



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services	Public Health Nurse	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-15441	Yellowknife	Public Health/Yellowknife

## **PURPOSE OF THE POSITION**

The Public Health Nurse is responsible for providing comprehensive public health nursing services to residents of Yellowknife, Ndilq and Dettah, in accordance with established standard of nursing practice, the philosophy, objectives and policies of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the principles of Primary Health Care and the *NWT Public Health Act*. Using the principles of primary health care, the aim of this position is to: prevent or reduce the incidence of communicable diseases; protect, restore and/or maintain the health status of clients experiencing various events during the lifespan; and promote community wellness through health promotion, screening and intervention activities.

## **SCOPE**

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services (HSS) 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. HSS 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 HSS 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 NWT. 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. The NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of community-based health care services to adults and children in order to enhance the health and well-being of communities through excellence, accountability and respect for regional diversity.

The Public Health Nurse (PHN) reports directly to the Regional Manager, Public Health, in Yellowknife. The Yellowknife Public Health Unit provides culturally sensitive care to people in the remote communities of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah. Yellowknife has a diverse population consisting of Dene, Metis and Inuit, as well as, many different cultures from around the world. Yellowknife has a transient population from other parts of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Canada, and other countries that move in and out of the NWT on a regular basis.

The PHN is critical to ensure the health of the people of Yellowknife, Ndilo and Dettah, and has in-depth knowledge of the Public Health Act and the Reportable Disease Control and Disease Surveillance Regulations. The position works directly with the NWT Department of Health and Social Service's (DHSSs) Communicable Disease Specialists in the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO). The PHN has an essential role in the timely identification of communicable diseases and the delivery of prevention and outbreak management and control interventions, especially in the areas of vaccine delivery, communicable disease surveillance and treatment.

The PHN is a registered nurse with advanced education and training beyond the scope of a graduate nurse. The PHN must practice not only according to the territorial and national registered nursing practice guidelines (RNANT/NU and CNA) but also according to national practice guidelines specifically for public health nurses (CHNC). This is an expanded scope of practice, a position that demands independent thinking, judgment, and critical decision-making skills. As a legal obligation, the PHN is required to report actual or suspected abuse of minors.

The PHN has the ability to follow clinical practice guidelines to provide assessment and select treatment (within scope), offer community based programming\services as per the NWT Community Health Core Services Standards and Protocols from the DHSS (Well child programs, vaccinations, assessment through the lifespan, communicable disease management, STI screening\treatment), develop, deliver and evaluate a wide range of health promotion and disease prevention strategies, and generate referrals to appropriate services\resources as required.

The PHN promotes the health of individuals, families, communities, and various populations and within their environments. The incumbent is required to honor and promote a culturally safe environment at all times. The PHN practices in diverse settings, such as, clinics, homes, schools, local hospital and primary care clinics, shelters, and non-governmental organizations and in public areas, such as, malls and the street. This position requires the ability to handle

several complex issues concurrently. The PHN must be constantly aware of patients' physical and emotional needs (mood, hygiene, etc.) when making an assessment and recommending an appropriate course of action that will recognize the clients' abilities, support systems and potential. This position requires the incumbent to remain calm, controlled and professional in all situations and demonstrate compassionate care that is free of racism and discrimination to patients, families, community members and members of the healthcare team.

The PHN is assigned to one of the following specialty teams: Communicable Disease; Maternal Child; or Child and Adolescent Health. However, the incumbent is required to be knowledgeable and proficient in all areas, teams and programs delivered by the Public Health Unit as they can be transitioned into the different teams to answer various public health needs. The PHN is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education and practice to maintain up-to-date Public Health knowledge and skills and encourage the professional growth of self and others. The PHN becomes a program leader within their team and specialty, and is expected to direct and organize their peers, administrative staff and healthcare team members when delivering programming, care and education in their area of expertise or when facilitating and advocating for clients or programs.

The PHN communicates with and educates, using appropriate strategies, all clients, community members, groups and health care providers. The PHN is an expert on public health practice and information, and the incumbent is a mentor for nursing and advanced practice nursing students during their practicum experiences at NTHSSA. The PHN provides seasoned advice and guidance to other health and non-health related professionals within the NWT on a wide range of specialized public health issues. The PHN will be asked to represent NTHSSA on relevant local, departmental, and territorial health committees and research projects and at workshops/conferences.

