

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

NTHSSA Medical and Professional Staff Bylaws Implementation

Purpose

This document has been created to inform and prepare Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) staff for the implementation of standardized Medical and Professional Staff Bylaws across the NTHSSA which will be formally implemented beginning March 15, 2018.

Terminology and Definitions

Please be advised that some terminology has changed with the implementation of new bylaws.

NTHSSA Territorial Staff:

The NTHSSA Territorial staff classifications that are appointed and granted privileges at a health care facility or hospital of the NTHSSA are defined as below:

- **Medical Staff:** physicians and dentists
- **Professional Staff:** nurse practitioners and midwives
- **Practitioner Staff:** Medical Staff and Professional Staff, i.e. physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, and midwives

Appointment and Granting of Privileges:

A Territorial NTHSSA Practitioner Staff Appointment outlines the category of Appointment, the responsibilities of that practitioner and the specific clinical Privileges granted to that practitioner. These Privileges may be specific to particular sites.

- **Initial Application:** process to seek an Appointment to the practitioner staff.
- **Appointment:** the admission of practitioner staff to a category of the NTHSSA staff (Active, Associate, Courtesy, or Locum).
- **Privileges:** core Privileges and site-specific non-core Privileges that have been granted pursuant to Part III of the Bylaws and include clinical services.

- **Core Privileges:** those clinical service(s) that a graduated, fully trained and licensed Practitioner of a discipline can reasonably be expected to perform.
- **Non-core Privileges:** those clinical service(s), which are outside of the Core Privileges that require further training or demonstration of skill.
- **Information Verification and Attestation (IVA):** yearly process that confirms that minimum credentials are met to maintain a practitioner staff Appointment
 - The IVA process is also known as “Credentialing”, the process of obtaining, verifying and evaluating the qualifications of a practitioner who would like to provide care or services in the NWT.

Appointment Categories:

The Appointment categories are described below:

- **Associate Staff:** An initial probationary Appointment granted by the Territorial Medical Director. This is applicable to medical staff for at least 1 year and professional staff for at least 6 months who intend to transition to Active Staff.
- **Active Staff:** Practitioners that are appointed by the Territorial Medical Director after having completed satisfactory service as Associate staff.
- **Locum Staff:** Practitioners that are appointed by the Territorial Medical Director to meet specific clinical needs for a defined period of time.
- **Courtesy Staff:** Practitioners that are appointed by the Territorial Medical Director, but whose primary commitment is not to the NTHSSA.

Background

Bill 44: *An Act to Amend the Hospital Insurance and Health and Social Services Administration Act*, came into force on August 1, 2016. As a result, six existing health authorities in the Northwest Territories (NT) were legally amalgamated into one Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority.

Prior to amalgamation existing health authorities either had distinct medical bylaws, or operated without bylaws. As outlined in Bill 44, one of the first tasks of the new Authority was to implement one comprehensive set of Practitioner Staff bylaws that would be applicable across the Territory, with the exception of Hay River.

The initial introduction of Bill 44 triggered an internal discussion about how the Medical and Professional Staff bylaws should be drafted. There was a strong desire

to adopt integrated bylaws that represented both Medical (dentists and physicians) and Professional (midwives and nurse practitioners) Staff. This desire was complemented by a Ministerial Directive, announced on February 11, 2014, that required Health Authorities to ensure that their bylaws allowed the Territorial Credential Committee to confirm the competence and credentials of not only physicians and dentists, but also of nurse practitioners and midwives.

The new NTHSSA Medical and Professional Staff Bylaws will govern physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners, and midwives that are seeking and receiving Appointments to the Practitioner Staff and granted Privileges at health care facilities and hospitals operated by the NTHSSA.

