 Department of Health Government of Nunavut		<b>NURSING POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS</b>	
		<b>Community Health Nursing</b>	
<b>TITLE:</b>		<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>
Initiating X-Rays for TB Program		Diagnostics	08-019-01
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	<b>REVIEW DUE:</b>	<b>REPLACES NUMBER:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PAGES:</b>
August 21, 2020	August 2023		5
<b>APPLIES TO:</b>			
Community Health Centres			

## 1. BACKGROUND:

X-rays are a vital tool used to screen for and diagnose pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) infections, as well as addressing the patient's clinical response to TB treatment. The Department of Health maintains two policies (08-018-00 and 08-019-00) which outline who is authorized to initiate an x-ray request and who is authorized to perform x-ray procedures in the health centre setting. Through these policies, Community Health Nurses (CHNs) are delegated the authority to initiate x-ray requests without a Physician or Nurse Practitioner (NP) order, but only with very strict parameters. As well, these policies permit CHNs, NPs, and Basic Radiology Technicians (BRT) to perform radiological procedures under specific guidelines.

The strict parameters set out in these medical guidelines were defined such that patient safety risks would be minimized, essential services would remain available in each community, and overall quality assurance of this activity could be easily monitored by the Department of Health. Although these policies remain relevant for general health centre use, they do present challenges when utilized in community-wide TB screening programs, which are primarily staffed with nurses working under the Public Health Nurse job description. This policy provides an authorizing mechanism for Public Health Nurses to additionally initiate orders for basic radiography exams under the community-wide TB screening program as outlined in this policy.

## 2. MEDICAL DIRECTIVE:

2.1 Community Health Nurses, Supervisors of Community Health Programs, and Public Health Nurses may initiate a chest x-ray request without a direct Physician or Nurse Practitioner (NP) order in accordance with the Department of Health TB surveillance protocols for:

- i. Patients of all ages who are being screened for TB disease as part of the Community-Wide TB Screening Program, or
- ii. Patients of all ages who are being monitored in follow-up for TB disease as part of the Community-Wide TB Screening Program, or
- iii. Patients of all ages, in the community health centre setting, who are being investigated and monitored for TB, in accordance with the Department of Health, TB Manual guidelines.

2.2 CHNs and PHNs are not authorized to initiate x-rays for patients who are pregnant; MD or NP order is required.

*Practice Note:* The practitioner must be aware, that due to the equipment and resources available in the health centre setting, the films may be suboptimal, and care must be exercised in using them for clinical decision making.

**3. RECIPIENT PATIENTS:**

Patients of all ages.

**4. CONTRAINDICATIONS TO THIS MEDICAL DIRECTIVE:**

Consult the Physician or NP before initiating an x-ray when any of the conditions exist:

- i. Patient is known or suspected to be pregnant.
- ii. The CHN/PHN cannot confirm all the conditions of this directive have been met.
- iii. The patient's history of physical exam does not match the criteria set forth in the Department of Health TB manual and protocols.
- iv. The x-ray test is not recommended as part of the diagnostic investigation as stated within the Department of Health TB Manual and protocols, or the protocols recommend physician consultation first.
- v. **The CHN/PHN must verify the date of the last chest x-ray and consult the physician if the x-ray was taken within a month of the proposed x-ray.**

**5. AUTHORIZED IMPLEMENTERS:**

5.1 Community Health Nurses, Supervisors of Community Health Programs, and Public Health Nurses who possess the knowledge, skill and judgement to do so and are following Department of Health TB Manual protocols. Demonstrated competency is required to implement this medical directive through the standard orientation process.

5.2 Sub delegation is not permitted to another health care provider or staff.

**6. DEFINITIONS:**

**Nurse:** Refers to Community Health Nurse, Supervisor of Community Health Programs, and Public Health Nurse.

**7. PRINCIPLES:**

7.1 Nurses are expected to practice within their own level of competence and seek guidance from their supervisor, physician, or NP as needed.

7.2 Guidelines do not replace clinical judgement. Management decisions must be individualized.

7.3 Children and fetuses are more radiosensitive and thus require special consideration.

**8. PROCEDURE:**

8.1 The nurse conducts a comprehensive history and physical assessment to determine if the conditions of this directive have been met. If the findings of the initial assessment suggest an x-ray is warranted as per the TB Manual, a chest x-ray may be initiated. Algorithm in *Figure 1* provides guidance to the nurse when determining if the medical directive is appropriate to enact.

8.2 The nurse will explain the procedure to the patient and/or family, including any potential adverse outcomes. Obtain verbal consent.

8.3 Complete all required fields on the x-ray requisition (enter in Meditech when available):

- i. Patient identifiers.
- ii. Reasons for requesting the x-ray exam (clinical findings and initial differential diagnoses).
- iii. Ensure the name of the nurse who is initiating the x-ray is clearly stated as the ordering provider. Do not include the MD or NP name if a direct order was not obtained.

8.4 The nurse ordering an x-ray test is accountable for providing timely follow-up of test results,

in accordance with CHN Manual policies: *Interpretation of X-Rays; Acknowledgement of Diagnostic Test Results; and Follow up of Abnormal Test Results.*

**Note:** The Physician On-Call must be consulted when there is an urgent need for an x-ray to be read.

8.5 At minimum, the following must be documented in the patient's health record:

- i. The patient history and physical assessment findings.
- ii. The x-ray test ordered and the medical directive name.

