



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority	Oral Health Professional II-Dental Therapist	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-5822	Inuvik	Public Health and Primary Care Services / Territorial Operations

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

Provides primary oral health care to children and adult clients in accordance with 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 clients improve and maintain optimum oral health.

## SCOPE

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 Tłı̨chǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-aboriginals. HSS 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 HSS staff.

While the Tłı̨chǫ 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 NTHSSA.

Under the direction of the Minister of Health and Social Services, the NTHSSA was established to move toward one integrated delivery system as part of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) transformation strategy. The NTHSSA sets clinical standards, procedures,



guidelines and monitoring for the entire NWT. While the TCSA operates under a separate board, and HRHSSA remains separate in the interim, Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and ensure adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Located in the school in their community and reporting directly to the Territorial Specialist, Oral Health Care. The incumbent independently provides clinical intra-oral restorative and preventative treatment to school age children (grade K to 12). The Dental Therapist develops and delivers community based oral-dental health promotion and educational activities to individuals or groups (i.e. a class) within carious schools. Additionally, the incumbent develops oral/dental health promotion material and activities to be delivered in partnership with a Community Health Nurse (CHN) and other health care professionals (i.e. post-natal clinic, pre-school screening within various community health centers).

Dentists are the main referral source for Dental Therapist's clients (recall examinations). A physician, CHN, or parent may also refer. In addition, the Dental Therapist will identify school are clients needing treatment through screening. Direct client care executed by the incumbent includes restoring teeth to proper form, function and esthetics, recognizing and managing dental/medical emergencies, post-extraction complications and providing local anesthetics to manage pain to restore and maintain the health of the dental patient. Activities of the Dental Therapist include, but are not limited to, taking x-rays, providing fillings, performing extractions with a Dental Therapist's scope of practice, installing stainless steel crowns, providing fluoride treatment, sealants, suturing and performance of recall examinations. The Dental Therapist may also perform oral diagnosis and examination in emergency cases. When necessary, the incumbent will administer local anesthesia for dental procedures.

When treatment is outside the Dental Therapist's scope of practice, the incumbent will refer the client to a Dentist (i.e. abnormal oral or pathological conditions, etc.). The Dental Therapist may also cross-refer the patient to other health care providers (i.e. CHN or physician for antibiotic treatment).

As a Dental Therapist providing care in a number of communities, the incumbent also provides functional expertise and direction to other health care providers on the delivery of oral health care, promotion and prevention. There are no Dentists permanently located in any of the small communities in the Beaufort-Delta region.

The incumbent may be required to provide dental services in different communities within the Beaufort-Delta region as required.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. Provides direct and independent dental therapy services to clients of the NTHSSA within a multi-disciplinary setting.**
  - Obtain consent for dental treatment.
  - Explain procedure to the patient.
  - Screen and assess patient's need for dental treatment.
  - Provide treatment to patients as per the treatment plan developed by a Dentist.
  - Investigate and document the medical history of patients and inform at risk patients of the necessary considerations for dental treatment.
  - Examine, diagnose, develop 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.
  - Deliver prophylactic treatments to reduce the incidence of decay.
  - Assist clients in realizing and maintaining maximum oral/dental health.
  - Advocate the dignity and self-rest of clients.
  - Be aware of the importance of confidentiality and be able to keep personal and medical information private and confidential at all times.
  - Advocate for client 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.).
  - Promote the autonomy of clients and help them express their health needs and value to obtain appropriate information and services.
  - Safeguard the trust of clients that information learned in the context of a professional relationship is shared outside the health care team only with the client's permission or as legally required.
  - Apply and promote principles of equity and fairness to assist clients in receiving unbiased treatment and a share of health services and resources proportionate to their needs.
  - Act in a manner consistent with their professional responsibilities and standards of practice.
- 2. The Dental Therapist develops, coordinates and facilitates education/teaching based on the needs of the client, potential clients and other health care providers.**
  - Use 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.
  - Conduct active preventative health education programs in schools and health centers to promote and reduce incidence of dental caries.
  - Assess the client for physical needs, their knowledge of their dental health, disease process and learning needs.
  - Assess and evaluate the oral health of populations, gather and interpret



epidemiological data, and plan, develop and initiate oral health programs to address the identified needs.

