



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

January 12, 2021

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COVID-19

NH's COVID-19 resources

- On the NH physician website:
 - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- On OurNH:
 - [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
 - [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of January 11, **2,560** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **497**
- New cases: **55**
- Currently in hospital: **44**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **16**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **42**

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](#) – January 11, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – December 18, 2020

Expression of interest for primary care physician participation in COVID-19 vaccinations

There is an opportunity for interested primary care physicians to participate in the COVID-19 vaccination plan for the North.

Interested physicians may contact Rhoda Viray at Rhoda.Viray@northernhealth.ca with the following information:

- Physician name
- Contact information (phone and email)
- The physician's home community and availability/interest to vaccinate in other communities (please list the other communities)

Fee-for-service physicians will have the opportunity to sign on to a short-term COVID-19 response group service contract compensated at the GP sessional rate for the hours they vaccinate in a Northern Health or First Nations Health Authority immunization clinic.

Alternative payment program physicians may also be paid at the GP sessional rate if the hours of service are in addition to, or fall outside of, the normal hours of service contemplated in their APP contract.

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gunn, VP Primary & Community Care and Clinical Programs
Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine

Information Sessions: Northern Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

Northern Health wants to share its plan for vaccination. There will be a number of information sessions available to you. The presentations take ten minutes, and there will be time for questions afterwards.

The information sessions will take place via Zoom on the following dates:

- Thursday, January 14 at 5:00 pm
- Friday, January 15 at 5:00 pm
- Wednesday, January 20 at 7:00 am

For Zoom details for these information sessions, click [here](#).

If you would like an information session for your team or facility and cannot make one of the above sessions, please contact physicianeducation@northernhealth.ca to help schedule something.

Northern Health's vaccine rollout strategy to be released soon

More information on vaccines will be coming shortly, including the release of a full plan this week. 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 page](#).

Referring people living in rural or remote areas / First Nations communities to temporary accommodations

The [Remote/Rural and First Nations Communities COVID-19 Response Framework](#) (RRFW) supports people to self-isolate in communities with a higher level of acute care services. [This document](#) covers transportation, accommodation, and coordination of supports. An intake form is also included.

COVID-19 outbreak at St Paul's Hospital cardiac units: Patient transfer information

A COVID-19 outbreak in St. Paul's Hospital (SPH) cardiac wards is limiting capacity to receive cardiac transfers at both SPH and Vancouver General Hospital (VGH).

From now until Friday, January 15th 2021, cardiac patients requiring transfer should be

The activated diversion plan below has been made in partnership with Cardiac Services BC and the affected Health Authorities. The Patient Transfer Network (PTN) has been notified, including charge nurses across NH to help support diversion of cardiac patients from SPH and VGH in discussion with physicians.

For details on the NH cardiac transfer process until Friday, January 15, please see [the full memo](#).

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, Jan 7:

- 259 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 38 primary care provider appointments (12 primary care from Fort St. James, Halfway River, Kitimat, Prince George, Houston, Fort St. John, Smithers, and Gitanmax, and 26 COVID-19 related)

Friday, Jan 8:

- 186 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 38 primary care provider appointments (10 primary care from Telkwa, Burns Lake, Fort St. John, Fort St. James, Hazelton, Smithers, and Prince George, and 28 COVID-19 related)

Saturday, Jan 9:

- 144 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 17 primary care provider appointments (13 primary care from Burns Lake, Fort St. Bear Lake, Terrace and Prince George, and 4 COVID-19 related)

Sunday, Jan 10:

- 196 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 8 primary care provider appointments (7 primary care from Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, and Fort Nelson, and 1 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

New resource for clinicians providing substance use and addiction care

A new 24/7 helpline for clinicians will provide health care providers around BC with live, in-the-moment addiction medicine support, while they are treating patients. The provincial 24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line is available 24 / 7 every day of the year by calling **778-945-7619**.

- The line is staffed by addiction medicine experts from across the province who can provide telephone consultations to physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, and midwives to help improve the delivery of life-saving, evidence-based addiction care.
- Telephone guidance can be provided to support patients with substance use disorders.
- This resource will help support the implementation of clinical guidance and regulatory amendments that are being rapidly developed in response to the dual public health emergencies, including considerations for prescribing safer prescription alternatives to the toxic drug supply.

More details: www.bccsu.ca/24-7/

Testimonials:

“Training in addiction medicine remains a huge gap in the health-care system and people aren't able to access the treatment and care they need as a result, despite the urgent need as we grapple with two public health emergencies that are especially impacting people who use drugs. This new support line will be a great asset to clinicians in many settings – from an ER doctor working overnight to a nurse in a remote

community – and help improve the delivery of life-saving, evidence-based addiction care across the province.”

-- Dr. Christy Sutherland, physician education lead at the BCCSU and medical director of PHS Community Services Society

“B.C.'s First Nations people have been historically underserved and disproportionately affected by untreated substance use. The need for increased services and support for addiction medicine in our communities has never been greater, nor has the need for addictions clinical staff trained and supported to deliver that treatment and care.”

-- Dr. Nel Wieman, acting deputy chief medical officer, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

Other organizational news

New Long-Term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 14: Information for residents and families

The long-term care task group is continuing to produce 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 updates to the long-term care and seniors' assisted living visitor policy and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Upcoming Conference: Modernization of Clinical Trials January 26-28, 2021

The conference will showcase regulatory renewal, new innovations in trial approaches and design, diversity of populations and teams, current topics, and leadership.

This event offers keynote lectures, exhibition hall and forums designed to stimulate engagement and planning through moderated panel discussions.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Allan Hackshaw, Professor of Epidemiology & Medical Statistics at University College London, and Deputy Director of the Cancer Research UK & UCL Cancer Trials Centre.

[Learn more about the conference and register.](#)

CRA guidelines for the 2020 tax year – claiming home office expenses

In response to the number of people working from home during the pandemic, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has simplified the way in which individuals are eligible to claim their home office expense deduction for the 2020 tax year.

For the 2020 tax year, Northern Health employees that worked from home during the year due to the pandemic, can use the Temporary Flat Rate or the Temporary Detailed Method for office expenses.

For detailed information, please review the [memo released on January 11, 2021.](#)

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](#).