



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**May 4, 2021**

## **Clinical guidelines**

---

### **BC CTC guidance for vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)**

In an effort to best protect British Columbians, the BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee and medical experts have put together four documents for physicians and other health care providers involved in patient care post-vaccination.

These documents (Care Pathway, Primary Care Outpatient Assessment, Key Messages Summary, and a VITT/TTS Poster) aim to educate and support physicians and facilitate rapid diagnosis and treatment of VITT/TTS.

View the guidance documents [here](#).

### **The Northern Health Virtual Clinic is now being advertised across the Northern Health region**

The Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic provides primary and community care services by phone or through a video call. The COVID-19 Online Clinic is now the Northern Health Virtual Clinic, and the phone number remains the same.

The Virtual Clinic will provide a supplemental layer of service to Northern Health's family physicians, who remain the cornerstone of our regional health care system. This service is for after-hours care when health centres or primary care homes are closed, or for patients who don't have a primary care provider. Patients are encouraged to contact their family doctor or nurse practitioner first to see when they can get an appointment.

#### **Patients can call the Virtual Clinic to access a family doctor or nurse practitioner:**

- Phone: [1-844-645-7811](tel:1-844-645-7811)
- Hours: 10 am to 10 pm daily (including weekends and statutory holidays)

#### **Purpose**

- The goal of the clinic is to provide culturally safe primary and community care services for unattached or vulnerable patients, or where access to primary care is limited due to geography, business hours or seasonal weather.

- The Northern Health Virtual Clinic will help support rural health care providers with access to broader health care resources, including support in day-to-day patient care as well as access to specialists for consultation when needed.
- The clinic will continue to provide screening, assessment, and coordination of testing for COVID-19.
- The Northern Health Virtual Clinic is one part of the overarching [Northern Health enhanced access to primary and specialist care strategy](#).
- The clinic aims to provide accessible and same-day health care service, using encrypted technology to ensure a secure experience.

For more information, please see this [letter](#) or visit the [Virtual Clinic webpage](#)

## Change in interpretation criteria on Nova StatStrip Lactate point-of-care instrument

Interpretation ranges for Fetal Scalp Lactate measurements have changed for the Nova StatStrip Lactate meter. This is in support of a PHSA recommendation to accommodate the fluctuating change in the measurement bias seen with this meter.

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

## 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 May 3, **7,223** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **189**
- New cases: **23**
- Currently in hospital: **15**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **8**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **140**

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](#) – May 3, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – April 28, 2021

## COVID-19 In-house testing update

Northern Health (NH) Laboratory Services has validated an additional PCR platform to augment in-house respiratory testing. With the addition of the Panther Fusion® technology at UHNBC, (along with existing platforms BioFire® and GeneXpert®) our laboratories at Fort St. John, Mills Memorial Hospital, and UHNBC will be able to meet all of the current demand for COVID-19 testing in northern BC. Additional information can be found in the [memo](#).

## Public Health Agency of Canada presents a COVID-19 Vaccines Webinar for Health Care Providers

This moderated, live webinar includes a presentation and discussion on the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on extended dose intervals and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines, with live Q&A to inform health care and vaccine providers. This webinar is hosted by the National Collaborating Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCCID), in collaboration with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

### The presentation will:

- Provide a brief overview of NACI guidance in the context of public health decision making
- Describe the efficacy and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of one or two doses
- Discuss the impacts of extended dose intervals of COVID-19 vaccines
- Present the NACI recommendations on extended dose intervals

### English Session:

- Wednesday, May 5, 2021
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm EDT
- Moderator: April Killikelly, PhD, PHAC
- Participants: Dr. Robyn Harrison, NACI; Dr. Jesse Papenburg, NACI; Dr. Bryna Warshawsky, PHAC; Austin Nam, PhD, PHAC; and Beate Sander, PhD, NACI

To attend the webinar, [register here](#).

Please note, due to time limitations, not all questions can be answered. **The webinars will be recorded and available on the NCCID website immediately following each event.**

For any registration difficulties, please contact NCCID: [nccid@umanitoba.ca](mailto:nccid@umanitoba.ca). Public Health Agency of Canada COVID-19 vaccine webinars can be found at [Canada.ca](https://Canada.ca) and at [NCCID](https://NCCID.ca).

