

NSHA DIAGNOSTIC TESTING IWK CLINICAL Policy

Title:	Diagnostic Test Requests – Authorized Prescriber	Number:	NSHA DT-AI-020 IWK 865
Sponsor:	NSHA Senior Medical Director, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services Network NSHA Director, Clinical Networks NSHA Senior Director, Medical Affairs NSHA Senior Director, Interprofessional Practice and Learning IWK Director of Diagnostic Imaging, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Maritime Medical Genetics Services IWK Director of Nursing and Professional Practice IWK Director, Quality, Patient Safety and Experience	Page:	1 of 9
Approved by:	NSHA Health Authority Medical Advisory Committee NSHA Clinical Operations Council IWK Policy and Practice Committee IWK Medical Advisory Council	Approval Date:	NSHA March 9, 2023 IWK May 17, 2022 Effective Date: January 30, 2024
Applies to:	Authorized Prescribers		

PURPOSE

This policy defines who has the authority to order Diagnostic Testing in Nova Scotia. This policy does not apply to self-referred testing such as breast, colon, and lung cancer screening.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Diagnostic services in Nova Scotia are available to be prescribed/requested by an Authorized Prescriber (see [Appendix B](#)).
2. The authority to request Diagnostic Testing is delegated to an Authorized Requestor through

- an approved and documented process (Example: A care directive).
3. The Authorized Prescriber is responsible to provide contact information for themselves and any additional Authorized Prescriber(s) who require copies of the results.
 4. The Authorized Prescriber/delegated Authorized Requestor must have a process in place to be available to receive Critical Test Results day or night.
 5. Prescribers external to and have no Contractual Arrangements with Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health/ First Nations Community Health Centres cannot request diagnostic tests within Nova Scotia Health/IWK practice settings.
 - 5.1. An Authorized Prescriber must be registered as an active provider in the diagnostic services information system prior to initiating a request.
 - 5.2. Approved diagnostic requisitions/processes must be used to request diagnostic tests.
 - 5.3. Urgent care situations for out of province Visitors (example: INR testing) should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department/services on a case by case basis when an Authorized Prescriber is not identified.
 - 5.4. Test requests from referral locations that have a Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health approved contractor relationship (including out of province) are accepted.
 6. The Authorized Prescriber requesting the test must:
 - 6.1. Record the request on the health care record.
 - 6.2. Legibly write on the order their first and last name and their licensing/identifying number.
 - 6.3. Provide the identifying number associated with the location to receive the results
 7. Authorized Prescribers must **not** request diagnostic tests for themselves or Family Members.
 - 7.1. Authorized Prescribers must only request diagnostic tests for individuals within their care or within an authorized referral pathway.

Testing Stewardship

8. Nova Scotia Health Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services Network must be consulted as a stakeholder when developing or revising documents/processes that delegate authority for ordering Diagnostic Testing (Example: Preprinted orders, order sets, care directives, delegated functions).
9. Diagnostic Testing will not be performed when requests fail to meet professional guidelines, such as those identified in the [College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia Professional Standards and Guidelines](#).

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

1. Quality and patient safety is the goal.
2. Evidence-based and clinically informed guidelines are used to determine diagnostic test utilization (Example: [Choosing Wisely Canada](#) and the [Canadian Association of Radiologists Referral](#)

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[Guidelines and provincial stewardship guidelines](#)).

3. Responsible stewardship of health care funding and health resources.

REFERENCES

Legislation

Dental Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (1992, c. 3, s.1). Retrieved from

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/dental.pdf>

IWK Health Centre Medical, Dental and Affiliated Staff Bylaws: made under Section 21 of the Health Authorities Act. (2014), c. 32). Retrieved from the the Nova Scotia Office of the Registrar of Regulations website: <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/haiwkmedbylaws.html>

Medical Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (2011, c.38). Retrieved from

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/medical.pdf>

Midwifery Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (2006, c.18). Retrieved from

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/midwifery.pdf>

Nova Scotia Health Authority Medical Staff Bylaws: made under Section 21 of the Health Authorities Act. (2014, c.32). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Office of the Registrar of Regulations website:

<https://www.novascotia.ca/JUST/Regulations/regs/hamedstaff.htm>

Nursing Act, Statutes of Nova Scotia. (2019, c. 8). Retrieved from

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/nursing.pdf>

Pharmacist Extended Practice Regulations: made under section 83 of the Pharmacy Act. (2011, c.11). Retrieved from the Nova Scotia Office of the Registrar of Regulations website:

<https://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/pharmextprac.htm>

Other

Canadian Association of Radiologists. (2022). *Referral Guidelines. 2021- 2022 Diagnostic imaging referral guidelines*. <https://car.ca/patient-care/referral-guidelines/>

Choosing Wisely Canada. (n.d.). *Choosing wisely recommendations*.

