 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS	
		Community Health Nursing	
Second Opinion		SECTION: Nursing Practice	POLICY NUMBER: 07-048-00
EFFECTIVE DATE: Oct 2023	REVIEW DUE: Oct 2026	REPLACES NUMBER: New	NUMBER OF PAGES: 3
APPLIES TO: Regulated Healthcare Providers			

1. BACKGROUND:

The Department of Health (Health) respects the clients wishes if they feel the need to seek a second opinion on a diagnosis or treatment plan. Nunavummiut requesting a second opinion face the added challenge of living in remote and isolated communities. Travel from these communities limits the ability of Nunavummiut to independently obtain second opinions. Health upholds the IQ Principle of *Aajiiqatigiingniq* and strives to ensure that collective decision making and consensus are actively incorporated into the diagnostic and treatment plan development processes.

Health provides the following policy and procedure to support clients who wish to seek a second opinion, after receiving a diagnosis and/or treatment plan from an HCP.

2. POLICY:

- 2.1. Any client receiving a diagnosis and/or treatment plan from a Nunavut Health Care Provider (HCP) will be offered the opportunity to seek a second opinion from another Nunavut HCP should they disagree with the initial diagnosis and/or treatment plan.
 - 2.1.1. The second opinion shall be completed through referral or consultation.
 - 2.1.2. If a second opinion cannot be arranged in a timely fashion, the HCP shall ask the client if there is any aspect of the treatment plan, they would be willing to begin.
- 2.2. HCPs who are uncertain about a diagnosis and/or treatment plan shall consult with or refer to another HCP after obtaining verbal consent from the client.

3. PRINCIPLES:

- 3.1. Inclusive and respectful decision making is essential to the provision of quality healthcare.
- 3.2. Health honours the principle of *Aajiiqatigiingniq* and actively promotes decision making through consensus.
- 3.3. Health supports requests for second opinions provided that a Nunavut HCP has reviewed and approved the request and that the request complies with Medical Travel Policy.

4. DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1. **Healthcare Provider:** refers to community health nurses (CHN), Nurse Practitioners (NP), and Physicians, Advanced Care Paramedics (ACPs)
- 4.2. **Consultation:** A deliberation between HCPs to seek advice. The HCP initiating the consult remains the Most Responsible Person

- 4.3. **Referral:** A referral is a request from one HCP to another to assume responsibility for management of one or more client either entirely or for a specified problem. A referral may be for a specified time, until the resolution of a problem, or may be for ongoing care. It is the responsibility of the HCP accepting the referral to maintain appropriate and timely communication with the referring HCP and to seek approval from the referring HCP for treating or referring the client for any other condition that is not part of the original referral.
- 4.4. **A second opinion:** refers to the evaluation of clinical data to determine a diagnosis and/or treatment plan by an HCP who did not complete the initial assessment or formulation of a treatment plan.

5. GUIDELINE:

- 5.1. HCPs providing diagnoses/treatment plans shall do so in the client's preferred language per Policy 06-013-00 *Interpreter Services*.
- 5.2. The HCP providing the diagnosis/treatment plan shall ask the client if they have any questions or concerns regarding either the diagnosis or treatment plan.
- 5.3. If a client disagrees with any aspect of the diagnosis or treatment plan, the HCP will ask their specific concerns and the reasons for their disagreement.
- 5.4. The HCP will attempt to address the client concerns by:
- 5.4.1. Providing additional information in plain language and avoiding medical terminology.
 - 5.4.2. Providing the client with the opportunity to seek a second opinion and facilitating that process.
- 5.5. If the process of getting a second opinion would result in significant delays that might risk the client's safety, the HCP will explain this to the client in plain language and request beginning the treatment plan until the second opinion can be acquired.

6. Protocol for the Health Care Provider seeking a second opinion:

- 6.1. When clients request a second opinion from a CHN, the CHN may contact:
- 6.1.1. A different CHN during regular working hours.
 - 6.1.2. The second on-call CHN during after hours if time sensitive (if not time sensitive an appointment should be booked the following day).
 - 6.1.3. An NP (if available in community or if available via telehealth support) as per Policy 07-043-00 *Nurse Practitioner Consultation Process*.
 - 6.1.4. A Registered Midwife if available in community and if the diagnosis and treatment pertains to prenatal clients.
 - 6.1.5. The Community Physician.
 - 6.1.6. The Regional Physician on-call (if the request for a second opinion is time sensitive or urgent).
- 6.2. When clients request a second opinion from an NP, the NP may contact:
- 6.2.1. A different NP (if available in community or if available via telehealth support) as per Policy 07-043-00 *Nurse Practitioner Consultation Process*.
 - 6.2.2. A Registered Midwife if available in community and if the diagnosis and treatment pertains to prenatal clients.
 - 6.2.3. The Community Physician
 - 6.2.4. The Regional Physician on-call (if the request for a second opinion is time sensitive or urgent)
 - 6.2.5. Physician Specialist (i.e. eConsult services, etc.)
- 6.3. When clients request a second opinion from a Registered Midwife, the Midwife may contact:
- 6.3.1. An NP (if available in community or if available via telehealth support) as per Policy 07-043-

00 Nurse Practitioner Consultation Process

- 6.3.2. The Community Physician or community assigned prenatal Physician/Obstetrician.
- 6.3.3. The Regional Physician/Obstetrician on-call (if the request for a second opinion is time sensitive or urgent)
- 6.4. When clients request a second opinion from a Community Physician, the Physician may contact:
- 6.4.1. A colleague physician within Nunavut
- 6.4.2. A Registered Midwife if available in community and if the diagnosis and treatment pertains to prenatal clients
- 6.4.3. The Regional Physician on-call (if the request for a second opinion is time sensitive or urgent)
- 6.4.4. Associate Chief of Staff and/or Chief of Staff
- 6.4.5. Physician Specialist (i.e. eConsult services, etc.)
- 6.5. When clients request a second opinion from a Physician Specialist outside of Nunavut, a Nunavut Physician or NP will:
- 6.5.1. Review the request to determine whether the second opinion is justified.
- 6.5.2. Maintain every effort to use eConsult, telehealth or any other virtual platform available.
- 6.5.3. Attempt to coordinate the Specialist consult appointment within the territory.
- 6.5.4. If in agreement and unable to coordinate an in territory consult or utilize virtual care consult, the physician/NP will submit a referral to the specialist out of territory with all completed investigations and the proposed diagnosis and treatment plan.
- 6.5.5. The request must be in keeping with Medical Travel Policy

7. RELATED POLICIES, PROTOCOLS AND LEGISLATION:

Medical Travel Policy


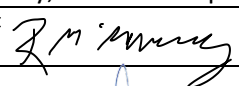
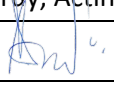
Policy 06-013-00 Interpreter Services

Policy 07-043-00 Nurse Practitioner Consultation Process

8. REFERENCES:

Canadian Medical Protective Association. (2014, September). *When a patient seeks a second opinion*.

Retrieved from CMPA.: <https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/en/advice-publications/browse-articles/2014/when-a-patient-seeks-a-second-opinion>

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