



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

March 18, 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 March 17, **5,307** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **304**
- New cases: **36**
- Currently in hospital: **27**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **13**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **111**

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 17, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – March 17, 2021

Updates to age-range eligibility for COVID-19 immunizations in specific communities

Two Northern communities have updated age-range eligibility for COVID-19 immunizations.

In Prince Rupert, Everyone 18 and older is now invited to call and book their vaccines! Residents of Prince Rupert and nearby Port Edward can call 1-866-481-2175 to book an appointment for COVID-19 immunizations.

In Fort Nelson, residents age 50+ are invited to make an appointment with the NH Call Centre to help us fill open appointments March 22-26, 2021. Please note, this is a special, first-come first-serve circumstance – anybody aged 50+ who doesn't get an appointment for March, will have the opportunity to get vaccinated later, during Phase 3 of the immunization plan.

For more information, visit <https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan#nh-resources>.

Workforce COVID-19 Immunizations – NH region

Northern Health, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Officer is helping to facilitate the vaccination of workers in high risk locations such as industrial work settings as part of BC's province-wide immunization program.

Additional supply of COVID-19 vaccine in BC is allowing for complementary immunization programs targeting outbreak response in communities and high-risk industrial settings, while Phase 2 of BC's foundational immunization program continues to be implemented for seniors 80 years of age and older, and Indigenous people 65 and older.

Vaccination of workers in high risk industrial settings have been one of the key parts of BC's vaccination strategy, and was planned to start as additional vaccines were approved and become available. This will not impact the completion of Phase 2 immunizations, and the move to Phase 3 and 4 immunizations across the North.

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

Have you had COVID-19? You no longer need to wait 3 months before getting the vaccine

As of today, the 3 month-deferral of COVID-19 vaccination for people who have previously had COVID-19 is being cancelled. All individuals in eligible priority groups will now be offered COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of any recent history of COVID-19 infection, as long as any acute symptoms have resolved.

This change is being made in the context of improved vaccine supply, and of having already offered vaccine to the highest-priority populations and settings.

If you are a member of an eligible group under BC's COVID-19 Immunization Plan who was contacted by the Northern Health call centre after February 3 and then asked to defer your immunization based on a positive test for COVID-19, please phone again to book your vaccine appointment.

For more information, see the [full memo](#).

Communicable disease exposure follow-up services for physician will be transitioning to the Northern Health Virtual Clinic

As of April 1, follow-up services for communicable disease exposure for physicians will transition to the [Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#). Workplace Health and Safety will no longer provide this service.

In order for the nurse to create a chart for you to document your care and follow-up, you will need to provide some personal demographic information the first time you are contacted by the virtual clinic.

To set this up, you will need an extra couple of minutes and your BC Care Card information.

This step will only be required the first time the virtual clinic contacts you. Once created, your chart will be available for any subsequent calls.

COVID-19 Outbreak declared over at Acropolis Manor in Prince Rupert

Northern Health Medical Health Officers have **declared an end** to the COVID-19 outbreak at Acropolis Manor in Prince Rupert.

In total, 33 residents and 24 staff tested positive for COVID-19, and there have been 16 resident deaths associated with this outbreak. There have been no new cases since February 10, 2021.

Northern Health appreciates the patience and understanding of Acropolis Manor residents and families, and the dedication of staff and physicians who continued to provide excellent care during challenging circumstances. And NH again extends condolences to the families, caregivers and friends of those residents who have passed away.

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

COVID-19 Outbreak declared over at Dawson Creek & District Hospital – Medical Inpatient Unit

Northern Health Medical Health Officers have declared an end to a COVID-19 outbreak on the Medical Inpatient Unit at Dawson Creek & District Hospital.

In total since the outbreak was declared February 7, there were nine patient cases and five staff cases of COVID-19, as well as one death of a patient who had tested positive in association with the outbreak. There have been no new lab-confirmed cases related to the outbreak since February 12, 2021.

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

Cultural safety resources for vaccine clinics now available

NH's Indigenous Health department recently created new cultural safety resources for the COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Completed resources to date (they'll also be available on the [Immunization Planning and Implementation all-staff page](#)):

- Training video for staff: [Supporting Cultural Safety at NH COVID-19 Clinics](#) (7:34)
- [Take-home sheet for clients: I've received my COVID-19 vaccine – what should I expect? \(For Prince George only\)](#) (11-800-6126)
- [Take-home sheet for clients: I've received my COVID-19 vaccine – what should I expect? \(For NH region\)](#) (10-800-6126)
- [Tipsheet: Enhancing Culturally Safe Communication](#)

Working together to Mitigate Pulmonary Function Testing Waitlists

Requests for PFT Testing have significant waitlists in all areas of Northern Health, mostly due to cleaning procedures related to COVID-19. Mitigating the backlog requires collaboration on the part of ordering physicians to ensure that they are: filling out requisitions with a complete patient history, only ordering tests that would change patient management, ordering Spirometry (vs. full PFT) whenever possible, ordering tests marked "URGENT" under a strict set of conditions and ordering the test at the correct clinical site.