<https://choosingwiselycanada.org/recommendations/>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (2019). *Nurse practitioner standards of practice 2018*.

https://cdn1.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/NP_Standards_of_Practice.pdf

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policies

Nova Scotia Health

[Patient Identification - NSHA CL-SR-025](#)

[Drug Prescribing, Administration and Testing by Pharmacists – Policy and Procedure – NSHA MM-GA-001](#)

[Requesting General Radiography Studies by Physiotherapists NSHA DT-DI-020](#)

IWK

[Patient Identification - IWK - 1100](#)

[Pharmacist Management of Drug Therapy - IWK - 10.09](#)

[Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine - Identification and Handling of Diagnostic Laboratory Specimens - IWK – 3311](#)

[Consultation for X-rays by Physiotherapists - IWK 7001](#)

[Pharmacist Management of Drug Therapy - IWK-10.09](#)

Appendices

[Appendix A: Definitions](#)

[Appendix B: Authorized Prescribers](#)

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Appendix A: Definitions

<p>Authorized Prescriber</p>	<p>An authorized prescriber is a Regulated Health Care Professional who is permitted by legislation, their regulatory college, Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health, and practice setting (where applicable) to prescribe medications/treatments and order diagnostic tests within their scope of practice or employment.</p> <p>To have the authority to prescribe in Nova Scotia, the authorized prescriber must be a Regulated Health Care Professional, registered (in good standing), and practicing within the Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health/First Nations Health Service Delivery structure and has a Contractual Arrangement with, hold privileges with, or employed by Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health to provide health care services to Nova Scotians.</p> <p>Prescribers external to and have no Contractual Arrangement with Nova Scotia Health/IWK Health/First Nations Community Health Centre may not prescribe within Nova Scotia Health practice settings.</p>
<p>Authorized Requestor(s)</p>	<p>In addition to an authorized prescriber, anyone who has been delegated the authority to request a test to be ordered through medical (care) directives, delegated functions, expanded role designation, specific policies, etc. (Example: Emergency Department care directives, physiotherapists (ordering x-rays) etc.). The Authorized Prescriber associated with the documented process is responsible for the test result(s).</p>
<p>Contractual Arrangement</p>	<p>For the purpose of this policy a Contractual Arrangement can include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Affiliation Agreement o Memorandum of Understanding o Memorandum of Agreement o Contracted Services o Referral Contracts
<p>Critical Test Results</p>	<p>Any unexpected or discrepant result or finding that may be considered life-threatening or that could result in severe morbidity or death if not dealt within a timely manner.</p> <p><i>Adapted from The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety, 2010.</i></p>

Diagnostic Testing	A test used to screen for, confirm/exclude, or monitor an illness, disease or condition. Examples include bloodwork and diagnostic imaging.
Family Members	An Authorized Prescriber's/Requestor's spouse or partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild; a parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild of the Authorized Prescriber's/Requestor's spouse or partner; or another individual with whom the Authorized Prescriber/Requestor has personal involvement that may render the Prescriber/Requestor unable to exercise objective professional judgment in reaching diagnostic or therapeutic decisions. <i>Adapted from the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia; Policy on Treating Self and Family Members May 27, 2016.</i>
Regulated Health Care Professional	Examples of a Regulated Health Care Professional are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Physician o Medical resident o Dentist o Nurse practitioner o Pharmacist o Midwife o Registered dietitian (when approved to order parenteral nutrition) and o Registered nurse authorized to prescribe (after completion of graduate level certification)
Testing Stewardship	The careful and responsible management of ordering, retrieving, and interpreting diagnostic tests.
Visitor	Someone who is in a place temporarily, such as a tourist.

Appendix B: Authorized Prescribers

Examples of Nova Scotia Professions	Authorized Prescribers for Diagnostic Testing	Source
Advanced Paramedics approved by formal Care Directives	Authorized Requestor: Limited test list	Refer to relevant Nova Scotia Health/IWK Care Directives
Chiropractors	Yes (General Radiography only)	
Clinical Clerks	No	
Dentists	Yes	PDBNS
Dietitians	Authorized Requestor: Limited test list	Refer to relevant Nova Scotia Health/IWK Care Directives
Genetic Counsellors approved by delegated medical function	Authorized Requestor	Refer to relevant IWK Delegated Medical Functions
Medical Students	No	
Naturopathic Doctors	No	
Nurse Practitioners	Yes	NSCN Practice Standards
Optometrists	No	NSCO
Pharmacists	Nova Scotia Health/IWK ordering diagnostic tests only (Community pharmacists currently under review)	Pharmacist Extended Practice Regulations Drug Prescribing, Administration and Testing By Pharmacists - Policy and Procedure - NSHA MM-GA-001 Pharmacist Management of Drug Therapy - IWK-10.09

Physicians (registered in Nova Scotia)	Yes – when holding privileges with Nova Scotia Health or IWK	CPSNS
Physician Assistants	Yes, limited test list	see Nova Scotia Health Care Directive
Physiotherapists	Yes (General Radiography only)	Requesting General Radiography Studies by Physiotherapists NSHA DT-DI-020 Consultation for X-rays by Physiotherapists - IWK 7001
Podiatrists	No	
Psychologists	No	
Registered Nurses approved by formal Care Directives	Authorized Requestor: Limited test list	Refer to relevant Nova Scotia Health/IWK Care Directives or
RN Prescriber (RN-AP)	Yes	Prescribing by Registered Nurses - Policy - NSHA MM-GA-020
Registered Midwives	Limited test list	MRCNS Legislation and Regulations MRCNS Policies and Standards

NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH/IWK POLICIES BEING REPLACED

CDHA CC-85-018 Clinical Laboratory Diagnostic Test Ordering

VERSION HISTORY

Version:	Effective:	Approved by:	What's changed:
Original		Refer to Masthead page 1	N/A
2023-11-10	2024-01-30	Sponsors	Appendix B: Added Chiro and Physios to order general radiography
2024-01-11			Appendix B: Pharmacy section - Added link to IWK policy
2024-01-22			RN Prescriber clarification to Appendix B