



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Health and Social Services	Senior Communicable Disease Specialist	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
49-1695	Yellowknife	Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO)

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Senior Communicable Disease Specialist provides leadership for the strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating of immunization and communicable disease control standards. The incumbent is expected to provide timely (sometimes urgent) ministerial direction and advice concerning a public health response to control of communicable diseases thereby ensuring the safety and health of the population of the Northwest Territories.

SCOPE

Located in Yellowknife, the Senior Communicable Disease Specialist (Specialist) reports to the Manager, Communicable Disease, and is appointed as a Public Health Officer under the *NWT Public Health Act*. By virtue of this appointment and a delegation of responsibilities received from the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), the incumbent has a statutory duty to enforce the *Act* and accompanying regulations as appropriate. The position works in the Communicable Disease Control Unit located in the OCPHO.

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

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

While the Tłıchǫ 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 DHSS and NTHSSA.

The Senior Communicable Disease Specialist will help guide practice based on the shared vision of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and Northwest Territorial Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA). The incumbent will foster and sustain academic partnerships to advance professional practices and develop the work force as a territorial lead. The Specialist role-models Registered Nurse practice and vigilance in ensuring the highest quality of care.

The Specialist is responsible to research and recommend patient care quality standards for public health services provided to all age groups as they relate to communicable disease prevention and control and immunization. The incumbent collaborates with Territorial, Regional and professional practice leadership to establish performance improvement activities, and works to ensure competency of health care personnel who provide these public health services.

The position provides expert advice and makes recommendations on matters related to the design, delivery, and utilization of immunization and communicable disease prevention and control strategies and standards. The incumbent assists with development of territory-wide, standards, protocols and program improvement plans regarding the management of immunization and communicable disease prevention programs. The application of standards and monitoring mechanisms is critical to ensure that the programs are operating according to national and territorial standards and best practices. The compliance mechanisms are supported through legislation, accreditation processes, audits, and surveys as well as through oversight and management by Health and Social Services Authorities (HSSA).

The Specialist has the expertise to provide ministerial direction to operational responses to known or suspect communicable diseases, outbreak scenarios and technical immunization questions. In providing this guidance, the incumbent considers many factors such as the virulence of the disease, context of the situation, social determinants of health, and frontline health professional capacity and capability. The direction given can have a significant impact on an individual or a community's population health as it relates to the spread of communicable disease and the occurrence of outbreaks.

The incumbent works concurrently on multiple projects of varying complexity that may span communities, HSSA, and other jurisdictions or governments. The incumbent coordinates territorial efforts with federal/provincial/territorial counterparts as part of a broader network of public health protection and surveillance. Work includes project management approaches to setting priorities, developing short- and long-term plans for identified projects, coordinating and/or reviewing project work assigned to team members, and developing performance measurements to ensure that services are focused on results.

The incumbent collaborates closely with other specialists in the DHSS and HSSAs including epidemiologists, environmental health officers, and the public health registry team to monitor disease cases, mitigate outbreaks and evaluate immunization and communicable disease prevention and control programs. The incumbent is expected to frequently and effectively work within team-based settings often involving other divisions, agencies, and governments, including formal teams with well-defined parameters and ad-hoc teams assembled to respond to urgent scenarios or more informal tasks assignments.

The Specialist will provide leadership and clear communication of standards to those providing public health services related to communicable disease prevention and control and immunization. The position may be called upon to address a variety of issues including but not limited to; addressing client complaints, providing briefing notes, providing advice and direction to other Territorial Specialists, Leads, and Regional Managers.

The incumbent will be expected to travel on occasion, in some cases on an emergency basis.

Extended workdays due to an outbreak scenario may be required.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Under the *Public Health Act* and related regulations, the Specialist provides timely direction and expert advice concerning the management and control of communicable diseases to the Director and CPHO as well as other Department and HSS Authority staff, governmental agencies and stakeholders (including private industry).

- Collaborates and works closely with the CPHO/Deputy CPHO and other Division staff in a team setting to identify public health responses to issues as they arise, including reviewing trends of communicable disease in collaboration with epidemiology staff to identify unmet or emerging issues areas and populations at risk.
- Provides expert advice for the consideration of the Unit Manager, Director, and CPHO on the design and delivery of immunization and communicable disease control programs.
- Remains knowledgeable of national and territorial protocols and guidelines for preventing, treating and controlling the spread of communicable diseases and associated immunization requirements.
- In the Public Health Officer role, provides immediate, expert advice and/or direction to HSS Authority health care providers concerning the prevention and control of the communicable disease including but not limited to:
 - Providing direction regarding the public health management of a suspect or confirmed case of a communicable disease including any known contacts,
 - Monitoring and evaluating the public health management of persons and/or public affected by communicable diseases;
 - Consulting directly with territorial, provincial and national diagnostic laboratories and other clinicians concerning new or suspect cases of a communicable disease;

