



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Oral Health Professional II – Dental Therapist	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48- 5826	Fort Smith	Public Health and Primary Care Services/ Territorial Operations

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

Provides primary oral health care to children and adult patients in accordance with the established standards of the *Canadian Dental Therapists Association* and the philosophy and objectives of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) to ensure patients improve and maintain optimum oral health.

## SCOPE

The NTHSSA is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̄chǫ 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 continuing, 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 Tłı̄chǫ 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.



Located in the school in their community and reporting directly to the Territorial Specialist, Oral Health Care, the Dental Therapist independently provides clinical intra-oral assessment and restorative dental treatment to school age children (grades K to 6) routinely. Based on their oral examination, the incumbent identify students needing treatment and will develop a plan under the guidance of a supervising dentist and provide direct patient care intervention including restoring teeth to proper form, function and esthetics, recognizing and managing dental emergencies, post-extraction complications, and providing local anesthetics to manage pain to restore and maintain the health of the dental patient. Interventions of the Dental Therapist include but are not limited to taking X-rays, providing fillings, performing extractions within a dental therapist's scope of practice, installing stainless steel crowns, providing fluoride treatment, sealants, suturing and performs recall examinations. The incumbent can also perform, on an emergency basis, oral examination and diagnosis for adult patients. When necessary, the incumbent may administer local anesthesia for dental procedures.

The Dental Therapist also develops and delivers community based oral/dental health promotion and educational activities to be distributed in schools and in partnership with a public health, community health representatives and community nurses and other health care professionals (preschool physicals, diabetes mini clinic, and healthy families).

The Dental Therapist may accept referrals from Dentists (for recall-follow up examinations), physicians, community health nurses (CHN), nurse in charge (NIC) and community health representatives (CHR) and parents.

When treatment is outside of the Dental Therapist's scope of practice, the incumbent will refer the patient to a dentist. The Dental Therapist may also cross-refer the patient to other health care providers, e.g. physician or nurse practitioner for antibiotic treatment. As a regional specialist in oral health, the Dental Therapist provides functional expertise and direction to other health care professionals on the delivery of oral health care, promotion, and prevention.

There are no Dentists permanently located in any of the small communities in the NTHSSA. The incumbent may be required to provide dental services in different communities within the NTHSSA as required.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. Provides direct and independent dental therapy services to patients of the NTHSSA within a multi-disciplinary setting.**
  - Screens and assesses patient's oral health and need for dental treatment.
  - Develops treatment plan for approval of visiting supervising dentist.



- Provides intervention to patients as per the treatment plan which may include but is not limited to X-Rays, fillings, pulpotomy, stainless steel crowns, prophylaxis (cleaning), fluoride treatments, scaling and extractions.
- Investigates and documents the medical history of patients and informs at risk patients of the necessary considerations for dental treatment.
- Examines, diagnoses and develops a comprehensive recall treatment plan that addresses all the patient's needs, refer when appropriate and document coordinated holistic approach which best meets the needs of the client.
- Delivers prophylactic treatment to reduce the incidence of decay.
- Assists patients to comprehend and maintain maximum oral/dental health.
- Is aware of the importance of confidentiality and is able to keep personal and medical information private and confidential at all times.
- Advocates for patient with other agencies, family and health care professionals (i.e. teacher, parents, Dentists, etc.) so that needs relating to the treatment are met (i.e. orthodontic antibiotic treatment, approval for treatment from the parent, etc.).
- Promotes the autonomy of patients and help them to express their health needs and values to obtain suitable information and services.
- 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 permission or as legally required.
- Applies and promotes principles of equity and fairness to assist clients in receiving unbiased treatment and a share of health services and resources proportionate to their needs.
- Acts in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities and standards of practice.