Questions

- 1. This document refers to the new bylaws. Where can I find a copy of the new bylaws?**
- 2. How do these bylaws impact the quality of care for our patients/clients and their families/communities?**
- 3. What changes are happening on March 15, 2018?**
- 4. What are some of the benefits of the new processes?**
- 5. What happens to current Appointment and Privileges of practitioner staff during the transition?**
- 6. What is expected from Practitioners during this transition?**
- 7. When are Practitioners expected to transition?**
- 8. What does a Periodic Review include?**
- 9. How often do Locums need to work in the NWT to maintain Privileges?**
- 10. How are Locum Medical Staff evaluated after their first locum rotation in the NWT?**

- 11. I've heard that Specialists and some Family Physicians are being asked to get Nunavut licenses. Who and why?**
- 12. I have heard that all the new forms are electronic. How do I fill out and sign forms electronically?**
- 13. What is going to happen to Practitioners working in Hay River on March 15?**
- 14. Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?**

Answers

- 1. This document refers to the new bylaws. Where can I find a copy of the new bylaws?**

The bylaws have been approved by the Minister, and are available on www.nthssa.ca.

- 2. How do these bylaws impact the quality of care for our patients/clients and their families/communities?**

There is an opportunity to promote quality health care services through bylaws processes.

- i. The new clinical leadership structure serves as a mechanism for engagement. It enables practitioner staff to have input into policy and planning decisions of the NTHSSA. Practitioner leadership and engagement are essential elements of high-performing healthcare systems, as engaged leaders ensure appropriate care.
- ii. The new process for the Appointment and granting of Privileges to the practitioner staff, including the amendment, suspension, or revocation thereof ensures that NTHSSA practitioners have the suitable skills needed to provide NWT patients with appropriate care according to patient/community needs.
- iii. The new process to conduct Periodic Reviews of practitioner staff enables maintenance of Privileges, while providing practitioners an opportunity to review their clinical performance, identify professional goals, and share health system issues and potential improvements. This process ensures that NTHSSA practitioners are continually

developing, practicing appropriately, and delivering quality care throughout the system.

- iv. The new process for responding to concerns about the practitioner staff provides the framework to effectively, constructively and fairly address concerns regarding the conduct and competence of the medical staff.

NOTE: The concern process applies to all practitioners; however, should a concern be initiated against a member of the professional staff (midwives and nurse practitioners) that would typically lead to a triggered assessment, that person would be referred to the Collective Agreement Grievance Process.

3. What changes are happening on March 15, 2018?

All other bylaws existing on March 14, 2018 will no longer be in use once the new bylaws are implemented on March 15, 2018; however, Part IX of the new bylaws outlines a transition provision.

This provision allows any practitioner who has an Appointment with a former health authority in the NWT to automatically receive a Territorial NTHSSA Appointment and Privileges that are equivalent to those held on March 14, 2018, unless a practitioner staff member does not wish their Appointment or Privileges to continue. As the new Appointment categories and privileging lists differ from those used previously, transition paperwork will be filled out by all staff in the coming year (see question 6, below).

In the past, individual letters outlining Appointment category for each staff member were distributed to regions. This year we will send collated lists of those maintaining their current Appointment and Privileges until such time as their new paperwork is reviewed.

Regional privileging, other than for Hay River, will no longer be required. From March 15, 2018 onwards, new applicants will use the new application forms for Privileging and Appointment through the Practitioner Affairs Office.

The Territorial Application Review Committee (TARC) will review applications, and the Territorial Medical Director will approve new Appointments and Privileges starting on March 15, 2018. The Territorial Credentialing Committee (TCC) will continue to review and approve new applications submitted prior to March 15, 2018 under the current process until all applications using the old forms are processed.

A new process for responding to concerns about the practitioner staff as outlined in Part V of the bylaws will come into effect on March 15.

A new process for deciding on rescheduling of Locums will begin March 15 (see question 10, below).

4. What are some of the benefits of the new processes?

Privileges will now be Territorial and will be maintained through Periodic Reviews and the annual Information Verification and Attestation (IVA) process. This means that Practitioners will not be required to reapply for Privileges every 3 years, as is the current practice.

A Periodic Review does not currently exist in the system. The Cumulative Clinical Performance Profile (CCPP) had little value in reviewing performance. The new process for the Maintenance of Privileges via Periodic Reviews will be a more effective, constructive and consistent process to review performance (see question 8, below to see what is in a Periodic Review).