## New Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 22: 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](#) provides an update on the new travel restrictions for BC, effective April 23, 2021, and information on the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

## 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, April 26

- 262 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 37 primary care provider appointments (21 primary care from Prince George, Telkwa, Quesnel, Fort St. John, Arras, Terrace, Thornhill, and Mackenzie, and 16 COVID-19 related)

### Tuesday, April 27

- 260 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 23 primary care provider appointments (21 primary care from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Smithers, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Kitimat, Telkwa, and Fort Nelson and 2 COVID-19 related)

### Wednesday, April 28

- 221 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 24 primary care provider appointments (21 primary care from Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Fraser, Terrace, Smithers, and Quesnel, and 3 COVID-19 related)

### Thursday, April 29

- 241 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 24 primary care provider appointments (24 primary care from Prince Rupert, Kitimat, Fort St. John, Terrace, Moberly Lake, Quesnel, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Thornhill, Smithers, Rose Prairie, and Burns Lake, and 0 COVID-19 related)

### Friday, April 30

- 164 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 32 primary care provider appointments (16 primary care from Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Terrace, Vanderhoof, Kitimat, Quesnel, Dawson Creek, and Merritt, and 16 COVID-19 related)

### Saturday, May 1

- 116 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 27 primary care provider appointments (25 primary care from Prince Rupert, Prince George, Terrace, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Granisle, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Smithers, Thornhill, and Fort St. James, and 2 COVID-19 related)

### Sunday, May 2

- 101 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 16 primary care provider appointments (10 primary care from Quesnel, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kitimat, Granisle, and Terrace, and 6 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

### Statistics on BC's illicit drug toxicity deaths for March 2021 now available

On April 29, the BC Coroners Service released a [report on the illicit drug toxicity deaths for March 2021](#).

#### Summary:

- March 2021 (N=158) saw a 41% increase in the number of deaths from March 2020 (N=112).
- This is approximately the same as February 2021
- NH has the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province for 2021, with a rate of 57 deaths per 100,000 individuals

#### Northern Health Summary

NH saw 12 illicit drug toxicity deaths in March (40 deaths per 100,000 individuals), which is the highest rate in BC for March 2021

- NW has seen 10 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 52.6 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the fifth highest in the province.
  - There were two deaths in March
- NI has seen 20 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 54.2 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the third highest rate in BC.
  - There were seven deaths in March
  - In 2021, the City of Prince George reported 16 deaths
- NE has seen 11 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 66.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the highest rate in BC.
  - There were three deaths in March

For additional information on illicit drug toxicity deaths in BC, see the BC Coroners Service website at [Statistical Reports on Deaths in British Columbia](#).

## Other organizational news

---

### Northern Health Medical Advisory Committee Working Group focussed on cultural safety and humility

The Northern Health Medical Advisory Committee (NHMAC) has convened a Working Group to focus on cultural safety and humility. Northern Health recently developed a Cultural Safety Framework Implementation Plan and NHMAC has dedicated leadership efforts to support this important work.

The NHMAC Working Group is currently made up of medical staff and leaders from across the region, as well as Northern Health's VP of Indigenous Health and the NHMAC Chair. Together, this group is co-creating a three-part action plan, advising the organization on the role of NHMAC in implementing the cultural safety framework and the steps we need to take. This will include how to incorporate cultural safety in the processes and structures that support medical staff working in Northern Health.

### Nursing Week Resiliency ReBoot #weanswerthecall

Get ready, National Nursing Week is going to look wonderfully different this year! Nursing Week is May 10-16, 2021.

Because we value you, because we appreciate you, because "thank you's and donuts" are not enough this year – we are very excited to gift you the *Nursing Week Resiliency ReBoot* remote experience! Anyone can register for these sessions – you don't need to be a nurse.

For more information on how to register, see the OurNH news [feed post](#).

In addition, the Canadian Nurses Association is hosting an event with their CEO, Michael Villeneuve on May 10 at 3:00 pm. See the [poster](#) for more information and how to register.

We encourage you to print and post the [Canadian Nurses Association posters](#) in anticipation of Nursing Week.

### Medication Reconciliation Reminder – Learn more about the Required Organizational Practice and resources available

Required Organizational Practices (ROPs) are evidence-informed practices addressing high-priority areas that are essential and that Northern Health must have in place to enhance patient safety and minimize risk.

Participation and achievement of national standards of care gives reassurance to the public, patients and families, caregivers, and the entire organization that Northern Health is providing high-quality services.

**Medication reconciliation is conducted in partnership with clients and families to communicate accurate and complete information about medications across care transitions.**

Medication reconciliation is a powerful strategy to prevent serious patient harm. In Northern Health, medication reconciliation is a three-step process:

1. **Generate a Best Possible Medication History (BPMH)** by interviewing the patient, family/caregivers, and consulting at least one other source of information (e.g., Pharmanet). Once generated, the BPMH follows the client and is an important reference tool for reconciling medications at transfer and discharge.
2. **Verify and reconcile the differences** to create admission or other medication orders (on transfer or discharge).
3. **Document and communicate** resulting changes to the patient, family/caregiver, and to the next provider of care.

For more information on medical reconciliation, please view the [Medication Reconciliation](#) page on OurNH. For information on all ROPS see the [ROP Handbook](#).

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

To recognize our staff, we are introducing an easier, more condensed process where you can acknowledge 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 is a safe way for us to congratulate our staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the next few months, we will be highlighting staff and physicians who were nominated. Click the link to read the OurNH highlight on the nominees (more staff recognition to come!):

- [Philippa Burgin – Nominated for Empathy, Respect, Collaboration, and Innovation](#)
- [Sherry Leepart – Nominated for Empathy, Respect, Collaboration, and Innovation](#)

### **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](#).