TCSA **Protocol.** **DRAFT: for discussion only** Reference. 4.102

Protocol Title: PROTOCOL FOR INTERNAL REFERRALS

Protocol Statement
Referral is an essential element of our integrated system of service delivery. It occurs when a caregiver recognizes that a client has a range of services needs, some of which are beyond his or her expertise, resources, or authority.

There are three types of referrals.

1. Referral to an outside agency. In this case the organization will likely have its own procedures and forms for accepting referrals.

2. Referrals to a team for the purposes of holding a case conference. In this case the caregiver will follow the *Case Conference Protocol* described in this handbook.

3. An internal referral to another department within the TCSA (Examples a referral from a school to the Wellness Centre; or, a referral from the Wellness Centre to a Health Centre. In this case, the referring and accepting department would follow this protocol.

Purpose
The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that referrals are made to appropriate service departments in an effective, efficient and accountable manner. This requires clear referral pathways and good communication between the referring department and the receiving department.

Procedures

Before making the Referral
All staff are expected to have an up-to-date working knowledge of the complete range of services provided by the TCSA—so they will know who to refer to. They can get this information from the *Service Directory* in the TCSA section on the Tlicho Government Website (www.tlicho.ca), through personal contact with staff in other departments, or through periodic large group information sessions where

staff in the various departments describe the services they provide, their respective roles, and their expectations in terms of making or receiving referrals.

Before making a referral, staff should be sure that the person making the referral is 1) the right person to receive the referral and 2) be able and willing to receive the referral at the present time. In many cases it will make sense to phone the department or individual in the department to explore the possibility of making the referral.

Making the Referral
The requirement for referrals will result from initial interviews with clients or from changes in the lives of existing clients that indicate the need for additional kinds of services.

When making a referral, the staff person should consult with the client about making the referral. If the client is in agreement, the staff person should fill in the *referral form* and email it to the person in the receiving department. (In general it is better to make the referral to an individual staff person in the receiving department rather than to the department itself. This may require a brief consultation with the program manager to find out which staff person is available and able to accept the referral.)

If it is essential to transfer confidential information, the referring staff person should explain why this is necessary and ask the client to sign a *Request to Share Information Form.* This form should be placed in the client's file with a note on the referral form that the person has signed the *Request to Share Information* form. If the sharing involves part of client files, record of tests or assessments, these also should be emailed or sent to the receiving department under separate cover.

If the client refuses to sign the *Request to Share Information form,* the referral can still be made. But the staff person should tell the client that the staff person receiving the referral will ask for the information if he or she thinks it is essential to provide the service.

A hard copy of the referral form should be offered to the client.

Receiving the Referral
The Staff person in the receiving department, upon receipt of the referral form, should reply to the email as soon as possible indicating that he or she accepts the referral. If the staff person rejects the referral, he or she should indicate why.

Once the receiving department accepts the referral, the staff person will notify the client to set up an appointment.

If the staff person receiving the referral decides it is important to report back the results of the referral, and confidential information is involved, he or she should request permission from the client to do this and have the client sign another *Request top Share Information* form.

Client Information and Permission
It is important all through the steps of this process to keep the client informed about what is happening and to seek the client's permission as required.