For more information, 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.

Sunday, March 14

- 119 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 10 primary care provider appointments (10 primary care from Terrace, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Dawson Creek, and Charlie Lake)

Monday, March 15

- 240 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 17 primary care provider appointments (17 primary care from Chetwynd, Prince Rupert, PG, Kitimat, Gitsegukla, Dawson Creek, Terrace, and Moberly Lake)

Tuesday, March 16

- 221 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 25 primary care provider appointments (17 primary care from Terrace, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Chetwynd, Telkwa, Hixon, Dawson Creek, Kitimat, and Hazelton, and 8 COVID-19 related)

Wednesday, March 17

- 187 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 28 primary care provider appointments (19 primary care from Kitimat, Houston, Terrace, Prince George, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Tachie Village, and Quesnel, 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](#).

Other organizational news

Kelowna General Hospital surgical centre repairs: Diversion of NH cardiac patients

Kelowna General Hospital (KGH) is undergoing HVAC repairs to the Interior Health Surgical Centre. This is currently limiting the capacity to receive cardiac transfers at KGH. From now until March 26, 2021, Northern Health cardiac patients requiring transfer should be diverted to other tertiary cardiac centres. This diversion plan has been made in collaboration with all other Health Authorities to assist with referrals from Northern Health.

Until March 26 2021, physicians are to direct cardiac transfers to St Paul's Hospital, Vancouver General Hospital, Royal Jubilee Hospital or Royal Columbian Hospital. As per the regular post-COVID-19 transfer process, physicians are required to call Patient Transfer Network (PTN) at **1-866-233-2337** when cardiac transfer is required. PTN will coordinate a physician conference as needed with the suggested tertiary cardiac site. The Northern Health Cardiac Triage Coordinator will continue to monitor cardiac transfers and work with PTN and the other Health Authorities to re-direct as needed.

For more information, see the [full memo](#).

APAU Discharges and Psychiatric follow-up

The Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment Unit (APAU) is a regional service for youth aged 12-18 years of age that require crisis stabilization and/or an inpatient admission.

At discharge the APAU team will provide recommendations for follow up to the care team, which could include ongoing therapy, regular blood work or medication monitoring by a physician, family therapy, parent support services, recreational community services, etc. APAU is responsible for all referrals for community services.

If determined by the inpatient team at APAU, 2-3 follow-up sessions can be offered depending on the severity of illness, and/or medication monitoring.

For more information, see the [full memo](#).

Happy Social Work Week, March 14-21, 2021!

The provincial government has declared March 14-20, 2021 Social Work Week in British Columbia. Social workers throughout BC plan activities that will highlight their essential contribution to the health and well-being of British Columbians. The theme for 2021 is "Social Work is Essential" (from <https://www.bcasw.org/benefits-of-membership/celebrating-social-work/>).

March is Pharmacy Appreciation Month!

March is Pharmacy Appreciation Month and the NH Pharmacy Department team would like to highlight some of the many services we provide throughout the region.

Our team consists of clinical and dispensary pharmacists, technicians, assistants, and administrative staff. We work collaboratively to ensure medications are effective, safe, and readily available for the patients we serve.

Apart from supplying medications to patients in a timely manner, we also ensure patients receive safe and effective therapy by:

- Performing best possible medication histories on patients
- Working with physicians and nurses to review medications
- Providing therapeutic drug monitoring by applying our pharmacokinetic knowledge
- Assisting patients in accessing medications in the community on discharge and communicating with the patient's community pharmacy on discharge
- Providing medication counselling
- Processing and filling medication orders
- Compounding "customized" medication orders specific to a patient's needs
- Managing numerous drug shortages to ensure, especially during COVID-19, that patients are receiving the medications they need

Achieving this exceptional performance would not be possible without the collaboration of physician, nursing, and other vital health care colleagues.

Microsoft Multi-Factor Authentication now required for offsite access to webmail, i-Site, and OurNH

Microsoft Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) has replaced Trusted Access as the new multi-factor authentication method for: Webmail, i-Site, OurNH.

MFA is only required when accessing these sites off NH networks (i.e. at home or on the go).

More MFA information, links, and set up guide can be found on [northernhealth.ca](https://www.northernhealth.ca). ***In the main menu, For Health Professionals > IT Support*** (<https://www.northernhealth.ca/for-health-professionals/it-support>)

How to setup Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) for the first time:

- Download the Microsoft Authenticator app to your mobile device
 - [iOS users](#)
 - [Android users](#)
- Go to [HealthBC on Microsoft](#)
- Follow instructions in the [step-by-step MFA setup guide](#)

If you've already set up MFA with the Microsoft Authenticator app, you don't need to set it up again. If MFA is not working (e.g., if you got a new phone), please contact the [ITS service desk](#) and ask for your Microsoft MFA to be reset.