The PHN will be required to be on call, on rotational basis, during weekends and after hours to respond to communicable diseases, urgent public health matters and outbreak situations. As required, the PHN will be called upon to work additional hours to actively contain communicable diseases and initiate contact tracing efforts in accordance to the Public Health Act and Communicable disease guidelines set out by the DHSS.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1. Develops implements and evaluates comprehensive, core-funded public health programs and services to prevent and/or minimize the impact of communicable diseases on at-risk clients, families, and communities according to established national and territorial legislation and standards.**

- Implements a comprehensive tuberculosis (TB) program which includes screening and surveillance, contact tracing, comprehensive health assessments, the dispensing of medications under direct observation therapy (DOT), education, counselling and the delivery of transferred medical functions, such as, ordering lab tests and chest x-rays.
- Works in consultation with OCPHO and/or the Public Health Nurse Practitioner.
- Implements a comprehensive sexually transmitted infections (STI) program that includes screening, surveillance, contact tracing, comprehensive health assessments,

the dispensing of medications, education, counselling and the delivery of transferred medical functions, such as, performing venipuncture, making diagnoses, ordering lab tests and treating uncomplicated STIs.

- Applies epidemiological principles in the screening, diagnosis, treatment, control and management, reporting and surveillance of communicable diseases.
- Performs surveillance and screening for other reportable communicable diseases according to NWT legislation.
- Dispenses medications for the treatment of communicable diseases according to NWT clinical practice guidelines.
- Carries out contact tracing for clients with laboratory-confirmed communicable diseases, through appropriate follow-up in home of clients to mitigate risk to larger population.
- Collects communicable disease samples and transports them in accordance to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.
- Mobilizes and support multidisciplinary team in event of outbreaks to support territorially needs to mitigate risk to the population of the NWT.
- Coordinates interdisciplinary client care for high risk or complex clients.
- Provides coaching and leadership to peers, students and other members of the healthcare team to develop skills level necessary to achieve the standards of care.

**2. Develops and carries out activities to eliminate the risk of vaccine-preventable and communicable diseases and improve the health status of clients by providing assessment, education and immunization, according to the NWT Community Health Core Service Standards and Protocols.**

- Delivers programs and services in a culturally safe manner that respects each individual's culture, beliefs, values, religion and language.
- Delivers Well Child clinics from birth to 5 years of age:
  - Health assessments
  - Growth and development screening
  - NWT Rourke Well Child Record
  - Education: health, nutrition, developmental milestones, play, immunization
  - Childhood immunizations according to the NWT schedule
  - Risk assessment and preventative interventions
  - Collaboration with the client/family/caregiver
  - Plan of care elaboration and referral to appropriate healthcare providers as needed
  - Referral to required interdisciplinary services, such as OT, SLP, dietitian, mental health services
- Delivers General Adult Immunization clinics to all ages that require vaccination updates based on age and in accordance with NWT Immunization Schedule and Canadian Immunization Guide:
  - Health and immunization education
  - Immunizations according to the NWT schedule
  - Screening for communicable diseases risks
  - Needle exchange program

- Immigrant screening and immunization
- Participates in program development for immunization and client's education.
- Coordinates and delivers outreach immunization clinics to meet the needs of at-risk populations and target groups.
- Coordinates and delivers mass flu vaccination clinics, usually within region, in or off-site locations, to provide access to vaccine to all age groups.
- Delivers school-based immunization and education programs to required age groups based on NWT Immunization Schedule and review of all age groups vaccination status.
- Implements travel health program, according to PHAC guidelines, that includes: country-specific disease prevention education; counselling; yellow fever vaccination program; medically-transferred functions (for example, issuing travel-related prescriptions under the guidance of the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO); and, post travel follow-up.)
- Coordinates management of tetanus related injury.
- Implements pre- and post-exposure rabies program and animal bite post exposure in collaboration with the OCPHO.
- Delivers immunization to new immigrants to Yellowknife Region, assistance with navigation of health care system and required TB follow up as per Canadian Public Health Guidelines.
- Supports various healthcare providers and communities as immunization expert.

