



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Speech Language Pathologist - Adult & Acute Care	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-658	Yellowknife	Rehabilitation and Continuing Care Services/Yellowknife

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Speech Language Pathologist - Adult & Acute Care (SLP) supports the prevention, assessment, and treatment of communication and swallowing disorders in pediatric and adult inpatients, as well as adult outpatients. Areas of practice include language, speech, voice, fluency, and dysphagia. Services are provided in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Rules of Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) and align with the philosophy and objectives of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA).

SCOPE

NTHSSA is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłıchq regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-indigenous. Health and social services include 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 Tłıchq Community Services Agency (TCSA) and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) operate under separate boards, 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 NTHSSA.

NTHSSA administers health and social services to the residents of the Yellowknife Region in the NWT. NTHSSA directly and contractually employs over 300 staff who deliver these services in Yellowknife, Ft. Resolution, Lutselk'e, N'dilo, and Dettah for the Yellowknife Region. NTHSSA provides and supports the delivery of services to adults, children, and seniors on an inpatient, outpatient, and outreach basis at multiple sites across the city of Yellowknife and the



Communities of Lutselk'e, N'dilo, Dettah, and Ft. Resolution. These services include community-based social services, a public health clinic, primary care services, rehabilitation services, home and community care services, and long-term care/extended care services.

The legacies of colonization and residential schools have impacted Indigenous health outcomes and the way health and social services are delivered and accessed. The incumbent is required to always honor and promote a culturally safe environment. Practicing from a trauma informed care perspective is expected and the position requires that interaction with clients and families is tactful, respectful, and humble.

There are four regional rehabilitation teams located in Fort Smith, Hay River, Inuvik, and Yellowknife. Rehabilitation services consist of audiology, occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy (PT) and speech language pathology (SLP). All teams provide PT, OT and SLP services; the Yellowknife and Inuvik teams provide audiology services. Each regional team is responsible for delivering services within the community where they are located as well as other smaller communities. The provision of regional services is achieved using various methods of delivery including community travel clinics, telehealth, telephone, etc. Child Development Teams (CDT) are located within the Yellowknife and Inuvik rehabilitation teams.

Reporting directly to the Territorial Manager, Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, the incumbent is part of a team of Speech-Language Pathologists who independently manage their own caseloads. The role involves providing diagnostic, treatment, preventative, education, counselling, and referral services to inpatients and outpatients ranging from preschool-aged children to seniors.

The SLP practices primarily within hospital and continuing care environments, with a focus on acute and complex dysphagia management. The incumbent may also work with patients who present with communication difficulties. Care provided may include but is not limited to improving communication skills and supporting the use of augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) secondary to medical condition. The incumbent works closely with physicians, nursing staff, dietitians, and interdisciplinary rehabilitation teams to support coordinated, patient-centered care.

The Speech-Language Pathology department consists of a Territorial Manager, Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, Speech-Language Pathologists, a Hearing and Speech Aide, and a Program Assistant.

The Yellowknife Speech-Language Pathology Department completes approximately 5,000 patient encounters annually (an average of five encounters per therapist per day). Referrals to Speech-Language Pathology services are received from physicians, nurse practitioners, community nurses, parents, schools, social workers, midwives, and self-referral.

The SLP conducts clinical and standardized assessments and may provide ongoing intervention, including one-on-one treatment, consultation, and education for families and other care providers. The incumbent may also monitor and support the delivery of treatment plans



delegated to patients, families, or other healthcare providers across various settings within the Northwest Territories and the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut, including hospitals, community health centres, and long-term care facilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provides dysphagia assessment, diagnosis, and management to pediatric and adult inpatient and adult outpatient populations using a clinical reasoning and problem-solving approach and in accordance with the professional standards, guidelines and scope of practice to support individualized patient care.

- Conducts comprehensive clinical swallowing evaluations and identifies risk factors for aspiration, airway obstruction and malnutrition/dehydration.
- Participates in rounds, case conferences, and care planning discussions.
- Initiates and coordinates referrals for instrumental swallowing assessments (e.g., VFSS) where appropriate.
- Performs video fluoroscopic swallow studies (VFSS) for adults, interprets findings, and determines appropriate diet modifications.
- Recommends safe diet textures, fluid consistencies, and compensatory swallowing strategies based on assessment findings.
- Develops, implements and evaluates evidence-based dysphagia management plans.
- Monitors patient progress and modifies treatment plans in response to changes in medical status and functional needs.
- Collaborates with physicians, dietitians, nursing staff, and other interdisciplinary team members to ensure coordinated dysphagia care.
- Provides education and training to patients, families, and caregivers regarding safe swallowing practices and management strategies.
- Participates in quality improvement initiatives related to dysphagia care and patient safety (e.g., aspiration risk reduction).
- Maintains accurate, timely, and comprehensive clinical documentation, including outcome measures and reporting.

2. Provides assessment, diagnosis, and management of communication disorders to pediatric and adult inpatient and adult outpatient populations using a clinical reasoning and problem-solving approach and in accordance with professional standards, guidelines, and scope of practice to support individualized patient care.

- Conducts comprehensive communication assessments, including evaluation of speech, language, cognitive-communication, and voice disorders.
- Identifies underlying impairments and functional communication needs impacting participation and quality of life.
- Participates in rounds, case conferences, and care planning discussions.
- Utilizes standardized and non-standard assessment tools to inform diagnosis and treatment planning.
- Develops, implements, and evaluates evidence-based intervention plans for individuals with communication disorders.
- Provides targeted therapy for speech, language, cognitive-communication, and voice



disorders using individualized, functionally relevant approaches.