- Research, develop, revise and evaluate on an ongoing basis, educational resources necessary to support clients, stakeholders (i.e. parents, teachers, community members, etc.) and other health care professionals.
- Supporting activities of the above responsibility.

**3. Advocate practice environments that have the organizational and resource allocations necessary for safe, competent and ethical clinical dental care.**

- Maintain a clinical environment (i.e. sterilize instrument and immediate surroundings) that is absent of micros-organisms that product disease (i.e. pathogens).
- Apply appropriate infection control measures.
- Create and maintain client records
- Provide coaching and leadership to peers, students and other members of the health care team to develop skill levels necessary to achieve the standard of care/
- Collaborate with Dentists, Physicians and CHNs 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 wellbeing of clients and others in the community.
- Orient new employees to unit specific programs and mandates.
- Participate in committees, task teams, research projects as related to Dental Therapy.

**4. Communicate with other members of the health care team (i.e. Dentist) regarding the dental health care of clients to provide continuity of care and promote collaborative efforts directed toward quality client care.**

**5. Effectively operate and maintain equipment by troubleshooting and ensuring timely and 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 client assessment or providing care/treatment. The incumbent will also move and lift heavy dental equipment during client 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 body fluids, hazardous materials (sharps, toxic cleaning and sterilizing solutions) that can result in potential health risk to the incumbent (80% of time).

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 (codex fixer and developer) required to product hard copy images.

To provide services to other communities, the incumbent is required to travel in small aircraft.

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent will be required to use the combined senses 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). Uncontrolled settings may be distracting for both the incumbent and the client (noise level, visual commotion, etc.).

Examination of patients and application 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 client at the same time. The Dental Therapist must be constantly aware (80% of the workday) of clients' physical and emotional needs (mood, hygiene, etc.).

### **Mental Demands**

The Dental Therapist has the opportunity to develop relationships with the clients of the Dental Therapy Program. The Dental Therapist is expected to remain calm, controlled and professional, regardless of the situation and demonstrate compassionate care to the client, family and other members of the health care team. Patients may cry or be uncooperative during dental treatment; patient management may be difficult in these types of circumstances.

As the only oral health care provider in the community, the incumbent works in professional isolation, unable to request on-site opinions or for assistance.

There is uncertainty in knowing what to expect while at work. There is legitimate concern about risk of verbal or physical assault and unknown and unpredictable situations (i.e. patients or family members under the influence of alcohol).

In addition, within the health care setting there can be significant lack of control over the work pace, with frequent interruptions that may lead to mental fatigue or stress.



The Dental Therapist is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education and practice to encourage the professional growth of self and others.

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

- Knowledge and ability to assess and modify prescribed dental treatment to accommodate for change in dental status.
- Knowledge of and an ability to apply dental therapy processes (assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation) and current dental practice to ensure that the clients' physical, emotional and educational needs are met.
- Knowledge of education principles related to both adult and child learners in order to develop and deliver subject specific training and development.
- Knowledge of oral anatomy (head and neck) in relation to local anesthesia considerations and techniques for safe and effective client treatment.
- Knowledge of oral anatomy in relation to muscle, nervous and circulatory systems.
- Knowledge of current universal precautions and appropriate and affective infection control measures (in relation to the clinical environment).
- Knowledge of and ability to operate word processing applications (I.e. Microsoft Word) in the completion of reports, training materials and presentations.
- As the community specialist in dental therapy procedures, the incumbent must be able 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.).
- An ability to develop and interpret dental radiographs to assist in assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning and case presentation.
- An ability to operate desktop computer in order to send and receive electronic mail and conduct research over the internet.
- 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**

Within the NTHSSA, health care providers must be able to acquire within a reasonable time



frame and remain current with the following training and certifications.

- WHMIS
- internal and E-mail application
- CPR.
- Fire Training

**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