



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

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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 21, **1,599** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **487**
- New cases: **9**
- Currently in hospital: **43**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **20**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **15**

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.

Situation 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 21, 2020
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – December 18, 2020

Northern Health administers first COVID-19 vaccines in Prince George

The first doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to a group of high-risk health care workers in Prince George today.

The first person to receive the vaccine in the Northern Health region was Biserka Becker, a care aide at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George. Biserka was vaccinated along with a group of health care workers from University Hospital of Northern BC, and the nearby Jubilee Lodge long-term care facility.

Dr. Marietije Slabbert, the physician lead for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at UHNBC, was also among the group to receive the vaccine. Dr. Slabbert is considered a high-risk health care worker because of her work in the ICU.

“This has been a really long journey for people working in health care, and the community at large, and it’s wonderful that this vaccine has finally arrived in the North; it’s like the best Christmas present ever,” said Dr. Slabbert. “The teams of physicians, nurses, care aides, cleaners -- everybody has been working so hard, and we’ll continue working hard to get this vaccine to every person in the North who wants to be vaccinated.”

Northern Health is distributing the vaccine in accordance with the priority vaccine groups as recommended by the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#), beginning with:

- High-risk health care workers
- Long-term care and assisted living residents

As more vaccines are approved by Health Canada, more communities and more groups of people 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.

All COVID-19 vaccines will be free to everyone in British Columbia.

For more details and a photo from today’s vaccinations at UHNBC, see this item on the NH Story Site: [Northern Health administers first COVID-19 vaccines in Prince George](#).

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

Outbreak continues in Jubilee Lodge, Prince George: Update

Ongoing monitoring and testing of staff and residents at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George has identified additional lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19. Since the outbreak was declared on December 12, 38 residents have tested positive for COVID-19, along with seven staff.

Tragically, four Jubilee residents have died since the outbreak began.

“The toll that COVID-19 has had on many of our most cherished, but most vulnerable, members of our communities has been heavy,” said Cathy Ulrich, Northern Health CEO.

“Our heartfelt condolences go to residents of Jubilee Lodge and their families as well as to their caregivers; the staff, nurses and physicians who continue to provide excellent and compassionate care during understandably challenging circumstances.”

For more details, please see the full [information bulletin](#).

BCCDC testing guidelines have been updated and now include priority symptoms

The BCCDC has updated testing guidelines to reflect priority symptoms. People experiencing the following symptoms should seek a COVID-19 test right away:

- Fever or chills
- Cough (Either new onset or worsening/exacerbation of chronic cough)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Difficulty breathing

People experiencing two or more of the following symptoms (not related to any other pre-existing conditions) for more than 24 hours should also seek a COVID-19 test:

- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme fatigue or tiredness
- Headache
- Body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

For those who have had close contact with a COVID-19 case, and have even a single symptom included above, testing is recommended.

To arrange for a test, contact your physician or nurse practitioner's office, or call the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic & Info Line at **1-844-645-7811**. More info is on the BCCD's [COVID-19 testing page](#).

N95s vs. reusable respirators

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a global shortage of N95 respirators. To ensure we have an adequate supply of respirators, NH implemented reusable respirators in target departments. Reusable respirators are either elastomeric half-facepiece respirators or powered air purifying respirators (PAPR).

Some key points to remember about respirator usage:

- Both N95s and reusable respirators provide the required level of protection against airborne infectious diseases.
- A reusable respirator is not used to provide a higher level of protection to specific staff or departments.
- Targeted departments for reusable respirators were selected due to their high usage of N95s.

Respiratory protection for COVID-19 (N95 or reusable) is only required when an aerosol generating procedure is performed. Droplet/contact precautions and the use of a procedure mask are recommended in all other situations.

What model of N95 do I wear?

Have you been fit-tested, but can't remember what model of N95 you need? To check your fit-test record:

1. Log into any NH computer with your username and password.
2. Open the Employee Fit Test Record report.

The report will tell you the model of N95 you were fitted to and on what date.

Until further notice, fit tests are valid for a two-year period as long as you can obtain a successful seal check. If your only valid fit test is to the 3M 1870+, you will need to be fitted to an alternate N95, as this model is temporarily unavailable.

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 17

- 265 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 20 primary care provider appointments (1 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Houston, 1 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Terrace, 1 primary care (PC) from PG, 1 primary care (PC) from Telkwa and 16 COVID-19 related)

Friday, Dec 18

- 238 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 18 primary care provider appointments (1 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Terrace, 2 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Ft St John, and 15 COVID-19 related)

Saturday, Dec 19

- 163 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 19 primary care provider appointments (2 primary care (PC) from Smithers, 2 primary care (PC) from Ft St John, 1 primary care (PC) from Prince George, 1 COVID-19 & primary care (PC) from Chetwynd and 13 COVID-19 related)

Sunday, Dec 20

- 161 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 10 primary care provider appointments (1 primary care (PC) from Prince George and 9 COVID-19 related)

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

Staying safer this holiday season

People who use drugs are at a high risk of harm during the holiday season. Coupled with COVID-19 isolation, the season brings additional risk of overdose deaths.

Please help prevent overdoses by having naloxone in the hands of anyone who might witness an overdose.

More information for people who use substances and how to stay safe during this pandemic can be found at:

- [Harm reduction information for people who use substances](#)
- [COVID-19 and Substance Use Over the Holiday Season](#)

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

Other organizational news

News from across NH

Cultural safety and humility training, resources and support: Brief starter menu of currently available options for physicians

Are you a physician seeking cultural safety and humility training, resources, and support?

Northern Health is in the ongoing process of developing a [brief menu of options](#), both internal and through our partners in health and education, for physicians to work toward achieving strategic priorities as outlined in the [NH Strategic Plan: Looking Ahead to 2023](#).

This menu provides a selection of resources that are readily available to support you in your learning and self-reflective practice. Recognizing that education on its own has limitations, we further encourage you to independently explore additional ways within your practice and in partnerships to improve cultural safety.

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](#).