**3. Designs, implements, modify, and evaluates appropriate health promotion activities and provides interventions according to national and territorial program standards**

- Collaborates with individuals, communities, and other stakeholders in identifying their needs, assets, and available resources.
- Identifies root causes of illness and disease and works with individuals and communities to raise awareness of health issues; shift social norms; change behaviors; and facilitate the initiation of adequate support to sustain these changes.
- Provides appropriate health information and a supportive environment to enable clients to take responsibility for their health care and become empowered.
- Identifies client's needs and appropriate services, healthcare, and other sectors, to facilitate clients' access.
- Identify and evaluate mental health needs, assist with crisis management.
- Facilitates referrals to other healthcare providers to ensure early diagnosis and prompt appropriate interventions.
- Participates in program development, research, develop, revise and evaluate on an ongoing basis educational resources necessary to support clients.
- Uses of a holistic approach to facilitate individual learning by clients and their families. Builds relationships based upon the principles of connecting and caring.
- Assists individuals, families, and communities in making informed choices about preventive health practices, such as, immunization, breastfeeding, nutrition, hand washing, infection control measures and contraception.
- Implements preventive screening programs, such as, kindergarten screening, vision, hearing and language screening in schools, and growth and development screening from birth to adolescence.

- Applies harm reduction principles to identify, reduce and/or eliminate risk factors in different settings, such as, the home (smoking), neighbourhood (safe playgrounds), workplace (regular safety checks), school (immunization clinics) and street (outreach activities).
- Delivers programming and implements school health education principals based on Joint Consortium for School Health in the following activities:
  - Language, vision, hearing and health screening at the clinic and school
  - Support to teachers, upon request, in providing health education to students
  - School mass immunization programs
  - Travel health education to students, families, and teachers for school trips
  - Sexual health education, screening, intervention and counselling at schools and clinics
  - Pregnancy testing, counseling, and education
  - Communicable disease screening and surveillance
  - Partner with community stakeholders to deliver health education and implement healthy school initiatives
  - Organizes and partners to support healthy school policy and atmosphere promoting health and well-being
  - Infection control prevention and hand hygiene, cough etiquette education, staff education on epi-pen, glucagon administration and disease specific management
- Delivers and implements Infant and Maternal Health programming:
  - Delivers Prenatal and postnatal groups education
  - Assures home visitation to newborns born in Yellowknife, Dettah, and Ndilo to provide assessment and management in the home post discharge from hospital.
  - Collects neonatal bilirubin in the home setting, transportation of blood samples in accordance with Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act
  - Growth and assessment of newborn and throughout infancy to ensure appropriate growth and development
  - Provides breastfeeding support and assistance immediately post hospital discharge and throughout duration of breastfeeding experience
  - Provides Breastfeeding Clinic: education, diagnosis, treatment and support to mothers and babies with breastfeeding concerns according to the International Lactation Consultant Association and Canadian Breastfeeding Committee standards of practice for Baby Friendly Initiative.
  - Monitors and keeps statistics on breastfeeding rates and trends within client population
  - Provides postpartum depression screening, support, and referrals to physician and mental health services as needed
  - Partners with local community and NGO groups to provide education and support to community groups
  - Delivers community group sessions for mothers and infants throughout first year of life, coordination of topics and interdisciplinary presenters
  - Provides home visitation to high risks clients to initiate relationships and support health needs, including referrals to Healthy Family Program

- Collaborates with Primary Care Physician for clients with concerns for breastfeeding and health
- Liaises and collaborates with social services for high-risk clients and families
- Collaborates with Northern Health Services Network to coordinate discharge from NICU care and arrange ongoing follow up as needed

**4. Demonstrates autonomy, professional responsibility and accountability in practice, and ensures delivery of culturally safe care.**

- Acknowledges the right of every person to respect, dignity, fairness and autonomy.
- Practices public health nursing according to the NWT Nursing Profession Act and the standards of practice of the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), RNANT/NU and CHNC.
- Performs competencies according to RNANT/NU and CHNC in all areas of practice.
- Maintains the privacy and confidentiality of all clients, including their information, and acts according to NTHSSA administrative directives, standing operating procedures and the NWT Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act in the sharing of any client information.
- Applies advanced nursing processes (assessment, planning implementation and evaluation) in delivering culturally sensitive nursing care to all clients.
- Continuous evaluation of all public health programs and implements relevant changes.
- Makes independent decisions based upon ethical standards of practice and principles.
- Applies nursing information and communication technology to develop, collect and manage relevant data to support nursing practice.
- Documents in EMR public health nursing activities in a comprehensive, timely and appropriate manner.
- Uses problem solving competencies to determine the most appropriate course of action.
- Provides constructive feedback (for example, chart audits) to peers, as necessary, to improve public health nursing practice.
- Participates in professional development and continuous education activities consistent with current practice, new and emerging issues, demographic trends, determinants of health and new research to keep Public Health knowledge current.

