



Memorandum

To: Nova Scotia Health Senior Leadership Team, Provincial Programs and Networks

From: Dr. Tim Mailman, Senior Medical Director, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services Network
Lewis Bedford, Senior Director, Clinical Network, Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services Network
Grayson Fulmer, NS Health Senior Director, Medical Affairs
Nancy MacConnell-Maxner, NS Health Interim Senior Director, Interprofessional Practice and Learning
Celine d'Entremont, IWK Director of Diagnostic Imaging, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Maritime Medical Genetics Services
Nancy Cashen, IWK Director of Nursing and Professional Practice

Date: Jan. 4, 2024

Subject: New Diagnostic Test Requests – Authorized Prescriber Policy (NSHA DT – AI - 020/IWK-865)

With increasing pressures on health care, including additional demands for testing, the appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of diagnostic test utilization is critical and should be based on evidence-based guidelines.

Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health (IWK) have collaborated to develop a consistent, provincial policy leveraging the full scope and range of providers to define who is authorized to request diagnostic tests. The new policy, [Diagnostic Test Requests – Authorized Prescriber Policy](#), will be published January 9, 2024 on [OP3](#) and will become effective January 30, 2024.

The overall goal is to support quality and patient safety by clearly defining:

- which health care professionals are authorized to prescribe diagnostic tests
- the scope of what various prescribers are permitted to order/request
- the circumstances or conditions under which this prescribing is authorized and
- the need for appropriate communication and follow-up with respect to results, including rapid response to critical results.



The policy was developed by a working group involving administrative and medical leaders from Nova Scotia Health's Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services Network, Chronic Disease Management and Primary Health Care Network, Medical Affairs, Interprofessional Practice and Learning, as well as representatives from Diagnostic Imaging, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Pharmacy and IWK.

It was drafted using information compiled from existing policies, other jurisdictions, and key stakeholders, including over 100 team members from the groups listed above.

This new policy will replace pre-existing regional or facility-based policies or guidelines defining who is authorized to request diagnostic tests. It applies broadly to various diagnostic services provided by Nova Scotia Health and the IWK, including diagnostic imaging, pathology and laboratory medicine, and other services used to detect or assess the progression of various illnesses, injuries, or conditions.

Frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

Thank you for your support for the development and implementation of this policy.

If you have any questions, please contact your local director, manager or medical lead.