



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

Tuesday, December 15, 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](#)

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of December 14, **1,331** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **398**
- New cases: **9**
- Currently in hospital: **46**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **18**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **12**

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 14, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – December 11, 2020

Northern Health Virtual Clinic: Data on patient visits

The Northern Health Virtual Clinic supports after-hours access to COVID-19 and primary care services for those who cannot easily access these services in their communities. The goal is to connect people to their local primary care home wherever possible. We will share Virtual Clinic data with you twice a week.

Thursday, Dec 10

- 280 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 22 primary care provider appointments (1 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Quesnel and 21 COVID-19 related)

Friday, Dec 11

- 313 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 20 primary care provider appointments (1 PC from PG, 1 PC from Dawson Creek, 18 COVID-19 related)

Saturday, Dec 12

- 217 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 19 primary care provider appointments (all COVID-19 related)

Sunday, Dec 13

- 196 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 10 primary care provider appointments (all COVID-19 related)

NH receiving first Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

The planning for COVID-19 immunization clinics is in progress across the Northern Health region. Northern Health is expecting to receive Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine within the next week. The amount of locations the vaccine can be initially offered is limited recognizing the complex storage and handling procedures, but we are planning for delivery in the coming days, weeks, and months across the system.

NH is working closely with the BCCDC to roll out the vaccine in accordance with the priority vaccine groups determined by the Ministry of Health, beginning with high-risk health care workers and then long-term care residents. As more vaccines are approved by Health Canada and shipment volumes ramp up, more communities will receive the COVID-19 vaccine. We expect to be able to immunize all Northern BC residents who wish to have the vaccine by the end of 2021.

More information about the vaccine rollout will be shared with staff and primary care providers as it is available.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine research, priority populations, and the provincial rollout plan, visit the Government of British Columbia [COVID-19 vaccines website](#).

New option to fast-track health care worker COVID-19 assessments and testing

Are you a direct patient care health care worker*, physician, or nurse practitioner needing a COVID-19 assessment? The next time you call the Northern Health Virtual Clinic, press option 2, and you'll be prioritized for your assessment and testing. Due to high call volumes in the morning, we encourage health care workers to call in the evenings if possible, instead of waiting until the next morning.

[Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#)

- Phone: [1-844-645-7811](tel:1-844-645-7811)
- Hours: 10 am to 10 pm daily (including weekends and statutory holidays)

Northern Health wants to create quick access to COVID-19 assessments and testing for those providing direct patient care.

Note: Direct patient care health care workers who are located in Prince George will now call the Virtual Clinic for a COVID-19 assessment and test, not the previous phone line which was in place for Prince George staff.

* Direct patient care health care workers are defined as people in roles critical to direct patient care delivery (e.g., physician, nurse, paramedic/ambulance attendant, pharmacist, radiology technician, etc.).

Facility outbreak declared at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George

Northern Health is implementing enhanced COVID-19 precautions at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George, following lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff and residents.

Communication with Jubilee Lodge staff, residents, and families is ongoing.

NH Medical Health Officers have declared a facility outbreak. NH care facilities have implemented very clear policies and procedures for COVID-19 infection prevention and control, to lower the risk of transmission to residents, staff, and physicians in a health care facility.

Northern Health is proactively testing residents to identify anyone who may have been infected, and taking additional steps to protect the health of all Jubilee Lodge staff and residents.

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](#).

COVID-19 case data will now be reported on a local health area level through the BCCDC

The BCCDC is releasing a weekly map showing COVID-19 case counts by local health area on the [COVID-19 data page](#).

This map shows the cases for the prior week, and is updated every Wednesday.

New Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 13: Food and gift guidance, Christmas decorations, and more

The long-term care task group is producing updates twice a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[This issue](#) of the update provides information on the provincial guidelines for social gatherings, guidelines for bringing gifts and food into the facility, information on Christmas decorations, and an overview on outbreak guidelines for long-term care homes.

Frequently asked questions for holiday/special occasions in facilities during COVID-19

[This memo \(OurNH link\)](#) provides guidance on holiday celebrations in Northern Health (NH) facilities that will be in effect from **December 15, 2020 to January 5, 2021**.

Information on decorating, donations, staff celebrations, and gifts and food for residents and patients is included in a [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) document \(OurNH link\)](#).

The FAQ compiles existing information with one exception: For three weeks during the holiday season, gifts and food previously identified as 'not essential' and not allowed in facilities are permitted, with instructions for how this will be done safely. At the end of this time, items may have to be removed or discarded in order to minimize clutter and allow for proper environmental cleaning.

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

Rural, remote, and Indigenous overdose grants are available until Jan 22, 2021

In partnership with the Provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC), the Community Action Initiative (CAI) is offering funding for rural, remote, and Indigenous overdose initiatives or projects.

Applications must be in alignment with the OERC's core package of comprehensive interventions, and applicants are encouraged to align with recommendations made during the October 2019 [Rural and Indigenous Overdose Action Exchange](#). Applicants can apply for up to \$50,000 in one-time-only funding.

Applications are due January 22, 2021.

To learn more and apply, visit <https://caibc.ca/rural-remote-indigenous-overdose-grants/>.

Other organizational news

News from across NH

New Revolution Apex CT scanner now in operation at UHNBC

Work has completed on replacing the UHNBC CT scanner with fluoroscopy functionality. The new CT scanner will have improved imaging processing capacity, faster acquisition rates, and is dual-energy.

Application training for technologists and radiologists is currently under way and will run until Monday, January 4, 2021.

Regular scheduling of CT-guided biopsies, CTCAs, and colonoscopies will resume on January 4, 2021.

For questions, please contact Roma Toor at 250-649-7505.

Upcoming conference: The Modernization of Clinical Trials – January 26-28, 2021

The Modernization of Clinical Trials 2021 Conference, hosted by [Clinical Trials BC](#), will showcase regulatory renewal, new innovations in trial approaches and design, diversity of populations and teams, current topics, and leadership. This three-day event offers keynote lectures, an exhibition hall, and forums designed to stimulate engagement and planning through moderated panel discussions.

[Register today, it's free!](#)

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](#).