



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Public Health Nurse	
Position Number(s)	Community	Division/Region(s)
57-8601	Yellowknife	Public Health/Yellowknife

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Public Health Nurse (PHN) is responsible for providing comprehensive public health nursing services to residents of Yellowknife, N'Dilo 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 life cycle; 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 in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłıchʔ 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 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 Tłıchʔ 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.

The PHN reports directly to the Regional Manager, Public Health in Yellowknife. There are 11 registered nurses and 1 nurse practitioner in the Public Health Unit who provide culturally-sensitive care to people in the remote communities of Yellowknife, N'Dilo 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.

This position is critical to ensure the health of the people of Yellowknife, N'Dilo and Dettah. The PHN has in-depth knowledge of the *Public Health Act* and the *Reportable Disease Control and Disease Surveillance Regulations*. The PHN works directly with the NWT Department of Health and Social Service's Communicable Disease Specialists in the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer. 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 position that demands independent thinking, judgment and critical decision-making skills.

The PHN specialty promotes the health of individuals, families, communities and various populations and their environments. The PHN practices in diverse settings, such as, clinics, homes, schools, local hospital and primary care clinics, shelters, churches and nongovernmental organizations and in public areas, such as, malls, bars and the street. The PHN collaborates with individuals, families, groups, communities and other care providers to develop, deliver and evaluate a wide range of health promotion and disease prevention strategies.

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.

The PHN becomes a program leader within his/her team and specialty. The PHN is expected to direct and organize other public health nurses, administrative staff and team members

when delivering programming in his/her 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. The incumbent is a mentor for nursing and advanced practice nursing students during their practicum experiences at NTHSSA. The PHN provides expert advice and guidance to other health and non-health related professionals within the Northwest Territories on a wide range of specialized public health issues. The PHN may be asked to represent NTHSSA on relevant local, departmental and territorial health committees and research projects and at workshops/conferences.

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 persons, 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, counseling and the delivery of transferred medical functions, such as, ordering lab tests and chest x-rays.
- Implements a comprehensive sexually transmitted infections (STI) program that includes screening, surveillance, contact tracing, comprehensive health assessments, the dispensing of medications, education, counseling and the delivery of transferred medical functions, such as, performing venipuncture, making diagnoses, ordering lab tests and treating uncomplicated STIs.
- Carries out contact tracing for clients with laboratory-confirmed communicable diseases.
- 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.
- Develops and carries out activities to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases by providing education and immunization, according to the NWT Department of Health and Social Services guidelines. These include:
 - Well child clinics
 - Mass school immunization programs
 - General adult immunization clinics
 - Travel health clinics
 - Outreach immunization clinics at local nursing homes and shelters

- Mass flu vaccination clinics at churches, grocery stores, shopping malls, etc.
- Implements a travel health program, according to PHAC guidelines, that includes: country-specific disease prevention education; counseling; yellow fever vaccination program; medically-transferred functions (for example, issuing travel-related prescriptions under the guidance of the Chief Public Health Officer; and, post travel follow-up.
- Implements a pre-and post-exposure rabies program.
- Takes a lead role in coordinating a pandemic response for NTHSSA, as required.

2. Design implements and evaluates appropriate health promotion 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 set-up 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.
- 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.
- Promotes links with appropriate community resources.
- Builds relationships based upon the principles of connecting and caring.
- 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), neighborhood (safe playgrounds), workplace (regular safety checks), school (immunization clinics) and street (outreach activities).
- Identifies appropriate services in the health care and other sectors and facilitates clients' access to them, as necessary.
- Promotes strategies, such as, home visits, school visits, case finding and outreach, to facilitate access to services by vulnerable populations (for example, persons who are ill, young, immigrants, disenfranchised, etc.).
- Well Child Clinics:
 - Health assessments
 - Growth and development screening
 - Education: health, nutrition, developmental milestones, play, immunization
 - Childhood immunizations according to the NWT schedule
- General Clinics:
 - Health and immunization education
 - Immunizations according to the NWT schedule
 - Screening for communicable diseases
 - Pregnancy testing, counseling and education

- Needle exchange program
- Immigrant screening and immunization
- Postnatal Home Visiting:
 - Education on health, immunizations, nutrition, safety and feeding
 - Health assessments for mother and baby
 - Breast feeding support
- School Health:
 - 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, counseling at school and clinic
 - Communicable disease screening and surveillance
 - Infection control prevention with hand hygiene and cough etiquette education
- Prenatal and postnatal group education Travel Health Clinics:
 - Health, disease prevention, immunization and medication education
 - Country/Location travel-specific immunizations
- Breastfeeding Clinic:
 - Education, diagnosis, treatment and support to mothers and babies with common breastfeeding concerns according to the International Lactation Consultant Association certification and standards of practice

