



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

Thursday, October 8, 2020

Medical Staff Digests are sent out every Tuesday and Thursday.

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COVID-19

NH's COVID-19 resources

For more COVID-19 information, see these OurNH pages:

- [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
- [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)
- [Physician website](#)

COVID-19 case counts and statements

Confirmed NH cases since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the **October 7 provincial update**:

- **325** cases
 - **14** active
 - **1** new
- **3** deaths (**0** new)

As always, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested. Surveillance reports for COVID-19, which includes breakdown of cases by Health Service Delivery Area, are [posted every Thursday on the BCCDC website](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – October 7, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – October 1, 2020

Glove Quick Reference Guides

To increase our supply of gloves, alternate models are being implemented across NH. Since each model of glove provides a different level of protection, we have developed two quick reference guides to help staff make informed decisions on what gloves to use:

1. [Glove Quick Reference Guide](#): provides a visual overview of each model of glove and its appropriateness for use in patient care, with accelerated hydrogen peroxide (AHP) wipes, and hazardous drugs.
2. [Condensed Glove Quick Reference Guide for AHP Use](#): provides the maximum duration time for use of each glove with AHP wipes (e.g., Oxivir)

For more detailed information on recommended usage of gloves, please review the [Product Change Notice](#) or [the Non Sterile Exam Glove Selection Guide](#), or speak with your local PPE Champion.

Supply of Non-Sterile Exam Gloves

Due to high global demand, the supply of our standard non-sterile exam gloves continues to be limited. To maintain a sufficient supply of gloves in all areas, staff are asked to review the glove requirements for individual tasks and ensure gloves are being used appropriately.

Gloves are not a replacement for proper hand hygiene and are not required for tasks such as:

- Cleaning with Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (e.g., Oxivir) wipes for less than 5 minutes unless blood or body fluids are present. Hand rinsing is recommended.
- Administering immunizations (except intranasal influenza vaccine or oral non-influenza vaccines)
- Delivering or picking up food trays
- Transporting clients in vehicles
- Administrative tasks; using computers, printers, etc.
- Visitor use

Procedural changes due to Diagnostic Services backlog

The restart of non-essential medical imaging and laboratory services has resulted in a large backlog of exams and orders for all medical imaging modalities and laboratory services. Sites are working diligently to manage workload by accommodating patients in order of priority.

Do not resubmit orders unless the urgency of the order changes **or** there are changes to requested exams and orders. Managing duplicate paperwork caused by unnecessary resubmissions will add to the current backlog and reduce efficiency.

Please note these procedural changes:

- If a requisition is re-submitted due to urgency or requested tests/exams, indicate on the requisition when the original form was submitted, and that the current form replaces the original as requirements have changed.
- Contact local laboratory directly for appointment booking if patient requires bloodwork within the next 72 hours.
- To assist with prioritization of requests, include on requisitions:
 - patient diagnosis
 - recommended time frame for completion of exams or orders

FNHA: COVID-19 advisory on sweat lodges and potlatches

A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, FNHA Acting Chief Medical Officer

Hello everyone. I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well even in the midst of this pandemic. I commend you for all the safety measures you are taking to avoid getting or spreading COVID-19. Let's continue staying strong and staying the course. What we are doing is working, and we will get through this together.

I'm writing this to remind everyone that the FNHA continues to strongly advise Indigenous communities in BC to postpone all gatherings until the pandemic has passed. This includes sweat lodges and potlatches, even though they are key spiritual and cultural activities.

The FNHA acknowledges their significance to our health and wellness, as well as the trauma caused by past banning of these activities. However, there is a time for everything, and now – during the COVID-19 pandemic – is *not* the time to hold or participate in these or any other kinds of group activities. Any gathering where close contact can occur can cause transmission and none of us are immune. Even if we are healthy, we should be thinking about not transmitting the infection to others around us – our Elders and those with underlying health issues.

Read the [full story on the FNHA website](#).

Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 9

The long-term care task group is producing biweekly updates for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities

[This issue](#) of the update provides information about outdoor and window visits, why visits are being monitored, the fall flu campaign, adult day programs reopening, and an update on in-person and virtual visits.

New BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections

[New modelling and projection figures](#) are available from the BCCDC. These figures represent the latest epidemiological numbers and data trends and were used in the [October 5 COVID-19 joint statement](#).

All [BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections](#) are available on both the [BCCDC website](#) and on the [modelling and projections page](#) of the NH physician website.

Thanksgiving and other celebrations during COVID-19

Fall is a time for gatherings and celebrations. As the days grow shorter and the weather grows colder, we long to be inside in the presence of good food and good company. However, this fall we must take extra precautions to ensure those celebrations are done safely. COVID-19 is changing the way we interact with each other, and the holidays are no exception.

