



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A twice-weekly update for medical staff*

**February 18, 2021**

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## COVID-19

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### 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 February 17, **4,135** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **285**
- New cases: **31**
- Currently in hospital: **30**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **11**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **102**

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.

As well, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#), which visualizes COVID-19 in BC in comparison to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, at the HSDA level. It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – February 17, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 17, 2021

## Deferring the second dose of the vaccine: Rationale and supporting details

A brief Letter to the Editor from the BCCDC was published in the New England Journal of Medicine which gives the core rationale for deferring the second dose in less than 200 words: [Safety and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine](#).

For a more detailed review of the evidence, including literature supporting longer versus shorter intervals between first and second doses, see this webinar presented on January 26 by Dr. Danuta Skowronski, the BCCDC's Epidemiology Lead, Influenza & Emerging Respiratory Pathogens: [Second Dose Deferral to Extend COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage: A Review of the Evidence](#).

## The North's largest immunization clinic to date: A collaborative effort

A team of First Nations Health Authority, Nisga'a Valley Health, and Northern Health immunizers carried out a COVID-19 immunization clinic on February 11.

The clinic was held at the Gingolx Memorial Recreation Centre in Kincolith, where 723 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were administered, making this the North's largest immunization clinic so far. Thank you to everyone for their hard work, and a big congratulations to all!

## Do the COVID-19 vaccines have human and animal cells or blood products?

No. Animal and human cell cultures may be used in the process of making some vaccines, but the vaccines themselves don't contain animal or human cells or tissue.

Get the answers to this and other common vaccine questions on the new "[Facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#)" 11 x 17" poster on Northern Health's [COVID-19 vaccine plan](#) page – feel free to share!

## 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.

### Sunday, Feb 14

- 143 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 12 primary care provider appointments (12 primary care from Prince George, Terrace, Kitwanga, Fraser Lake)

### Monday, Feb 15

- 168 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 16 primary care provider appointments (5 primary care from Prince George, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Fort St. John, and 11 COVID-19 related)

### Tuesday, Feb 16

- 226 COVID-19 nursing assessments

- 12 primary care provider appointments (7 primary care from Prince George, Terrace, Fort St. John, and Smithers, and 5 COVID-19 related)

### Wednesday, Feb 17

- 260 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 23 primary care provider appointments (8 primary care from Prince George, Vancouver, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, and Smithers, and 14 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

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### The Lifeguard app supports people who use substances alone

Social distancing orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic have made it more difficult for people to have someone with them when they use drugs. The Lifeguard app supports people who are at the highest risk of overdose death: people who use substances alone. The app connects people to emergency responders automatically if they are unresponsive. It can be downloaded for free on a smartphone or tablet through both the [Apple App Store](#) and the [Google Play Store](#).

To learn more about the app, visit <https://lifeguarddh.com/>.

## Other organizational news

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### Sign up for the Health Career Access Program: Paid education opportunity to become a registered Health Care Assistant

The new Health Career Access Program (HCAP) gives you the opportunity to receive paid post-secondary education and on-the-job training to become a registered Health Care Assistant. Your course fees will be covered, and you'll also be paid for your time while you study and work.

The program consists of employment, education, and training, and takes up to 18 months to finish.

**Overview:**

You must meet both Northern Health's job requirements and the requirements of the college you'll attend. Which college you attend depends on where you live.

After finishing your education to become a Health Care Assistant, you'll start as a Health Care Support Worker before moving on to a Health Care Assistant position.

- Health Care Support Workers earn a starting salary of about \$39,000.
- Health Care Assistants earn an average annual salary of about \$45,090.

**The HCAP process**

**Step 1:** Apply for a Health Care Support Worker position on [Northern Health's internal employment page](#). Once you receive and accept your offer of employment, work and training will begin.

**Step 2:** Complete basic training and onboarding provided by Northern Health. You'll be paid for your time, and your course fees are covered.

**Step 3:** Become a Health Care Assistant! After you finish basic training and pass a probationary work period, you'll enter a structured education program to become a health care assistant. You can finish this program while you work.

- The program is a partnership between Northern Health and an established post-secondary institution
- It takes about 12 to 18 months to finish, and there's no cost to you

When you've completed the education program, you'll earn a recognized post-secondary credential and will be eligible to register as a Health Care Assistant.

Learn more about [what health care support workers and health care assistants do and the required qualifications for the program](#).

**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](#).