 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS	
		Community Health Nursing	
TITLE:		SECTION:	POLICY NUMBER:
Certification of Death		Nursing Practice	07-012-00
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DUE:	REPLACES NUMBER:	NUMBER OF PAGES:
Feb 15, 2022	Feb 15, 2025	07-012-00	2
APPLIES TO:			
Community Health Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Licenced Practical Nurses; Primary Care and Acute Paramedics			

1. BACKGROUND:

The *Vital Statistics Act* R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.C-20, as amended by Nunavut Statutes s.NU.2007, c.15, s.177 governs the certification of death in Nunavut. The Act states “the medical practitioner who was last in attendance during the last illness of the deceased, or the coroner who conducted an investigation or lead an inquest respecting the death, shall, immediately after the death, investigation or inquest, as the case may be, complete and sign the medical certificate in the prescribed form, stating in it, the cause of death according to the International List of Causes of Death, as last revised by the International Commission assembled for that purpose...”

The Department of Health (Health) recognizes that due to the remote and isolated nature of healthcare delivery in Nunavut, the medical practitioner in communities will often be a Community Health Nurse (CHN), Nurse Practitioner (NP), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) or Acute Care Paramedic (ACP).

POLICY:

- 1.1 The coroner is notified of all deaths so that a reportable death is not missed (07-014-00).
- 1.2 In circumstances where the coroner indicates they will conduct an investigation or hold an inquest respecting the death, the coroner shall be responsible for signing the *Certificate of Death*.
- 1.3 When the coroner indicates this is not a reportable death, and a physician is not available to complete the *Certificate of Death*, the form shall be completed and signed by a CHN or NP.
 - 1.3.1 In the event that neither a CHN nor NP is available at the Health Centre, an LPN shall complete and sign the form after consultation with a physician or NP.
 - 1.3.2 In the event that a health centre is closed and only a PCP or ACP are on site, the form shall be completed and signed by the PCP or ACP after consultation with a physician or NP.
- 1.4 The original copy of the form is sent to the *Office of the Registrar General of Vital Statistics*.
- 1.5 All unexpected deaths must be reported as an incident through the internal incident reporting system in Meditech.

2. PRINCIPLES:

- 2.1 In the absence of a physician, it is the responsibility of the CHN or NP to complete and sign the *Certificate of Death* after notifying the coroner.
- 2.2 When a CHN or NP are not in the community, an LPN, PCP or ACP will consult with a physician or NP and notify the coroner before completing and signing the *Certificate of Death*.

3. RELATED POLICIES, PROTOCOLS AND LEGISLATION:


Policy 05-011-00 Reduction and Suspension of Core Community Health Nursing Services

Policy 07-013-00 Pronouncing a Death
Policy 07-014-00 Reporting a Death to the Coroner

4. **REFERENCES:**

Consolidation of Vital Statistics Act (R.S.N.W.t. 1998, c.17,s.29 as amended by Nunavut Statutes: S.NU. 2012, c.17, s.29 Available at: <https://www.nunavutlegislation.ca/en/consolidated-law/vital-statistics-act-consolidation>

Coroners Act R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.C-20, as amended by Nunavut Statutes S.Nu2007, c.15, s.177. Available at: <https://nunavutcoroner.ca/publications-and-reports/file/1-coroner-act>

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