Other benefits include:

- A combined initial hiring and granting of Appointment and Privileges processes for new medical staff applicants, which are currently two distinct processes with limited ability to share references or documents;
- A streamlined and transparent process for deciding whether to reschedule a Locum; and
- A streamlined and transparent process for addressing concerns.
- Elimination of duplicative processes such as second regional approval of privileges
- Practitioner leadership structure enabling engagement and communication

5. What happens to current Appointment and Privileges of practitioner staff during the transition?

During the transition process, all permanent and Locum Practitioners will be granted an Appointment in an equivalent category, and Privileges equivalent to those previously held until such time that the completed transition Privileging form and accompanying documents have been processed and approved.

Collated lists of those maintaining their current Appointment and Privileges will be distributed to Chief Executive Officer (CEOs) at Hay River Health and

Social Services Authority and Tłıchǫ Community Service Agency, Chief Operating Officers (COOs) of NTHSSA and different units in the hospitals during the transition period.

6. What is expected from Practitioners during this transition?

In order to transition Appointment and Privileges from the old system to new NTHSSA Privileges under the new bylaws processes, all practitioner staff need to complete a new “transition” privileging list (see Question 7, below) and IVA form (already sent out for completion). These will grant Territorial Privileges, with the exception of Hay River, and enable maintenance of Privileges through the IVA and Periodic Review processes, as laid out in the bylaws.

The transition privileging forms may require practitioners to provide additional supporting documentation of training, certification, or experience.

If new Privileges are requested that had not been granted prior to March 15, a *Request for Change Form* will need to be completed.

7. When are Practitioners expected to transition?

Permanent and Locum medical staff with Privileges set to expire in 2018, and who have successfully completed and returned an IVA form will start receiving transition privileging forms from March 19, 2018, with 22 business days to complete and submit the form and all required supporting documentation.

Permanent and Locum practitioner staff with Privileges set to expire in 2019 and 2020 should expect to receive transition Privileging forms in the coming months, with a goal of having all Privileges transitioned by the end of 2018.

8. What does a Periodic Review include?

As per section 18.9 of the Bylaws, a Periodic Review for Active and Associate staff may include but is not limited to:

- actions arising from a previous Periodic Review;
- compliance with Practitioner staff responsibilities and accountabilities, as set out in section 13.3 of the Bylaws;
- evidence of professionalism and competence in respect to the fulfillment of their responsibilities as defined by these Bylaws, which may include activities, such as self-practice audits or chart reviews;
- the continuation of professional development and maintenance of competence activities; and

- a collated assessment, a *Colleague Assessment* that is non-identifiable as to source, by relevant health care teams and other practitioners with respect to their provision of quality of care and ability to interact professionally and effectively with peers, NTHSSA administrative leaders and staff, and patients.
 - In the future, a similar assessment from patients may be included.

For Locums, we may limit the amount of information addressed in Periodic Reviews to reflect the limited services provided to NTHSSA.

9. How often do Locums need to work in the NWT to maintain Privileges?

Over a three year period, a Locum must have worked in the NWT for a total of 30 days to be eligible for Maintenance of Privileges through the Periodic Review process.

If a Locum does not meet this requirement, but has been granted Privileges to work in the NWT within the last three years, the Locum is eligible to re-apply for Privileges using a simpler *Reapplication Form*.

If a locum does not meet either of these requirements, i.e. has not been granted Privileges in the NWT within the last three years, the Locum will need to complete a full Initial Application.

10. How are Locum Medical Staff evaluated after their first locum rotation in the NWT?

It is important to ensure that there is a good fit between a Locum and a community or service. In addition to Locums being given the opportunity to give us feedback on their experience, we will also begin a process called "Initial Locum Review". After March 15, an Initial Locum Review will be conducted after each Locum's first rotation to determine if he or she is a good fit for rescheduling. This is done via a collated survey of staff with whom the Locum interacts. Should a concern arise, the Area Medical Director or designate will contact the Locum to discuss the concern.

This process has already been underway in many parts of the territory. The change is that this will be done in a standardized way with a standardized questionnaire, and also that any concerns will be communicated to Locums (this has not always occurred in the past).

The Locum review for radiologists will be a different process, currently under development.

