



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A twice-weekly update for medical staff*

**Thursday, October 15, 2020**

Medical Staff Digests are sent out every Tuesday and Thursday.

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## COVID-19

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### 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 14 provincial update**:

- **343** cases
  - **13** active
  - **2** 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 14, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – October 8, 2020

## COVID-19 exposure alert – Prince George Taxi

Northern Health is advising anyone who used the services of Prince George Taxi on October 2nd or 3rd, between the (overnight) hours of 6 pm and 6 am, that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Public health officials are asking people who traveled by PG Taxi during this time period, to take extra care to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 until October 17th (14 days from the last date of possible exposure). Public health contact tracing is underway and, where possible, NH is reaching out directly to individuals who have been exposed.

If people remain healthy and do not develop symptoms, there is no need to self-isolate, and people can continue with their usual daily activities.

For more information, see the [full news release](#).

## Essential visitors to ultrasound and lab appointments

To support the safety of patients, staff and family members, the Imaging and Laboratory Departments will only allow partners, family members or friends into the department with the scheduled patient if they qualify under the [Essential Visitor protocol](#) (OurNH link). This protocol will be updated in line with provincial policy changes, as they occur.

**Note: An obstetric ultrasound is considered a scheduled maternity appointment.**

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

## Extended use of faceshields

[Cleaning and disinfecting protocols for faceshields](#) will eventually result in scratches and cloudiness that make it difficult to see properly after extended use.

While extended use protocols are needed to ensure we continue to have an adequate supply of PPE, faceshields should not continue to be used when the wearer's field of vision is impaired, and the health and safety of patients or staff could be affected.

Central supply rooms can order additional faceshields through the [PPE Request Approval form](#).

## Safe use of disinfecting wipes

When using disinfectant wipes in areas of a facility that are also cleaned by NH housekeeping staff, it is important not to use household disinfectant wipes such as Lysol or Clorox.

Although these wipes are an effective way of disinfecting hard surfaces, when combined with the healthcare-grade cleaners used in acute and long-term care facilities they could potentially cause a negative reaction that affects the health and safety of staff.

Healthcare-grade wipes (e.g. Oxivir TB) are a safer option for disinfecting areas that are also cleaned by internal NH housekeepers.

### **NH Physicians – Partners in Wellness October issue**

The [October issue of the NH Physicians – Partners in Wellness newsletter](#) is now available. This issue contains important information on influenza and the influenza vaccine such as:

- Vaccine roll out
- COVID-19 influenza resources
- Influenza & pneumococcal vaccine use guide
- References
- Additional resources
- Influenza prevention program for health care workers

### **Immunizations are as important as ever**

Immunization is an essential service, and health units are continuing to hold immunization clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, services vary across the province. Please contact your local health unit for information on immunization services during COVID-19 in your area.

Clinic changes have been made to ensure safety and to respect physical distancing. Please note the following changes:

- Only one adult should bring a child to the clinic (all other family members should stay home).
- Do not go to the clinic if you or your child are feeling ill and/or have any of the following symptoms:
  - Runny nose
  - Sore throat
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
  - Diarrhea or vomiting
- Do not go to the clinic if you have been asked to quarantine because you have travelled outside of Canada or been in contact with or near someone with COVID-19

For more information, see the [full article on ImmunizeBC](#).

### **PG COVID-19 testing site in new location in Parkwood Place**

The Prince George COVID-19 testing location has moved to a new location in Parkwood Place Mall. The new COVID-19 testing site will provide enhanced hours specifically for booked COVID-19 testing, seven (7) days a week from 8 am to 4 pm.

Address: Unit # 175 - 1600 15th Avenue  
Fax: 250-563-8440

Requisitions for testing remain the same: requisitions received from the Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic or by fax from primary care providers.

### 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

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### **FNHA: Sober(er) for October: helping ourselves and others regain balance spiritually, mentally, physically, and emotionally**

When stopping or significantly reducing the use of alcohol or other substances, there are many things to consider. For example, if you have been a heavy user, you might experience withdrawal symptoms.

The fear of withdrawal symptoms prevents some people from stopping their use of substances. There is acute withdrawal, which usually lasts a few days and consists mainly of physical symptoms. However, there is also post-acute withdrawal syndrome (PAWS), which can last from several days to even months, and generally involves more "thinking" and "feeling" symptoms." These can include:

- Memory problems / "foggy thinking"
- Inability to concentrate
- Low motivation to do things
- Irritability
- Anxiety, depression or mood swings

These symptoms are a sign that your body is trying to heal itself from the effects of substance use; your brain is "recalibrating," or adjusting to the changes you are making. This cycle moves from physical discomfort to emotional and psychological discomfort.

We can help ourselves and others in a number of different ways. As FNHA Knowledge Keeper Syexwaliya Ann Whonnock reminds us, "The Ancestors and Elders teach that we need to respect, understand and care about where each of us is at in our life journey, and to

help or support one another as best we can. This includes being kind, non-judgemental, and understanding – and listening with an open heart."

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

## Other organizational news

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### News from Across NH

#### **Acute Care Council formed to tackle issues within acute care**

To address the complex quality issues within acute care settings, Northern Health has pulled together a broad team of stakeholders to form the Acute Care Council.

This council will facilitate coordination around a variety of topics relating to acute care, including:

- COVID-19 pandemic planning, response, and continued preparedness
- Advising and navigating strategic level issues
- Aligning acute care priorities with other service areas as appropriate
- Supporting integrated planning and alignment with the Service Network framework
- Stewarding and advising on acute care projects and initiatives including Hospital@Home, Care in the Right Place, and access to diagnostics

Laboratory services restart, surgery restart, and pandemic acute care surge planning are the current areas of focus for the Acute Care Council.

For questions or more information on the Acute Care council, please contact [Ronald Chapman, VP medicine](#).

#### **Register for the 2020 BC Health Leaders Conference: Oct 29 – 30, 2020**

Registration is now open for the 2020 BC Health Leaders Conference to learn how to better navigate the health system challenges that are being faced across the country. Discover how leadership through innovation, creativity, and flexibility can help you find and trust your leadership compass. Explore practices to help guide yourself and others through the issues and opportunities of today's healthcare industry such as:

- Establishing guiding principles (national framework, teams, etc.)
- Being flexible in your leadership practices
- Leveraging and inspiring your team
- Making decisions in times of fiscal constraints
- Being effective environmental stewards
- Navigating challenging ethical situations
- Promoting diversity in the workforce

The BC Health Leaders Conference is a pivotal opportunity for health leaders to come together to learn, share knowledge, and improve leadership skills to work toward better healthcare for all.

For more information and to register, see the [event page](#).

## **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](#).