases which meet referral criteria (following the red flag system, e.g., marked change in hearing) or which are unusual.

## **2. Orders and repairs hearing aids to provide clients with hearing aid services:**

- Takes earmold impressions for new hearing aids, replacement earmolds, and swim plugs or noise plugs.
- Fills out hearing aid order forms and Client Equipment Requisition forms for hearing aids and accessories.
- Completes appropriate application forms for funding of clients' hearing aids/repairs where applicable.
- Packages earmold impressions for new orders or malfunctioning hearing aids for mail-out
- Sends new hearing aid/accessory orders or repaired hearing aids to appropriate satellite clinic or contacts client for pick-up (not including new hearing aids which require an appointment for a fitting)
- Deals with customer complaints about the hearing aid or repairs needed. This requires assessment of the hearing aid, troubleshooting for possible problems, technical testing of the aid, making minor repairs or adjustments, deciding if the aid needs to be sent out for repair.
- Selects and sets loaner hearing aids (once program has been implemented).
- Records pertinent information regarding hearing aid complaints, action taken, etc. on the client file.
- Provides real ear verification of hearing aids where appropriate.



- Maintains a well-stocked department by ordering supplies when necessary.

**3. Assists Audiologist in early identification of hearing loss in children:**

- Conducts Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emissions testing on infants and young children who are referred to Audiology or who are seen on travel clinics.
- May be actively involved in the NTHSSA Infant High-Risk Hearing Screening program.

**4. Workplace Health and Safety: employees of the Authority are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for employees and patients/clients. Building a safe and respectful workplace is everyone's responsibility.**

- All employees and contractors have a professional and personal responsibility to perform their duties to health and safety regulations, standards, practices and procedures.
- All stakeholders (management, staff, UNW, and Worker's Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC)) need to ensure our Workplace Health and Safety Committee works effectively, with a shared purpose of continuous quality improvement in health and safety.
- All Managers and Supervisors play an active role in workplace health and safety through their daily management: identifying prevention opportunities, ensuring staff are trained in Risk Monitor Pro, investigating potential risk and accidents, and applying timely corrective measures.
- A healthy workplace, where employees can prove quality service under safe conditions, is the right thing to do and makes good business sense.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Physical Demands**

Approximately 25% of the incumbent's day will be spent standing and leaning over patients while performing assessment or care.

While visiting smaller communities the incumbent will need to travel with heavy baggage that holds testing equipment (e.g., diagnostic equipment, etc.).

**Environmental Conditions**

During their day an incumbent may be exposed to communicable diseases, blood and body fluid that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent.

**Sensory Demands**



The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of sight, touch and hearing during assessment and provision of care in a variety of settings that vary from controlled (e.g., hospital) to uncontrolled (e.g., travel clinic). These settings may be distracting for both the incumbent and the patient (noise level, visual commotion, etc.).

The Practitioner must be constantly aware of patients' physical and emotional needs (mood, etc.) while providing care (75% of the workday). A high intensity of listening, alertness and comprehension skills are needed to obtain an accurate diagnosis as well as to try to help patients describe problems for which they may not know the words.

### **Mental Demands**

The Practitioner has the opportunity to develop relationships with the clients of the Rehabilitation Services Department. The Practitioner is expected to remain calm, controlled, and professional, regardless of the situation and demonstrate compassionate care to the client, family, and other members of the healthcare team.

The incumbent will travel to smaller communities approximately 20 days per year that may cause moderate levels of stress on the incumbent's family and social life.

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

The Practitioner is required to be motivated and innovative in continuing education and practice to encourage the professional growth of self and others.

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

- Knowledge of cognitive and functional development and impairment related to audiology including anatomy, physiology, and pathology in a variety of age groups.
- An ability to apply therapeutic processes (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation) to ensure that the patients' physical, emotional, psychosocial, educational, and day-to-day living needs are met.
- An ability to educate patients, their families (where applicable) and other healthcare professionals on appropriate self-care methods and techniques.
- Knowledge of biological, physical, behavioral, and mental health sciences in order to recognize, interpret and prioritize findings and determine and implement a plan of action based on accepted standards of practice.
- Knowledge of and an ability to network resources within and outside the Region (e.g., Social Services, Community Health Nurses, Daycare, etc.) to ensure support of patients and their families (e.g., discharge planning).
- Knowledge of and ability to operate a desk top computer to send and receive electronic mail and conduct research over the Internet,



- Knowledge of and ability to operate word processing applications (e.g., Microsoft Word) in the completion of reports, training materials and presentations.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

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

This level of knowledge is typically acquired through the successful completion of a Diploma course for Hearing Aid Practitioner or Hearing Instrument Practitioner/Specialist.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Certification by the National Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists prior to commencement of employment
- Licensed as a Hearing Aid Practitioner or Hearing Instrument Practitioner/Specialist in a Canadian province/territory.
- Proof of Immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.

NTHSSA has several certifications that are required upon hire, depending on the area where the employee works, including but not limited to: Indigenous Cultural Awareness, Biohazardous Waste, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Infection Control, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and others directly related to the incumbent's scope of practice.

**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:** Select language

- Required
- Preferred