Northwest Territories Health and Social Services

NWT Clinical Practice Information Notice

UPON RECEIPT: (1) PLEASE FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BELOW
(2) FILE THIS NOTICE IN SECTION C, CLINICAL PRACTICE INFORMATION BINDER FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

The following clinical practice has been approved for use in the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services system, and has been distributed to:

- [x] Hospitals
- [x] Community Health Centers
- [x] Public Health Units
- [x] Doctors' Offices
- [ ] Social Services Offices
- [ ] Other: _____

The information contained in this document is a Departmental:

- [ ] Policy
- [x] Standard
- [ ] Protocol
- [ ] Procedure
- [ ] Guidelines

Title: Infection Control Respiratory Precautions for Acute Care Settings

Effective Date: June 20, 2003

Statement of approved clinical practice:

The recent SARS outbreaks have caused a reassessment of traditional infection control practices in clinical care setting. All healthcare practitioners in the NWT should therefore be aware and become familiar with the enhanced practices that are now the new standard.

Infectious agents such as SARS, tuberculosis or other viral infections should be included in the differential diagnosis of any person seeking medical attention with symptoms that include fever and cough. The appropriate infection control measure in such circumstances is to have the patient wear a NIOSH 95 mask.

All patients who present with a fever and cough in an emergency room or clinic setting should be given a NIOSH 95 mask and instructed to wear it until medical or nursing personnel allow its removal. If the patient is unable to wear a NIOSH 95 mask due to shortness of breath, the patient should be provided with a surgical mask and health care staff wear the NIOSH 95 mask for their protection.

This precautionary measure should be used until the person has been assessed and a final diagnosis has been made and/or it has been determined that the patient is not infectious.

Precautionary measures such as a more systematic use of NIOSH 95 masks will enhance the protection of health care providers and patients against infectious respiratory diseases. Although, such a precautionary measure may seem unwarranted to persons seeking medical care, it will be important to explain why these actions are necessary and how they contribute to everyone's protection.

This clinical practice is approved.

(signature)

Assistant Deputy Minister [ ] **Chief Medical Officer of Health** [x] **Director, Child & Family Services** [ ] **Director, Adoptions** [ ]