For example: "PA/LAT chest x-ray ordered as per 'X-rays for TB Screening' policy."

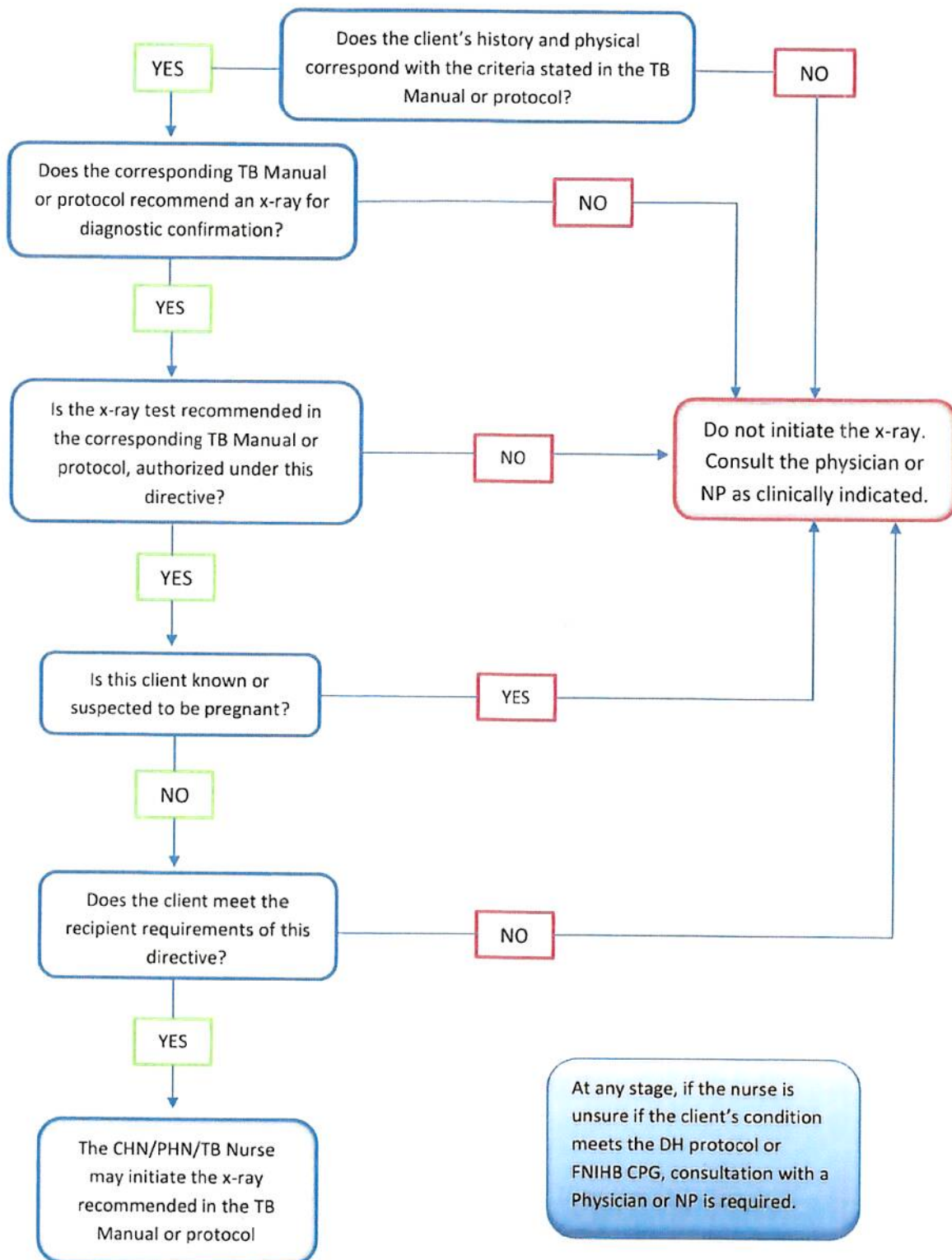
#### 9. RELATED POLICIES, PROTOCOLS, AND LEGISLATION:

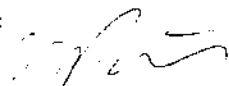
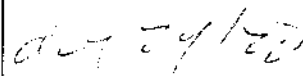

Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-019-00 Nurse Initiated X-ray Requests  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-018-00 Performing X-rays  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-010-00 Interpretation of X-rays  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-005-00 Acknowledgement of Diagnostic Test Results  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-006-00 Follow up of Abnormal Diagnostic Test Results  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 08-009-00 Radiographical Examination of Pregnant Women  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 06-008-00 Documentation Standards Policy  
Community Health Nursing Manual: 05-009-00 Transferred Functions Policy  
FNIHB Clinical Practice Guidelines for Nurses in Primary Care  
FNIHB Pediatric Clinical Practice Guidelines  
Government of Nunavut TB Manual

#### 10. REFERENCES:

Government of Nunavut. Tuberculosis Manual.  
Stelll, I.G., Wells, G.A., Hoag, R.H., Sivilotti, M.L., Cacciotti, T.F., Verbeek, P.R., et al. (1997).  
CNO (2014). Reference document: Legislation and Regulation. RHPA: Scope of Practice, Controlled Acts Model.

Figure 1: Algorithm for Assessing Appropriateness of the Medical Directive



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