



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Oncology Medical Social Worker	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-15742	Yellowknife	Territorial Operations/Health Services

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Oncology Medical Social Worker is responsible for providing specialty oncology social work support to cancer clients, their families and identified groups. In collaboration with the Cancer Nurse Navigator, this position provides client centered case management, assessment, social work and counselling services to oncology clients and their families who are encountering navigation and psycho-social challenges as a result of their cancer diagnosis.

The position works within the framework of case management and in accordance within applicable legislation (*Social Work Profession Act*), standards and guidelines and the philosophy and objectives of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority.

## 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, Métis, and non-indigenous persons. 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 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. This position functions in a manner that is consistent with the mission, vision and policies of the NTHSSA.

The Oncology Medical Social Worker is responsible and accountable for providing quality client care in accordance with the established standards, policies and bylaws of social work practice set by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW). In addition the Oncology Medical Social Worker will adhere to the Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Reporting administratively to the Territorial Specialist, Cancer Care, the incumbent will receive ongoing clinical supervision and guidance through matrix relationships established within the NTHSSA Clinical Integration team. In collaboration with the Cancer Nurse Navigator, the incumbent will work to coordinate and navigate the care of persons and families affected by cancer in the NWT across their cancer journey. The incumbent provides, under supervision, the following services: clinical assessment, treatment, referral and counselling services for cancer clients and families. The incumbent participates as a member of an interdisciplinary team, in partnership with the Stanton Territorial Oncology Program, providing comprehensive, client-centered cancer care to clients and their families all along the cancer continuum. The incumbent provides psychosocial oncology and supportive care education to clients/families, staff and community groups as required; engaging the community and helping to build a community of practice. Recognizing the emotional impact of providing cancer care, the incumbent offers emotional support to oncology colleagues, identifying resources to help prevent compassion fatigue. The incumbent provides consultation to colleagues regarding psychosocial oncology. The incumbent maintains strong professional links with provincial/territorial psychosocial oncology practitioners and is aware of national practice standards. The incumbent will exercise professional judgment in the completion of their duties and action to be taken on day-to-day matters.

Working collaboratively with Territorial, Regional, Community Health Centre sites, visiting specialists and facilities outside the NWT, the Oncology Medical Social Worker in conjunction with the Cancer Nurse Navigator is an integral part of the interdisciplinary Cancer Care team providing a single point for coordination and integration of services for the client during key transition points in their cancer care journey. The incumbent engages in the coordination of safe, integrated, comprehensive, and individualized care across the cancer care continuum, and will provide and educate clients on survivor care plans. The Oncology Medical Social Worker will work closely with the Community Health Representatives in our rural and remote communities by monitoring and assisting clients and families utilizing the survivor care plans, and by providing survivorship support.

As a specialty trained oncology social worker, this position works with stakeholders to identify gaps, improve access to services, and identify and integrate both cancer care and community based supports in a timely manner.

The Oncology Medical Social Worker will provide direct and indirect support to cancer clients ranging from pediatric to geriatric. The incumbent has sound knowledge of oncology medical social work process and theory demonstrating sound problem solving and critical thinking, communication, prioritizing, conflict resolution and decision making skills and excellent organizational skills.

The incumbent experiences demands associated with shifting priorities and a dynamic work environment. This position requires the incumbent to work independently, show initiative in carrying out responsibilities and use sound judgment in pursuing objectives and adapting resources to meet timelines. The Oncology Medical Social Worker is expected to remain calm, controlled and professional in all situations, and demonstrate compassionate care to the client, family and other members of the health care team.

The Oncology Medical Social Worker promotes a holistic and comprehensive approach to planning, organizing, teaching and relationship development that will best meet the needs of the client; acts as a client advocate, facilitating communication between the client, their family, Family Practitioners, specialists and other health care professionals; engages in direct cancer client care during various inpatient and outpatient units at Stanton Territorial Hospital (STH); respects the client and family through supporting and maintaining confidentiality of client information; and recognizes the supportive association within the cancer care trajectory to promote emotional self-care.

The Oncology Medical Social Worker provides professional and legal documentation, and may be required to work additional and flexible hours (approximately less than 5 % of the time).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**1. Case Management: assist in the provision of direct-client centered care and integrated case management to clients within the cancer care pathway; includes assessing oncology clients and/or family members for psycho-social problems related to their illness and plans, implements and evaluate interventions which will ensure that the necessary resources are in place for support and follow up.**

- Consult and collaborates with client multidisciplinary team to become familiar with client's cancer diagnosis, stage, along with treatment options, including survivorship and palliative issues.
- Establish a therapeutic relationship with persons affected by cancer and their families by being a consistent link between client, health team, hospital/health centre, and community services through key transition points.
- Identify and assess physical, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual needs of clients throughout the cancer continuum and provide supportive care interventions and referrals in a collaborative multidisciplinary approach to care.
- Develop a plan of care to address client and family psychosocial and supportive care needs, in conjunction with the client and family, multi-disciplinary teams and community resources. This includes a range of psychosocial oncology interventions which may include individual, family and small group counselling, education and referral to other resources.
- Create a survivorship care plan with the person affected by cancer.
- Actively participate in weekly STH Chemotherapy rounds, identifying clients requiring psychosocial oncology and supportive care services.
- Ensure that health care professionals have the information required for cancer care and/or follow-up with a client. This includes maintaining timely verbal and written

documentation in the Electronic Health Record (EMR), of services provided and regularly collaborates and communicates with other care providers.

- Provide consultation to other care providers and community groups regarding psychosocial and supportive care needs and resources.
- Advocate for clients and families, linking them to available programs and services at the territorial, regional and local community levels. May identify and document gaps in service, reporting these to the NTHSSA Clinical Integration Team.
- Maintain knowledge and awareness of current available psychosocial and supportive care services and resources.
- Assist and support the clients and families indirectly through collaboration / consultation with Primary Care providers, STH Oncology Programs, the Cross Cancer Institute and other community resources.
- Assist in organizing and coordinating client appointments, services and referrals.
- Identify and proactively anticipate potential barriers to accessing care and/or services and incorporate strategies to mitigate identified barriers.
- Facilitate and support the interdisciplinary team to screen clients for physical, emotional and psychosocial distress utilizing standardized assessment tool(s).
- Apply knowledge of cultural safety principles and potential impact on client/family health concerns.
- Provide supportive and adjustment counselling in areas such as: grief, new medical diagnosis, adjustment to chronic illness, care giver support, end-of-life planning, enhancing coping abilities, family stress, parenting, preparing for transitions and life changes, etc.
- Facilitate advance care planning discussions and decision-making with clients and family members as appropriate.
- Facilitate conflict resolution within families, between client/family and inter-professional team members and/or between client/family and community/government services as appropriate.
- Coordinate and prioritize caseload.

2. **Actively participate in the planning and delivery of educational and supportive care programs to cancer clients, clients' family, and the public and other health care providers.**

- Act as a clinical resource consultant to colleagues regarding psychosocial and supportive cancer care.
- Participate as a member of the multi-disciplinary cancer care team in client/family care planning.
- Initiate and participate in case conferences and staff meetings as needed.
- Collaborate with Cancer Nurse Navigator to facilitate client navigation.
- Establish and maintain effective interpersonal relationships with regional primary care providers, including Primary Care and regional communities of cancer care practice to: 1) raise awareness of psychosocial oncology needs and services, and 2) remove barriers to accessibility.
- Assume regional Screening for Distress leadership and care pathway development in collaboration with the palliative care team and Cancer Nurse Navigator.

- Assume leadership for cancer client engagement.
- Contribute to community and public engagement to help remove barriers to equitable cancer care.
- Plan, develop and provide prevention and promotion activities and client information and resources through public education and awareness and through community engagement and collaboration.
- Orientate clients and families to the cancer journey and the cancer system in NWT and Alberta.
- Mentor and provide cancer related information sessions to community agencies and health professionals.
- Refer health professionals to appropriate education resources, clinical guidelines, care plan and clinical leaders.
- Support persons affected by cancer in the decision making process.
- Advocate on behalf of the client and family to support their choices and needs to promote self-managed care.

**3. Collaborate as a member of the multi-disciplinary team (in accordance with agency policy and procedure and relevant legislation) in order that services are neither duplicated nor missed and the information can be shared from the benefit of the client and family.**

- Develop a supportive rapport with cancer client and their families to facilitate good work relationships with other health and social services care providers;
- Make frequent decisions about the most appropriate, effective and efficient mode of communication among interdisciplinary team members;
- Coordinate and participate in case conferences and interdisciplinary rounds to share pertinent information concerning client concerns or progress and to utilize the team's skills and resources in the most efficient and effective manner;

**4. Management/Quality Improvement**

- Manage the day-to-day navigation activities for cancer care; coordinates and/or facilitates the functioning of a multidisciplinary team.
- Work collaboratively with the territorial and regional cancer care teams to manage navigation services.
- Use data obtained from evaluations and quality improvement surveys to further improve cancer client navigation services.
- Gather, record and report statistical data relevant to program operation and requirements.
- Responsively recommend changes to Oncology Medical Social Work activities and accountabilities based on trend analysis and statistics.
- Set objectives and priorities in consultation with the Territorial Specialist of Cancer Care and Territorial Manager of Cancer Care.
- Participate on working groups, committees, and service or program meetings as required and maintains relationships with out of territory cancer networks.
- Participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of standards relative to cancer care.

