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|  Department of Health Government of Nunavut | | NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS | |
| | | Community Health Nursing | |
| TITLE: | | SECTION: | POLICY NUMBER: |
| Laboratory Procedures | | Diagnostics | 08-001-00 |
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| APPLIES TO: | | | |
| Community Health Nurses | | | |

POLICY 1:

A Registered Nurse may perform laboratory procedures in the community health centre providing the following conditions are met:

- 1. The Department of Health and Social Services (HSS) shall establish and maintain policies which authorize the registered nurse to perform laboratory procedures.**
- 2. Criteria exist for the selection of laboratory procedures appropriate for implementation by registered nurses:**
 - **Procedures can be safely conducted in a health centre**
 - **Access to suitable instruction in the procedure exists**
 - **The recommended procedures are cost effective**
- 3. Access to laboratory personnel or adequate resources exist where questions arise with regard to laboratory procedures.**
- 4. A Government of Nunavut-approved laboratory manual for community health centre procedures is available to all staff in the community health centre.**
- 5. HSS establishes and maintains a policy for obtaining post-mortem samples.**

POLICY 2:

Nurses shall perform laboratory procedures in accordance with the Government of Nunavut *Community Health Centre Laboratory Manual*.

PRINCIPLES:

- Safe implementation of laboratory procedures is of primary importance to ensure quality client care.
- Nurses must practice within their own level of competence. When aspects of care are beyond his/her level of competence, he/she must seek additional information or knowledge, seek help from their supervisor or a competent practitioner and/or request a different work assignment. In the meantime, nurses must provide care until another nurse is available to do so.
- The employer can identify individual expectation or restrictions and is then responsible to ensure competency for the expected procedure(s) by providing education and practical experience as necessary.



RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND LEGISLATION:

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| Policy 05-009-00 | Transferred Health Functions |
| Policy 05-010-00 | Competency for Transferred Health Functions |
| Guideline 08-001-01 | Laboratory Procedure Guidelines |
| Policy 08-002-00 | Requisitioning Laboratory Studies |
| Policy 08-004-00 | Post Mortem Samples |
| Guideline08-004-01 | Collecting Post Mortem Samples |
| Government of Nunavut <i>Community Health Centre Laboratory Manual</i> | |

REFERENCES:

Canadian Nurses Association (2002). *Code of Ethics for Registered Nurses: Safe, Competent, and Ethical Care*. CNA: Ottawa.

Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (2007). *Bylaw: Dispensing, Compounding and Packaging Drugs*. RNANTNU: Yellowknife.

Government of Nunavut *Community Health Centre Laboratory Manual*.



Collecting Sexual Assault Kits

A timely, well done medical forensic examination can potentially validate and address sexual assault clients' concerns, minimize the trauma they may experience, and promote their healing. It can also increase the likelihood that evidence collected will aid in a criminal case investigation.

1. The *Sexual Assault Kit* is a forensic packaging system that contains:
 - Specific instructions on collecting the physical and trace biological evidence from a particular case.
 - Containers in which to place all the collected physical and trace biological evidence.
 - Instructions on packaging and documenting evidence.
 - Procedure on maintaining the chain of custody.
2. The *Sexual Assault Kit* is provided by the RCMP. Once the Kit is completed, it will be seized by the RCMP as an exhibit in regards to the criminal investigation.
3. The chain of custody shall be maintained from the time the examination is initiated until the collected physical evidence is handed over to the RCMP. The physical evidence collected during the examination must be closely regulated and controlled to maintain accurate continuity and accountability of exhibits and property. All collected specimens must never be left unattended, including being left in the examination room in the presence of the client.
4. After collection, the seized physical evidence is the responsibility of the RCMP.
5. The Registered Nurse examiner shall follow the protocols and guidelines of the Department of Health and Social Services and RCMP *Sexual Assault Kits*.
6. Every effort must be made to contact the RCMP in advance of using the RCMP Sexual Assault Kit. In the event there is no RCMP officer in the community, contact the RCMP detachment responsible for the community.

Coordinated Approach:

- A coordinated, multidisciplinary approach to conducting the exam provides victims with access to comprehensive immediate care and helps minimize trauma they may experience.
- Addressing client's needs may include: evaluating and treating injuries; conducting prompt exams; providing support, crisis intervention, and advocacy; providing prophylaxis against sexually transmitted infections and referrals; assessing reproductive health issues; and providing follow-up contact/care.
- Addressing justice system needs may include obtaining a history of the assault; documenting exam findings; properly collecting, handling and preserving evidence; and interpreting/analyzing findings, and providing factual and expert opinions.



Victim-Centred Care:

- Victim-centered care is paramount to the success of the exam process. Response to the victims should be timely, appropriate, sensitive and respectful.
- Give clients of sexual assault priority as emergency cases and respond in a timely manner. Provide as much privacy as possible.
- Recognize that the medical forensic exam is an interactive process that must be adapted to the needs and circumstances of each client.
- Be respectful of cultural beliefs which may influence/affect a victim and/or the exam process.
- Understand the importance of victim support services within the exam process. Victim service providers/advocates typically offer victims support, crisis intervention, information and referrals, and advocacy to ensure that victims' interests are represented, their wishes respected, and their rights upheld. Victims have the right to accept or decline victim support services.
- Accommodate victims' request for responders of a specific gender as much as staffing limitations permit.
- Prior to starting the exam and before each procedure, describe what is entailed and its purpose to the client (Provide interpreting services as need to ensure information is accurately conveyed). Respect the client's right to decline any part of the exam.
- After the exam, provide the client with the opportunity to wash, change clothes, get food or drinks, and make needed phone calls.

Confidentiality:

- Maintain confidentiality in accordance with territorial and federal policies and legislation.

Informed Consent:

- Clients should understand the full nature of their consent to each exam procedure. The client must be presented with relevant information to make an informed decision to accept or decline a procedure.
- If a procedure is declined, the client should be aware of the impact of declining the procedure with the client's reasons for declining being documented





RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND LEGISLATION:

Policy 05-010-00 Competency for Transferred Health Functions
Policy 06-001-00 Confidentiality

REFERENCES:

Government of Canada (2006). Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Operational Manual. Ottawa, ON.

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| Approved by: |  | 11 FEB 2011 |
| Chief Nursing Officer | | Date |
|  | | |
| Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services | | Date |
| | | Effective Date: April 1, 2011 |