11. I've heard that Specialists and some Family Physicians are being asked to get Nunavut licenses. Who and why?

Physicians who work at Stanton provide a considerable amount of medical service to the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut. Nunavut requires a Nunavut license for:

- Direct patient care on Nunavut soil
- Direct to patient telehealth for patients on Nunavut soil
- NWT Physician to Nunavut nurse advice calls

This has always been the case. For new applicants, the process to get an NU license is quite straightforward and involves signing consent to share information. However, we recognize that for those who are already licensed in NWT, the process to get a Nunavut license requires considerable paperwork.

All physicians working in the Stanton emergency department must have a Nunavut license as the NTHSSA-Government of Nunavut contract states that emergency department service "include telephone consultations for Community Health Nurses who require advice and/or direction on specific patient-related emergent and urgent cases". Specialist Physicians as well as Family Physicians providing Obstetrical, Hospitalist or Anesthesia services at Stanton Territorial Hospital are strongly encouraged to have a Nunavut license. If they do not, they cannot provide direct patient care including telehealth to Nunavut, nor telephone advice to a Nunavut nurse *unless a Nunavut physician is on the line to accept the advice.*

The cost of the license is covered for those physicians in the categories listed above.

12. I have heard that all the new forms are electronic. How do I fill out and sign forms electronically?

Yes, this is correct. All forms under the new bylaws will be circulated, received and processed electronically.

From your computer:

Adobe Reader is free software, so if you don't have Adobe Reader installed, you can download it here: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

1. Save the file to your computer

2. Right click the file from your computer (not your email) to bring up the options menu and then select "open with", and select either "Adobe Reader" or Adobe Acrobat Pro".
3. Fill out the form
4. Click the "Sign" button in the top right corner of the document.
5. Under the "I Need to Sign" tab, select "Place Signature" to either:
 - a. type a signature,
 - b. use your webcam to photograph your handwritten signature,
 - c. draw your signature with a mouse/graphics tablet, or
 - d. upload a photo of your handwritten signature.
6. Approve your signature
7. Place your signature in the signature box at the bottom of the form
8. Return to the "I Need to Sign" tab in the top-right corner of the document
9. Select the "Signed. Proceed to Send" button
10. Select "Save a Copy" or "Send in email"

NOTE: If you are still having issues saving the form data that you have entered into the PDF form fields, you may need to upgrade your Adobe Reader to the newest version.

From your iPhone:

1. Download the Adobe Acrobat App for free
2. Open the email with the attached PDF form
3. Select and hold your finger down on the document (options menu pops up)
4. Select "copy to Acrobat" (PDF will open in Acrobat)
5. Select the menu in the top left corner (blue document icon)
6. Select "Fill & Sign"
7. Fill out form (you can zoom in to make this easier)
8. When ready to sign, select the pen icon at the bottom of the screen
9. Select "create signature"
10. Sign with your finger or a stylus/screen-safe pen
11. Adjust the size of the signature and fit into the signature box

12. Select the menu in the top left corner again
13. Select the blue document icon (this is your file)
14. Select the upload icon at the bottom of the screen (2nd icon from the right in the row of icons at the bottom of the screen)
15. Select "Share file"
16. Select "share flattened copy" (this locks the form)

13. What is going to happen to Practitioners working in Hay River on March 15?

At this time, Hay River Health and Social Services Authority remains a distinct entity with distinct bylaws. Appointment and Privileges are granted by their Public Administrator, but they will rely on the review and recommendations of the Territorial Application Review Committee. Physicians who work in Hay River will have three options for NTHSSA Appointment:

- **Active:** if a practitioner staff is already permanent staff in NTHSSA but occasionally work as Locum in HRHSSA (he or she would then be Active NTHSSA and Locum Hay River)
- **Locum:** if a practitioner staff occasionally works in NTHSSA on Locum contracts (he or she may simultaneously be Active or Locum in Hay River)
- **Courtesy:** if a practitioner *only* works in HRHSSA and *never* in NTHSSA, this will allow the practitioner to access Diagnostic services at Stanton (he or she could simultaneously be Active or Locum in Hay River), but he or she will be unable to provide services in NTHSSA facilities.

14. Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

To ensure we are capturing and responding to all feedback and concerns during the implementation of the new Medical and Professional Staff Bylaws, we ask that if you have any questions or concerns about the information in this document, please contact:

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