- Maintain practice knowledge base including knowledge specific to the defined service area, relevant services and resources and regulatory standards, guidelines, and requirements.

**5. Community Liaison /Community Engagement.**

- Work collaboratively with community-based agencies.
- Inform the public, health care professionals, community organizations and members of local committees about the role of the Oncology Medical Social Worker, navigation and cancer services.
- Identify gaps in services and works with key stakeholders to address gaps and make system improvements.
- Act as liaison for the client between community-based professionals and agencies and the cancer care team.
- Communicate with various staff, organizations and agencies within the various local NWT communities to improve organization, quality and coordination of services.

**6. Workplace Health and Safety (WHS): Employees of the Authority are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for employees and 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 Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission) need to ensure our WHS Committee works effectively, with a shared purpose of continuous quality improvement in health and safety.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

**Physical Demands**

No unusual demands.

**Environmental Conditions**

Case managed clients may be seen in Stanton Territorial Hospital exposing the incumbent to communicable diseases, blood and body fluids, and hazardous materials (sharps, toxic cleaning and sterilizing materials, chemotherapy). This would represent approximately 25-50% of the time not spent in a standard office setting.

**Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during on-going assessment of client within case managed care.

**Mental Demands**

Incumbent interacts directly with clients approximately 25-50 % of the time, and there will be exposure to crisis situations on a daily basis.

Persons affected by cancer, their family, and other staff involved in their care may be experiencing stress, anxiety and grief. Many of the cancer clients are undergoing palliative treatments for their disease and will eventually die of the disease possibly after months or years of treatment. The incumbent will have exposure to death and dying and other emotionally upsetting experiences.

Travel may be required to communities within the NWT and outside of the NWT but within Canada.

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

- Knowledge and understanding of social issues that may impact cancer clients and their families wellbeing such as homelessness, poverty, substance misuse, financial concerns, family violence and mental illness.
- Knowledge of and ability to apply advanced oncology and social work processes (assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation) to ensure that clients' physical, emotional, psychosocial, spiritual and cultural needs are met.
- Knowledge and ability to provide individual and family counselling for across the lifespan.
- Knowledge of cancer care, including both clinical and supportive care.
- Ability to acquire and apply knowledge of the Territorial and community based cancer support services and non-cancer support services.
- Verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to educate clients and families on self-care.
- Computer proficiency with Microsoft Office Programs, client information data base programs (Healthnet Viewer, EMR) and applicable GNWT programs.
- Knowledge and skills relating to community engagement, education across the lifespan and professional development presentation delivery.
- Knowledge of community, regional, Territorial and southern resources.
- Knowledge of the policies and procedures of the NTHSSA, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and all Acts and Legislation applicable to program delivery.
- Ability to develop and maintain networks and resources at the local, territorial and inter-provincial level in order to ensure support of clients and their families.
- Ability to use data in the evaluation, improvement and coordination of cancer care.
- Able to be innovative and creative in order to develop strategies that successfully meet the needs of diverse client, family and provider populations.
- Ability to work effectively in a cross-cultural setting.

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

A baccalaureate Degree in Social Work; Masters preparation preferred, and a minimum of five (5) years of clinical counselling experience in a health care setting; minimum 2 years clinical counselling experience in cancer care setting preferred.

Assets include: Territorially supported oncology courses (i.e. the DeSouza Institute Foundations in Oncology Nursing Practice, Client Navigation, and Interprofessional Psychosocial Oncology: Introduction to Theory and Practice, Families in Oncology & Palliative

Care, or other similar courses).

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

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

Yearly registration and continuing competency through the Registrar, Professional Licensing of the GNWT, Department of Health and Social Services is required.

### **NTHSSA Requirements**

Within the NTHSSA the Oncology Medical Social Worker must be able to acquire within a reasonable time frame and remain current the following mandatory certifications:

- Basic CPR must be obtained prior to hiring and with mandatory certification every 2 years.
- Workplace Hazardous Materials information Systems (WHMIS)
- Internet and E-mail Application
- Fire Training
- FIT Testing
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Social Media Training
- Workplace Bullying/Respectful Workplace
- De Souza Institute – Client Navigation

### **Position Security**

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