**2. Develops, coordinates and facilitates education/teaching based on the needs of patients and other health care providers.**

- Uses a holistic approach to facilitate individual learning in relation to dental health (i.e. self-care, health promotion, etc.) in the clinic, school and community.
- Provides active preventative oral health education screening and treatment as required for preschool programs, schools and health centers.
- Collaborates with community pre-natal programs to provide oral health education and screening.
- Provides education for seniors and long term care (LTC) patients for dental health and denture care; refers as indicated. Offers training for LTC staff as required.
- Assesses and evaluates the oral health of populations, gathers and interprets epidemiological data, and plans, develops, and initiates oral health programs to concentrate on the recognized needs.



- Researches, develops, revises and evaluates on an ongoing basis, educational resources necessary to support patients, stakeholders (i.e. parents, teachers, community members, etc.) and other health care professionals.
- 3. Advocates practice environments that have the organizational and resource allocations necessary for safe, competent, and ethical clinical dental care.**
    - Maintains a clinical environment that is absent of micro-organisms that produce disease (i.e. sterilize instruments and immediate surroundings).
    - Applies appropriate infection control standards.
    - Creates and maintains patient records.
    - Collaborates with dentists, physicians, CHNs, public health nurses, and other members of the health care team to advocate oral health care environments that are conducive to ethical practice and to the health and well-being of patients and others in the community.
    - Participates in committees, task teams, research projects as related to dental therapy.
  - 4. Communicates with other members of the health care team regarding the dental health care of patients to provide continuity of care and promote collaborative efforts directed toward quality patient care.**
  - 5. Effectively operates and maintains equipment by troubleshooting and ensure appropriate maintenance and repairs on dental equipment.**

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

Approximately 50% of the incumbent's day will be spent bending and standing in awkward positions while performing patient assessment or providing care/treatment. The incumbent will move and lift heavy dental equipment during patient assessment and care.

While traveling to other communities (approximately two weeks per year) the incumbent will need to travel with heavy baggage that holds dental equipment.

### **Environmental Conditions**

The incumbent is exposed to communicable diseases, blood and bodily fluids, hazardous materials (sharps, toxic cleaning and sterilizing solutions) that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent's health. Universal precautions will be applied.

The incumbent is exposed to low levels of ionizing radiation during x-ray examinations (most is avoidable – i.e. behind protective screens) as well as toxic chemical (cider fixer and developer) required to produce hard copy images.



### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to use the combined sense of touch, sight, smell, and hearing during assessment and provision of care in a variety of settings that vary from controlled (i.e. clinic) to uncontrolled (i.e. classroom).

Examination of patients and applications of treatment, whether in a classroom or clinic, requires sustained periods of concentration, precision work and co-ordination to operate a number of instruments while monitoring the patient at the same time.

The incumbent must constantly aware (80% of the workday) of clients' physical and emotional needs (mood, hygiene, etc.).

### **Mental Demands**

Pediatric patients may cry or be uncooperative during dental treatment.

As the only dental therapist in the community, the incumbent works in professional isolation, unable to request on-site opinions or assistance.

Position travels to other communities approximately two weeks per year.

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

- Knowledge, skills and abilities to work within the clinical scope of the Dental Auxiliaries Act.
- Knowledge of and an ability to apply dental therapy processes (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation) and current dental practice to ensure that the patient's physical, emotional, and educational needs are met.
- Knowledge of oral anatomy (head & neck) in relation to local anesthesia considerations and techniques for safe and effective patient treatment.
- Knowledge of oral anatomy in relation to muscle, nervous, and circulatory systems.
- Knowledge of current universal precautions and appropriate and effective infection control measures (in relation to clinical environment).
- Knowledge of education principles related to both adult and child learners in order to develop and deliver subject specific training and development.
- Proficiency in working with internet research, word-processing and spreadsheet software, internet, and email.
- Interpersonal and communication skills, written and oral.
- An ability to develop and interpret dental radiographs to assist in assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning, and case presentation.
- Ability to provide training, advice and assessment using specialized equipment, treatment, tools and techniques (including but not limited to sharps, x-ray equipment, various drills, air/water syringe, suction tools, various hand tools, sterilizer, etc.).



- 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:**

Completion of a Diploma in Dental Therapy.

Licensed with the NWT Professional Registrar as a Dental Therapist.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**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