- Recommends and supports use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems where appropriate.
- Monitors patient progress and modifies intervention plans in response to changes in medical status and functional needs.
- Collaborates with interdisciplinary team members, including physicians, nursing staff, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and others, to ensure coordinated care.
- Provides education, counseling, and training to patients, families, and caregivers regarding communication strategies and supports.
- Facilitates discharge planning and transition of care related to communication needs.
- Provides consultation to team members regarding communication supports to optimize patient engagement and safety.
- Participates in quality improvement initiatives related to communication care, patient safety, and functional outcomes.

3. Arranges travel clinics to provide dysphagia management to residents in long term care facilities in communities within the NWT.

- Coordinates community clinics and collaborates with long term care staff to determine schedule, caseload, services, and follow-up.
- Conducts comprehensive clinical swallowing evaluations and identifies risk factors for aspiration, airway obstruction and malnutrition/dehydration.
- Recommends safe diet textures, fluid consistencies, and compensatory swallowing strategies based on assessment findings
- Initiates and coordinates referrals for instrumental swallowing assessments (e.g., VFSS) where appropriate.
- Provides education and training to patients, families, and caregivers regarding safe swallowing practices and management strategies.
- Maintains accurate, timely, and comprehensive clinical documentation, including outcome measures and reporting.

4. Advocates for practice environments that have the organizational and resource allocations necessary for safe, competent, and ethical care.

- Recognizes the importance of cultural safety and cultural diversity in working with clients and their support systems.
- Collaborates with physicians, nurses, and other members of the health team to advocate for healthcare environments that are conducive to ethical practice and to the health and well-being of patients and others in the setting.
- Provides coaching and leadership to peers, students, and other members of the healthcare team to develop skill levels necessary to achieve the standard of care.
- Provides consultation and professional opinion on diagnosis, prognosis and appropriate treatment of conditions affecting language, communication, and dysphagia to family physicians, physician specialists, community nurses, and other healthcare professionals.
- Provides orientation to new employees on scope of service and clinical responsibilities.
- Refers patient to other health providers when appropriate.



- Provides information and recommendations on capital expenditure.
- Participates in committees, task teams, and research projects as required.

5. Workplace Health and Safety: employees of the Authority are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful workplace for employees and patients/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 Worker's 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 and supervisors play an active role in workplace health and safety through their daily management: identifying prevention opportunities, ensuring staff are trained in RL6, investigating potential risk and accidents, and applying timely corrective measures.
- A healthy workplace, where employees can provide quality service under safe conditions, is the right thing to do and makes good business sense.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

During their day, an incumbent may be exposed to communicable diseases, blood and body fluid, and unsanitary conditions during home visits, that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent.

Sensory Demands

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses of touch, sight and hearing during assessment and provision of care in a variety of settings. The SLP must be constantly aware of patients' physical and emotional needs while providing care as some patients may be unable to request assistance when required.

Mental Demands

The SLP is expected to remain calm, controlled, and professional, regardless of the situation, and demonstrate compassionate care to the patient, family, and other members of the healthcare team.

The incumbent may travel to communities for up to four weeks per year, which may cause moderate levels of stress on the incumbent's family and social life.



KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of dysphagia management, including but not limited to bedside clinical swallowing evaluation, VFSS, diet modifications, and evidence-based interventions.
- Knowledge of communication disorders within the acute care and adult populations including but not limited to assessment and treatment of these disorders.
- Knowledge of current accepted standards of rehabilitation practice with a broad base of skill and clinical experience in communication disorders.
- Knowledge of applicable protocols, policies, regulations, and legislation.
- Knowledge of, and sensitivity to, cultural, social, gender and age dynamics as they relate to the delivery of primary healthcare programs and services with an ability to deal with a variety of people in a non-judgmental manner.
- Sensitivity to issues, and the ability to lead in a collaborative way to inspire, influence and persuade.
- Research and evaluation skills to conduct reviews and analyze or compare practices against evidence based and accepted standards.
- Written and oral communication skills include listening, observing, identifying, and reporting; including an ability to communicate effectively and efficiently to a divergent group of people with various degrees of emotional regulation.
- Ability to work with individuals at all levels in a variety of organizations at the community, regional and territorial level.
- Ability to lead and foster excellence in multi-disciplinary client service delivery.
- Ability to develop new programs, to facilitate creative problem solving using a situational approach, and incorporating conceptual, analytical, interpretive, evaluative, intuitive, and constructive thinking skills.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently personally practicing diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

Successful completion of a master's degree in Speech Language Pathology and two years of relevant experience.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Speech Language Pathologists must have provisional professional licensure in any Canadian province and full licensure within six months of hire, licensing in Alberta is preferred.
 - This may include graduating from a Canadian or other recognized Speech Language Pathology Program and successful completion of the certification exam within a reasonable time frame.
- SLPs must also be practicing members of Speech and Audiology Canada (SAC).
- Proof of Immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.



NTHSSA has several certifications that are required upon hire, depending on the area where the employee works, including but not limited to: Indigenous Cultural Awareness, Biohazardous Waste, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Infection Control, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and others directly related to the incumbent's scope of practice.

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