



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A twice-weekly update for medical staff*

**March 4, 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 March 3, **4,693** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **268**
- New cases: **44**
- Currently in hospital: **23**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **12**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **109**

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, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – March 3, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – March 3, 2021

## Revised guidelines on mask use for parents/essential visitors for admitted paediatric patients

Masking requirements for parents/essential visitors for admitted paediatric patients has been updated because of the extended amount of time they could be spending in the patient room. The revised requirements are as follows:

### Parents/essential visitors of admitted paediatric patients:

- Required to wear a medical mask when entering and moving around the facility.
- **Not required to wear a mask when in the patient room, unless asked to wear a mask by a health care professional.**
- Maintain 2 (two) metres distance from health care worker in the patient room, if possible.
- If assisting with care or it is not possible to maintain two metres distance, wear a medical mask when a health care worker is in the room.

Masking requirements for admitted labouring patients or their partners/essential visitors was also reviewed but no changes were made. Masking requirements remain as follows:

### Admitted labouring patients:

- Required to wear a medical mask when entering and moving around the facility, including during patient transport.
- Not required to wear a medical mask when in their room, unless asked to wear one by a health care professional.
- COVID-19 positive or suspect patients would be asked to wear a medical mask throughout labour, if possible, or as tolerated.

### Partners/Essential visitors:

- Required to wear a medical mask at all times while inside the health care facility, including when they are in the patient room.

This updated guidance has been added to the [Masking FAQ](#).

## Revised NH Regional Transfer Algorithm for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) With Guiding Principles: Version 4

This latest version of the [Transfer Algorithm and Guiding Principles](#) includes revisions of patient transfer pathways within each HSDA as well as additional clinical information to guide conferencing with COVID specialists.

## The Northern Health PPE FAQ and Masking FAQ have been updated

The following PPE documents have been updated. Changes in the documents have been highlighted.

- [Masking FAQ](#)
- [NH Regional FAQs on Using PPE](#)

## 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.

### Monday, March 1

- 212 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 22 primary care provider appointments (16 primary care from Prince George, Smithers, Hazelton, Masset, Houston, Prince Rupert, and Fort St. John, and 6 COVID-19 related)

### Tuesday, March 2

- 194 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 18 primary care provider appointments (11 primary care from Prince George, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Pouce Coupe, and Prince Rupert, and 7 COVID-19 related)

### Wednesday, March 3

- 205 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 21 primary care provider appointments (19 primary care from Prince George, Kitimat, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Chetwynd, Charlie Lake, and Smithers, and 2 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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### **New Treatment Approaches in the Opioid Crisis – RN/RPN Prescribing**

In September 2020, the Provincial Health Officer [issued an order](#) that allows nurses to prescribe medication to treat Opioid Use Disorder as part of the escalating response to the ongoing opioid overdose crisis.

Initially, this expanded scope for nurses is being applied to the medication Suboxone, with more treatments to be incorporated at a later date. Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses can be nominated by their Health Authority to receive this training and work with the expanded scope.

A cohort of Northern nurses are already going through the education process to be able to support patients in their region, with more opportunities for additional nurses to receive this designation coming soon.

If you or your team are interested in being at the forefront of these new advances to nursing scope, please reach out to Nick Rempel at [nick.rempel@northernhealth.ca](mailto:nick.rempel@northernhealth.ca) for more information!

## Other organizational news

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### **The Dr. Charles Jago Awards (Adapted for COVID) - Nominees**

To recognize our staff, we are introducing an easier, more condensed process where you can nominate your colleagues for the work they are doing by nominating them for a “The Dr. Charles Jago Awards (Adapted for COVID)” recognition award. This recognition will allow for more staff to be highlighted, and a safe way for us to congratulate our staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout March we will be highlighting staff & physicians who were nominated in the month of January in the Digests. Click the link to read the OurNH highlight on the nominees (more staff recognition to come!):

- [Dr. John Fine - Nominated for Empathy](#)
- [Jolene Pagurut - Nominated for Empathy](#)

### **Coding Services conducts self-assessment to ensure fit as strategic asset. Executive summary and final report now available.**

Coding Services collects clinical, demographic, and administrative information from a patient’s health record and assigns codes to diagnoses and interventions to translate clinical documentation into structured data.

This information is used to measure the performance of Canada’s health services and population health, as well as support strategic planning, research, performance and quality measures, policy development, and decision-making.

A Coding Quality Framework was recently developed to ensure its fit for use as a strategic asset. A data quality assessment was completed to measure the pre-framework state of coding quality against [Canadian Institute for Health Information's](#) five dimensions of quality:

- Accuracy and Reliability
- Relevance
- Timeliness and Punctuality
- Comparability and Coherence
- Accessibility and Clarity

The data quality assessment consisted of two activities: a self-assessment and interviews with key stakeholders of data collected by Coding Services.

View the [executive summary](#) of the Coding Services self-assessment and interviews, or [the full report](#).

Learn more about how Coding Services determines the quality of data it collects to ensure it is fit for use as a strategic resource. View the [Coding Quality Framework Overview](#).

For questions, contact [kristi.hovland@northernhealth.ca](mailto:kristi.hovland@northernhealth.ca).