- Providing guidance to health care providers and stakeholders regarding the appropriate interventions and controls needed to be in place to contain the spread of disease including expert advice regarding immunization program delivery and investigation of adverse events following immunization (AEFI).
 - Provides direct advice and guidance to other senior health officials in the event of a significant or threatened outbreak of a communicable disease.
 - Participates as a subject matter expert in public health response teams on identifying actions required in an outbreak or other urgent/emergent communicable disease scenarios.
 - Follows procedures and protocols for the Unit and the Division, including appropriate documentation for the advice provided to other staff and agencies in the prevention and control of the communicable disease.
- 2. Develops and evaluates standards, guidelines, protocols, policies and procedures, and strategies for the prevention and control of communicable diseases in the NWT, thereby ensuring that HSSA and health care professionals exercise current evidenced-based best practices when providing care.**
- Researches, reviews and recommends new or improved public health legislation, regulations, standards, policies and guidelines for communicable disease and immunization programs.
 - Develops quality improvement indicators for monitoring and evaluating HSS system compliance to territorial legislation, regulations, standards, policies, and guidelines, and sets out auditing and monitoring requirements to be met by HSSA.
 - Provides expert advice and guidance to professionals to interpret standards, policies, and guidelines to support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of communicable disease and immunization programming.
 - Develops procedures and protocols for the Unit where workflows and responsibilities identify integrated actions.
 - Researches, reviews and recommends new approaches and strategic directions for improving communicable disease and immunization programming.
 - Ensures the NWT stays current on emerging issues, trends, and best practices through participation in federal/provincial and territorial committees and national reviews, as well as circumpolar forums.
 - Collaborates with a broad range of partners on northern and circumpolar initiatives and research.
 - Determines how evidence-based advances in disease prevention and control can be adapted to meet the needs of the NWT.
 - Ensures that effective communication policies, procedures and protocols are in place to inform health care professionals of program changes.
- 3. Develops, presents, and participates in education sessions as an expert on communicable disease prevention and control and immunizations to ensure that NWT health care professionals and the general public are informed of the current best practice in these areas.**

- Develops and delivers information and education sessions to a wide range of NWT professionals and institutions on the prevention and control of communicable disease and immunization to ensure awareness of current territorial requirements, best practice and scientific advances in disease prevention.
- Works in collaboration with public health teams and communications/social marketing experts to identify and develop educational and promotional material for professionals and the general public.
- Collaborate with governmental communications to develop media information related to communicable disease control, immunizations and public health advisories.

4. Participates in territorial and intergovernmental work and forums on matters relating to communicable disease and immunization.

- Represents the NWT on federal, provincial and territorial committees, forums and ad-hoc working groups on national matters relating to communicable disease prevention and control, immunization policy, vaccine requirements, national strategies or action plans, and other related public health topics.
- Leads or participates in territorial committees or working groups to advance public health priorities or provide forums for subject matter experts to guide input into NWT legislation, regulation, and policy, standard or best practice.
- Researches and analyses national or territorial policy requirements, development of NWT or departmental positions at territorial or inter-governmental tables, and effective liaises and engages other staff, units, divisions or agencies to ensure the development of informed analyses and position statements.

5. Assists in the broader work of the Unit and Division, including ensuring operational continuity as necessary, and maintains required professional competencies.

- Participates in cross-training and workplace safety initiatives.
- Provides coverage and operational continuity of Unit activities as identified by the Manager, including coverage of the Manager position.
- On behalf of the CPHO, provide on-call after-hours coverage as identified through advance scheduling.
- Maintains and updates knowledge and competencies through methods such as reviewing literature, consultation with other professionals, attendance at relevant educational programs and participation in required training.
- Participates in continuous quality improvement/quality assurance activities.
- Prepares briefing materials, correspondence, financial submissions, proposals and position papers as assigned.

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

- All employees have a professional and personal responsibility to perform their duties to health and safety regulations, standards, practices and procedures.
- All stakeholders (management, staff, Union of Northern Workers (UNW), and Workers' 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 play an active role in workplace health and safety through their daily management: identifying prevention opportunities, ensuring staff are trained in Risk Monitor Pro or other incident reporting systems, investigating potential risk and accidents, and applying timely corrective measures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

No unusual conditions.

Sensory Demands

No unusual demands.

Mental Demands

No unusual demands.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of communicable disease prevention and control including knowledge regarding immunizations.
- Knowledge of and/or ability to acquire knowledge of relevant legislation, policies, and guidelines including, but not limited, to the *NWT Public Health Act* and related *Regulations*.
- Knowledge of the international classification of disease coding (ICD-10).
- Knowledge and understanding in epidemiology, biostatistics and analysis.
- Knowledge of and/or the ability to acquire/apply knowledge of trends of communicable disease prevention and control, and health protection and public health surveillance activities that occur at local, territorial, national and international levels.
- Knowledge and skills related to providing culturally safe programming and care such that indigenous peoples of the NWT feel safe and respected.
- Ability to acquire/apply knowledge of the organizational structure of health systems and roles/responsibilities for public health functions at local, regional and territorial levels.
- Knowledge of adult education principles and concepts.
- Project management skills, including coordination of a variety of activities, programs, and projects.
- Problem-solving skills and abilities in risk management using a situational approach incorporating conceptual, analytical, interpretive, evaluative, intuitive and constructive thinking skills with the ability to make time-sensitive critical decisions.
- Research, analysis, and evaluation skills to conduct an examination of program objectives against evidence-based and accepted national and international standards.

- Computer skills including MS Office, email/task/calendar management (Outlook), Adobe Acrobat, Visio, and electronic and hardcopy medical records.
- Ability to collaborate with a number of professionals, colleagues, and co-workers.
- Communication skills both written and verbal, to a wide range of people including but not limited to: colleagues, co-workers, other experts, ministerial staff and the general public with many levels of knowledge and literacy.
- Knowledgeable in RNANTNU code of nursing ethics, practice standards and scope of practice.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

An undergraduate degree in nursing and a minimum of three (3) years of nursing experience including one (1) year in a specifically relevant area.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The incumbent must be a registered nurse in good standing with the Registered Nursing Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU)

Immunizations - Required

The incumbent must provide proof that their immunizations are up to date according to the Canadian Immunization Guide for Health Care Providers prior to hiring and ongoing proof that immunizations are kept up to date.

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