**5. Provides leadership and expertise in the field of public health to other health care providers, community agencies and other professionals.**

- Acts as a resource for public health knowledge and practice (for example, immunizations, travel health, tuberculosis, STI and other communicable diseases) for health care providers locally and in other communities in the NWT.
- Participates in the advancement of public health nursing practice by acting as a mentor and preceptor for students and new practitioners from local, as well as, national nursing and advanced practice nursing programs.
- Actively participates on relevant committees including, but not limited to:
  - NWT Immunization Advisory Committee
  - NTHSSA Occupational Health and Safety Committee
  - NWT Infection Control/Antimicrobial Awareness Committee

- Joint Maternal Child/Breastfeeding Baby Friendly Advisory Committee
- Professional association committees
- NWT Child and Youth Fatality Review Committee.
- Participates in special projects and research on best practices and current public health issues.

**6. Coordinates and delivers programs to vulnerable and high-risk populations in outreach settings, to meet the dynamic needs of the population.**

- Initiates communication to community partners and local organizations to build connections.
- Implements community health assessment on current program delivery and services
- Coordinates with interdisciplinary team to mobilize required professionals and resources.
- Liaisons with DHSS on strategic goals and current action plans.
- Implements programming and service offerings to high-risk clients reluctant to access care in mainstream system.
- Develops and partners to offer mass community events to meet target population needs.
- Required to operate clinics and provide home visitation as lone worker.
- Recognizes high-risk situations and coordinates services to mitigate impacts.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

Off-site visits represent 40% to 70% of the PHN's time. The incumbent, when practicing out of the clinic, will be required to carry supplies, vaccine coolers and equipment, including vision and hearing screening machines, up and down stairs, as well as, into and out of a vehicle. This often includes multiple trips carrying supplies and equipment of various sizes and weights. These supplies often must be carried great distances from parking lots. Because Yellowknife is located in the North, the PHN must carry these supplies and equipment over uneven, slippery roads and walkways and travel in extreme cold weather. The PHN will also be required to bend and stand in awkward positions while performing patient assessment or care and depending on the home of the client, may be required to sit or kneel on the floor.

### **Environmental Conditions**

The PHN may be exposed to communicable diseases, such as chicken pox, tuberculosis, whooping cough, measles, blood- borne infections, needle stick injuries and hazardous materials. While performing home visits, the PHN encounters unsanitary conditions, animals (pets) and clients and/or family members who are smoking, drinking alcohol or using drugs. At times, the incumbent will be required to manage equipment or PPE in extreme weather conditions (ex. swabbing outside -30 where gloves crack) .

## **Sensory Demands**

Sixty to 100% of the time will be spent providing direct patient care where the incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during assessment and provision of care in an uncontrolled setting (i.e., client's home).

## **Mental Demands**

The environment is dynamic and constantly changing so the PHN continually re-evaluates and shifts priorities. There can be significant lack of control over the work pace, with frequent interruptions.

Working within the client home can be extremely distracting making assessment and diagnosis more challenging.

The PHN will be required to respond promptly, quickly and appropriately in outreach settings and home environment with minimal resources available. This requires comprehensive critical thinking, clinical judgement, and adept public health knowledge when working in a lone environment with lack of immediate support.

When making home visits, contacting clients in regard to communicable diseases or delivering necessary outreach programs, the PHN may be exposed to violent clients and/or family members who are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. The PHN will also come into contact with clients who are mentally ill or homeless, and/or demonstrate a range of emotional and physical states. At times, the emotional state of clients and family members brings uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work, and the incumbent may experience concern about their physical safety in unknown and unpredictable situations.

The PHN is required to deliver programming in Dettah. This is a remote location and the PHN travels as a lone worker over gravel or ice roads in extreme cold weather.

