



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

February 25, 2021

Sections

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

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 February 22, **4,437** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **264**
- New cases: **20**
- Currently in hospital: **34**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **12**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **105**

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 25, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 24, 2021

New order set: Tocilizumab infusion in critically ill COVID-19 patients

The BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee's (CTC) recently revised their clinical practice guidance for tocilizumab injection for the treatment of patients with severe COVID-19 who need life support measures. In response, the NH Therapeutics Committee has created an order set to assist with prescribing:

- OurNH: [Regional Order Set: Critically Ill Tocilizumab Infusion Orders \(COVID-19 only\)](#)
- NH physician website: [Regional Order Set: Critically Ill Tocilizumab Infusion Orders \(COVID-19 only\)](#)

For more information on the most current research on these therapies and others for management of COVID-19, see the up-to-date guidelines provided by the [BC CTC](#).

Compilation of COVID-19 pediatric resources

Child Health BC has provided a compilation of [COVID-19 Pediatric Resources](#) to highlight to health care providers what's available on the BCCDC website. The list includes clinical management guidelines, testing and infection control, and more.

The original gap between the first and second doses was 35 days. Where did the new 42-day gap come from? Isn't that too long?

Research shows that these vaccines are very good at stimulating your immune system: your first dose alone protects you for at least three full months. Because vaccine supplies are currently limited in BC, the time between first and second doses is being extended so that more people can get their first dose. This means we can protect more people.

The World Health Organization and the Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization support up to 42 days between doses, and other places are using even longer gaps -- up to three months.

For more information and evidence, see the BCCDC's [Public Health Statement on Deferral of Second Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine in BC](#).

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.

Monday, Feb 22

- 274 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments (18 primary care from Prince George, Smithers, Vancouver, Houston, Kitimat, Terrace, Prince Rupert, and Fort St. John, and 11 COVID-19 related)

Tuesday, Feb 23

- 209 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 19 primary care provider appointments (16 primary care from Prince George, Chetwynd, Fort Nelson, Houston, Skidegate, Prince Rupert, Wonowon, Smithers, Quesnel, and Fort St. John, and 3 COVID-19 related)

Wednesday, Feb 24

- 177 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 18 primary care provider appointments (11 primary care from Prince George, Kitimat, and Smithers, and 7 COVID-19 related)

Take the COVID-19 vaccine safety survey! We want your feedback whether you've had the vaccine or not

The **Canadian National Vaccine Safety (CANVAS) Network** is a national platform that monitors vaccine safety after vaccines are approved for use. Using a web-based survey, they collect information about whether health events occur after people receive COVID-19 vaccines.

CANVAS is also looking for people who have not yet had the COVID-19 vaccine to participate to measure the background level of health of the population as a whole. [Enrol in the study now!](#)

Questions?

- [More information on the survey](#)
- Email vecstudies@canvas-covid.ca

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

Reflecting on the overdose crisis in 2020

As the five-year anniversary of the province's illicit drug toxicity public health emergency approaches, [the BC Coroners Service reports](#) 2020 was B.C.'s worst year yet in terms of number of lives lost due to the effects of the toxic illicit drugs.

BC had 1,716 deaths due to illicit drugs in 2020, a 74% increase over 2019 (984). The number of deaths in 2020 equates to 4.7 preventable deaths every day, and is two deaths per day higher than in 2019 (2.7). This toxic drug supply has claimed more lives than motor vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides, and prescription-drug-related deaths combined.

In Northern Health we must continue working to keep people who use drugs safer. Resources to help staff, clients, and families stay safer:

- [Toward the Heart](#)
- [Stop Overdose BC \(Lifeguard app\)](#)

Other organizational news

Share with your patients: "Ask Kelty" mental health tool

Developed with the help of our FamilySmart parent peer support workers at the Kelty Centre, the ["Ask Kelty" mental health tool](#) offers suggestions about where to go and what to expect when looking for support options.

You can type your question into the tool, and find answers to commonly asked questions families have, such as:

- My child needs help now; what can I do?
- How do I find counselling?
- What can I do while my child is on a waitlist?
- I'm struggling to cope with my child's illness. Where can I get support?

BC Concurrent Disorders Virtual Conference is March 12

Join us for this free one-day virtual event:

- Friday March 12, 2021
- 8 a.m.-4 p.m. PST
- [Register now!](#)

Join the conversation on how to best help people with a dual diagnosis of severe mental illness and addiction, or a concurrent disorder, at the [B.C. Concurrent Disorders Conference](#).

Hosted by BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, the conference is open to and relevant for any health professionals treating either mental health or substance use patients.

Upcoming webinars for frontline clinicians: Informed Decision-Making (March 9) and Health Literacy (March 24)

Informed Decision-Making

This workshop is designed for frontline clinicians who are involved in diagnostic or treatment decisions. It focuses on skills needed to create successful partnerships that support patients in making decisions consistent with their desire to be involved, and the values that influence those decisions. The practical skills taught in this workshop are using Ask-Tell-Ask to give information and advice and using the BRAIN worksheet to support informed decision-making.

- **Date:** March 9, 2021
- **Time:** 12:30- 4:00 PM PST
- [Contact us](#) for more information about registration.

Health Literacy

This workshop provides training in fundamental concepts from the health literacy universal precautions and teaches core skills, including how to use resources, plain language, teach-back, and Ask-Tell-Ask. It can also be adapted into a package that may include webinars, online modules, and homework assignments.

- **Date:** March 24, 2021
- **Time:** 9:00 AM - 12:30 pm PST
- [Contact us](#) for more information on how to arrange for your group to take this course.

Upcoming Workshop: Person and Family Voice in Quality Improvement - March 17 and 23

Providing person-and family-centred health care means including the patient or client's voice in real and substantial ways. This workshop teaches how to think effectively about, plan for, and succeed at engaging people and families for practice improvement. Learners will draft a concrete plan for an engagement in their setting.

Learners should come with an engagement project in mind to explore through the webinar series (Examples of possible projects: wishing to engage seniors around clinic services or seeking to engage people with lived experience of drug use about community services).

- **Date:** March 17 & 23, 2021. Participants must commit to attending both sessions.
- **Time:** 12:00 pm PST
- [Contact us](#) for more information about registration.

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](#).