The BCCDC has released [guidelines to make your celebrations as safe as possible this year](#). These guidelines provide advice for both hosting and attending celebrations and cover topics such as where to gather, food preparation, cleaning, and appropriate activities for your celebrations.

Keep in mind that the more space you have, and the less time you spend with others, the safer you are when getting together.

For more information, see the [full BCCDC guidelines](#).

It's not a trick: Safe guidelines for treat-givers and trick-or-treaters this Halloween

This Halloween may look a little different as we find ways to safely enjoy the holiday. The [BCCDC has developed guidelines](#) to let us celebrate Halloween, while still maintaining needed safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BCCDC guidelines include topics on:

- Halloween parties
- Trick-or-treating
- Handing out treats
- Halloween decorations

For more information, see the [full BCCDC guidelines](#).

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- **Non-medical info:** call **1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319** 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 webpage](#).

Overdose prevention and response

Compassion, Inclusion, Engagement (CIE) support in Northern Health

Compassion, Inclusion, Engagement (CIE) events can support teams engaged in overdose response. CIE is a provincial partnership between the First Nations Health Authority and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to address stigma and discrimination experienced by people who use substances, particularly those who are Indigenous.

CIE supports people with lived experience, primarily in remote and rural communities, in forming peer groups. Peer groups have been instrumental in advocating for the rights of people who use drugs and for meaningful change in drug policy that saves lives. CIE peer groups are empowered and supported in two ways: through skill and capacity-building, and through seed funding.

By providing capacity-building support, these groups learn tangible skills such as organizing, developing a mission, navigating group dynamics, grant-writing, financial management, and more. The seed funding that's provided supports their on-the-ground work, which ranges from operating peer-run overdose prevention sites, training and distribution of naloxone and harm reduction supplies, providing needle cleanup, and providing employment and income to members.

By supporting new and emerging peer groups, and by leveraging the BCCDC's position as a provincial leader, CIE ensures that the voices of people who use drugs are at the table with decision-makers.

Through CIE, peer groups across BC were supported to take on projects related to stigma elimination, harm reduction, and overdose response in their communities, and were free to choose the most effective ways to create that change for themselves, in relation to their community.

The majority of the groups chose to employ peers as trainers for overdose prevention and harm reduction services, while other groups engaged in advocacy work that pushed levels of government for safe supply. This work included people with lived and living experience of substance use in community conversations, decision-making, and advocating for increased harm reduction/overdose prevention services.

One example of work done by peer groups is the Clean Team in Quesnel, BC. The Clean Team is led by, and composed of, peers with lived experience of homelessness and substance use. The peers are employed part-time and perform early morning cleanups of needles, drug paraphernalia, and litter around business improvement areas, schoolyards, and other "hotspot" locales.

More recently, the CIE team travelled to Terrace to support the Community Action Team in their priority setting.

As part of our harm reduction regional supports, Northern Health has a regional peer coordinator that can help you link to programs such as these.

For more information, check out the [Toward the Heart Website](#) or contact [Kerensa Medhurst](#).

Other organizational news

News from Across NH

Influenza Prevention Program 2020/21 - peer immunizers needed!

Peer Immunizers are RNs, RPNs, LPNs or pharmacists who have volunteered to provide influenza immunization to peers and unit/site employees while working their regular scheduled shifts. This gives employees timely access to influenza immunization.

If you are interested in this role, please email: influenza@northernhealth.ca

UHNBC CT replacement project

Over the past year, one of the two UHNBC CT machines, CT1, has become unreliable with multiple extended downtimes. This has resulted in an imminent need for replacement of this machine.

From Oct 19 - Dec 7, 2020, work will be underway to replace CT1 with a new CT. Work has been underway to minimize service disruption. During this time, continue to refer patients as is normal for your practice.

UHNBC installed both machines in 2008 with one machine having fluoroscopy functionality (CT1) and the other not. The replacement for CT1 will have improved imaging processing capacity, faster acquisition rates and is dual energy.

Dual energy is a relatively new area of CT scanning that allows for better metal artifact elimination and could also lead to a reduction in the amount of contrast needed for imaging the vessels of the body.

If you have any questions, please contact [Roma Toor](#) at 250-649-7505.

Staff wellness and more

Resources for staff wellness are available in the right hand sidebar under the heading "Resources for stress and emotional support" on both the [COVID-19 page](#) and the [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit page](#) of Northern Health's staff intranet, OurNH.

For more information on [staff deals](#), the [NH Community Corner](#), and [RAARs](#), visit [OurNH](#).