## **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge of and an ability to apply sanctioned transferable medical functions (assessment and selection of treatment based on assessment) as outlined in the Nursing Administration Manual's standards, policies and guidelines (i.e., collection of samples and assessment of patients).
- Knowledge of and an ability to perform basic laboratory functions such as, but not limited to pregnancy tests, various swab specimens, the preparation of specimens for culture and sensitivity, and collection of specimens in uncontrolled settings (i.e. Client homes and off-site locations).
- Knowledge about the history, structure and interaction of public health and health care services at local, provincial/territorial, national and international levels.
- Knowledge of the nursing process to identify the needs of the community in program and policy planning.
- Knowledge of biological, physical and behavioural 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 build coalitions and networks within and outside NTHSSA (for example, social services, public health, home care, physician clinics, etc.) to ensure culturally sensitive support of clients and their families.

- Knowledge of the current NWT Public Health Act, Reportable Disease Control and Disease Surveillance Regulations and in accordance with the NWT Communicable Disease Manual.
- Knowledge of the immunizations in accordance with the NWT Public Health Act, Immunization Regulations and the Canadian Immunization Guide.
- Knowledge of computer programs including but not limited to: Word processing; Excel; Internet Explorer; Outlook e-mail; Power Point; EMR (Wolf electronic medical record system); Travax (professional travel health program); MS Team; NTHSSA Network.
- Ability as a front-line provider to be self-directed and work independently.
- Ability to think critically with strong problem solving and decision-making skills.
- Ability to understand and recognize the cultural, social, and political realities in the NWT.
- Ability to recognize the impacts of colonization and residential schools on Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered.
- Ability to coordinate a wide variety of activities and objectives, to be self-directed, meet deadlines, prioritize own workload and manage several tasks at once,
- Ability to facilitate creative problem solving using a situational approach incorporating conceptual, analytical, interpretive, evaluative, intuitive and constructive thinking skills.
- Ability to identify and collaborate with partners in addressing public health issues.
- Able to communicate in a variety of methods to individuals, groups, peers and specialists in the public health field.
- Ability to build community capacity by sharing knowledge, tools, expertise and experience.
- Knowledge and pharmacy skills, such as, prescribing medication under the direction of the CPHO and dispensing medications under approved policies and the NWT Drug Formulary.
- Ability to provide emergency care and treatment in response to a medical emergency (i.e. Anaphylactic reaction, fainting client).
- Ability to educate patients and their families on self-care methods and techniques.
- Ability to facilitate creative problem solving using a situational approach incorporating conceptual, analytical, interpretive, evaluative, intuitive and constructive thinking skills.
- Ability to legally operate a motor vehicle in order to get to and from client's home,

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

A BScN or BN nursing degree program with two (2) years of nursing experience in a public health or community health environment.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Proof of immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.

Class 5 driver's license in good standing.

Must be eligible for registration with the RNANT/NU.

## **NTHSSA-Yellowknife Regional Requirements**

The Public Health Nurse must be able to acquire, within a reasonable time frame, and remain current in the following training and/or certifications:

- Non-violent crisis intervention
- Education Program for Immunization Competency (EPIC)
- Fire/disaster plan for NTHSSA
- Certification in WHMIS
- Certification in basic CPR
- IPAC training
- GNWT Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity Training
- Certification in hand hygiene
- Fit testing
- Point of Care testing
- Suicide Risk Assessment
- Mental Health First Aid
- Certification in infection control practices
- Transport of Dangerous Goods
- Breastfeeding course (20 hours)

The incumbent may be required to obtain additional skills training in areas, such as, but not limited to, the following as directed by the supervisor: Venipuncture certification; Pap smear and various swab collection methods; Pregnancy testing; STI diagnosis and treatment; Travel immunizations; Travel prescriptions; Yellow fever vaccine delivery; International lactation consultant certification.

The PHN will be required to follow safe work practices as outlined by NTHSSA and NWT Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations while employed with NTHSSA. NTHSSA is a scent-free Organization.

### **Immunization Requirement**

Due to the nature of the PHN position duties and potential exposure to vaccine preventable illnesses; the PHN is required to be up to date with routine immunizations as per the NWT Immunization schedule and complete yearly TST testing.

### **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