3. Demonstrates autonomy, professional responsibility and accountability.

- 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 Regulations in the sharing of any client information.
- Applies the nursing process (assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation) in delivering culturally-sensitive nursing care to all clients.
- Evaluates all public health programs at least annually and implements relevant changes.
- Applies evidence-based, current knowledge in order to maintain competence in his/her practice.
- Makes decisions based upon ethical standards of practice and principles.
- Applies nursing information and communication technology to develop and manage relevant data to support nursing practice.
- Documents public health nursing activities in a comprehensive, timely and appropriate manner.
- Seeks assistance with problem solving, as needed, 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 opportunities consistent with current practice, new and emerging issues, demographic trends, determinants of health and new research.

4. 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 in other communities in the NWT and Nunavut.
- 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.
- Acts as an advocate for change using the principles of social justice.
- 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
 - NWT Perinatal Committee
 - Professional association committees
 - NWT Child and Youth Fatality Review Committee.
- Participates in special projects and research, as requested.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Off-site visits represent 40% to 60% of the PHN's time. When the PHN practices out of the clinic s/he is 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 walk ways and travel in extreme cold weather. The PHN will also be required to bend and stand while performing patient assessment or care and, depending on the home of the client, may be required to sit or kneel on the floor.

The PHN is required to deliver programming in Dettah. This is a remote location and the PHN travels over gravel or ice roads in extreme cold weather for a significant portion of the year.

Environmental Conditions

The PHN may be exposed to communicable diseases, such as chicken pox, tuberculosis, whooping cough, measles, mumps, influenza, blood-borne infections, and hazardous materials that can result in potential health risk. 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 exposing the PHN to second-hand smoke or physically unsafe conditions which may cause illness or personal injury.

Sensory Demands

Sixty to 100% of the time the PHN uses the senses of touch, sight, smell and hearing during client assessments. Forty to 60% of the time the PHN uses video display terminals which can put him/her at risk for repetitive strain and visual injuries.

Mental Demands

The environment is dynamic and constantly changing so the PHN continually re-evaluates and shifts priorities. Because of this fast pace, the PHN will experience mental fatigue and stress. The PHN is exposed to clients in a range of emotional and physical states. The PHN must act in a professional manner regardless of the situation. S/he must demonstrate care and compassion for the client, family and other members of the health care team.

When making home visits, contacting clients in regards to communicable diseases or delivering necessary outreach programs, the PHN may potentially be exposed to violent clients and/or family members who are under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. The PHN also will come into contact with clients who are mentally ill or homeless. As a legal obligation, the PHN is required to report actual or suspected abuse of minors. This puts additional stress on the PHN. At times, the emotional state of clients and family members brings uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work. In this position, there is legitimate concern about one's physical safety and the risk of assault in unknown and unpredictable situations.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of public health and nursing sciences to practice and synthesize knowledge from a broad range of theories, models and frameworks.
- 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 behavioral 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 computer programs including but not limited to: Word processing; Excel; Health Suite; Internet Explorer; Outlook e-mail; Power Point; iEMR (Wolf electronic medical record system); Travax (professional travel health program) 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 identify and collaborate with partners in addressing public health issues.
- Advanced level of communication skills to be able to communicate in a variety of methods to individuals, groups, peers and specialists in the public health field. This advanced skill must include the ability to communicate using English language skills to people and groups at various levels of literacy.
- Ability to build community capacity by sharing knowledge, tools, expertise and experience.
- Ability to think calmly and respond in emergency situations, such as, reacting appropriately to anaphylaxis or fainting after an immunization or in unsafe situations.
- Advanced knowledge and pharmacy skills, such as, prescribing medication under the direction of the Chief Public Health Officer and dispensing medications under approved policies and the NWT Drug Formulary.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

The successful completion of a BScN or BN nursing degree program with 2 years of nursing experience in a public health or community health environment.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

NTHSSA-Yellowknife Regional Requirements

Must be eligible for registration with the RNANT/NU, have completed a satisfactory criminal record check and possess a Class 5 driver's license.

When employed in the Yellowknife Region, 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
- NWT immunization certification
- Fire/disaster plan for NTHSSA
- Certification in WHMIS
- Certification in basic CPR
- Certification in hand hygiene Fit testing
- Certification in infection control practices Breastfeeding course (20 hours)

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
- PHAC Skills Enhancement for Public Health Programs

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

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

Aboriginal language: To choose a language, click here.

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred