



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Medical Staff Digests are sent out every Tuesday and Thursday.

Sections

COVID-19.....	1
Overdose prevention and response	3
Other organizational news.....	4

COVID-19

NH's COVID-19 resources

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

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

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of December 9, **1,159** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **378**
- New cases: **27**
- Currently in hospital: **40**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **14**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **9**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

Surveillance reports, including a breakdown of cases by HSDA, are [posted each Friday by the BCCDC](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – December 9, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – December 4, 2020

COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada

The Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19 has been approved by Health Canada, and the Moderna vaccine is pending approval and will be delivered once approved.

The COVID-19 vaccines require two doses, spaced several weeks apart, and will be free for everyone in British Columbia.

Initial vaccines will be administered to high-priority populations, with first priority for residents and workers in long-term care and assisted living facilities. More vaccines are expected to be available in January 2021.

Priority vaccine groups include:

- Residents and staff of congregate living settings that provide care for seniors such as long-term care homes.
- Adults 70 years of age and older, beginning with adults 80 years of age and older, then decreasing the age limit by 5-year increments to age 70 as supply becomes available.
- Health care workers (including all those who work in health care settings and personal support workers whose work involves direct contact with patients).
- Adults in Indigenous communities where infection can have disproportionate consequences.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine and its distribution, see the [BCCDC page](#) and the [Government of B.C. page](#) on COVID-19 vaccines.

Received a COVID-19 test result? What to expect

The recent surge in lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region is putting pressure on public health case and contact management (contact tracing) resources.

The number of new people testing positive for the virus is impacting public health's ability to quickly contact people who have tested positive. There is currently a backlog of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, but have not yet been contacted by public health.

Northern Health is deploying additional staff to its case and contact management teams, and making other necessary changes to how cases are notified, monitored, and cleared from self-isolation, to clear the backlog and speed up the process in the weeks and months ahead.

Note: Information specific to primary care providers is currently being developed and will be distributed as soon as it is available. For more details, see the [full information bulletin](#).

Media statement - Deployment of BCEHS Rapid Response, Fort St James

NH issued a media statement today in response to questions about the BC Emergency Health Services deployment of a Paramedic Rapid Response team to Fort St. James/Omineca. For more details, see the [full media bulletin](#).

Take a look at how many patients are receiving care from the Northern Health Virtual Clinic!

Since the creation of the Northern Health Virtual Clinic, we have been providing patient care to more patients all the time. To see how the NH Virtual Clinic has been doing, we'll be sharing the current statistics with you each week.

Thursday, December 3 to Wednesday December 9

- COVID-19 assessments: **1,855**
- Primary care provider encounters: **137**

COVID-19 Unit Discharge Checklist now available

To help nurses with discharge planning for COVID-19 patients, Northern Health has created a clear and easy to use [COVID-19 Unit Discharge Checklist](#).

Celebrating during a pandemic: Frequently asked questions about holidays/special occasions in facilities

A [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\) document](#) has been developed to address questions surrounding holidays, decorations, celebrations, and special occasions in facilities.

This guidance will be in effect **December 15, 2020 to January 5, 2021**.

Please note: If an outbreak occurs at any facility, this guidance will no longer apply and further direction will be provided by the Outbreak Management Team.

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

Stigma harms us all: Learn how you can create supportive environments for people who use substances

NH front line staff play a key role in creating supportive environments for people who use substances. Drug use stigma prevents people who use drugs from seeking help and creates barriers to accessing lifesaving health care services.

An education resource has been created: [Creating Supportive Environments for People Who Use Substances](#)

Front line managers are encouraged to share the course with their staff.

To access the course visit the [Learning Hub](#).

Other organizational news

News from across NH

The Prince George prototype for Hospital @ Home will be launching January 2021

The Hospital @ Home Prince George prototype, based out of UHNBC, will be launching January 2021 with a small number of low acuity patients as we test out the process. We're working with staff and physicians to design this service in our Northern setting to work for patients, families, and providers.

The prototype will focus on providing home-based acute care services for:

- Patients already receiving community-based palliative care services who temporarily need acute-level care
- Patients who need enhanced IV therapy

Over time, the program will expand the patient population to include stable acute medical patients, stable acute surgical patients, and patients experiencing acute mental health episodes.

The hiring process is under way for the Prince George prototype for a Care Coordinator, Registered Nurses, and a Nursing Unit Clerk.

For more information about H@H, see the [FAQ](#).

For questions, contact Greg Marr (Gregory.marr@northernhealth.ca).

The LearningHub will be down December 20-22, 2020

The LearningHub will be down for scheduled system maintenance starting Sunday, December 20 at 5 pm until Tuesday, December 22 at 9 am. During this time, no one will be able to use the LearningHub.

If you have any eLearning activities in progress, please complete them before the scheduled downtime, as any activities not completed will be lost.

If you're a manager, please don't schedule any employees for online orientations or training during the shutdown.

During the shutdown, the Learning Hub will upgrade its servers. This will eliminate problems that we've had from having too many simultaneous learners on the system during peak times.

Please contact education@northernhealth.ca if you have any questions.

Upcoming Evidence to Action Workshops: Register for all or any of the three sessions in this workshop series

This is a great opportunity for clinical nurse educators, executive leads, and leaders working on program improvements. The workshop provides an overview of the services provided by Education and Development, Library Services and the Policy Office.

Upcoming workshops:

- January 13, 2021: [Best Practices](#)
- February 10, 2021: [Readability](#)
- March 10, 2021: [Technical Tips/Copyright Images](#)

Benefits of the workshops:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of Northern Health's resources available to support the development of high-quality evidence-informed education, policy documents and programs.
- Review case scenarios of excellence within Northern Health regarding obtaining evidence, developing education, and developing or revising policies or clinical practice standards.
- Learn to understand copyright laws and the appropriate use of images.
- Increase your skill in writing concise, understandable documents.

Location: Microsoft Teams meeting invitations will be sent out to registrants prior to the session.

For more information, please contact gail.haeussler@northernhealth.ca.

Wellness and more

Resources for wellness are available on the [Health and Wellness page](#) of the Physicians Website.

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