



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

June 01, 2021

Clinical guidelines

Information about a new MSK X-ray ordering Quality Improvement project at UHNBC

A working group was recently established at UHNBC in an effort to standardize the process of plain x-ray ordering for all acute and chronic MSK conditions. The project is led by Dr. Anthony Costa (Orthopaedic Surgeon, UHNBC), and is supported through the Specialist Services Committee (SSC) Physician Quality Improvement Initiative (PQI).

Through establishment of the above working group, a set of plain x-ray ordering guidelines for all acute and chronic MSK conditions was created.

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

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 31, **7,683** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **117**
- New cases: **10**
- Currently in hospital: **10**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **7**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **153**

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 31, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – May 26, 2021

B.C. launches restart plan to safely bring people back together

With more than 60% of adults vaccinated with their first dose and COVID-19 case counts and hospitalizations steadily declining, British Columbia is moving forward with the cautious first step of a four-step plan for a careful and safe restart.

The plan to bring B.C. back together will be a slow and gradual return to a more normal life, with safety and health protocols such as mask wearing and physical distancing remaining in place and mandatory during the initial two steps of the plan.

The four-step plan was designed based on data and guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer (PHO). Progressing through the steps will be measured by the number of adults vaccinated, COVID-19 case counts, and hospitalizations and deaths, taking into account clusters and outbreaks. While there are approximate dates, the plan will be guided by data, not dates, and will not proceed to the next step until it is safe to do so based on guidance from public health and the latest available data.

As of May 25, we entered step 1 of the plan with the guidelines as follows:

- 60% of adult population with Dose 1
- COVID-19 cases stable, hospitalizations stable
 - Maximum of five visitors or one household allowed for indoor personal gatherings
 - Maximum of 10 people for outdoor personal gatherings
 - Maximum of 10 people for seated indoor organized gatherings with safety protocols
 - Maximum of 50 people for seated outdoor organized gatherings with safety protocols
 - Recreational travel only within travel region (travel restrictions extended)
 - Indoor and outdoor dining for up to six people with safety protocols
 - Resume outdoor sports (games) with no spectators, low-intensity fitness with safety protocols
 - Start gradual return to workplaces
 - Provincewide mask mandate, business safety protocols, and physical distancing measures remain in place
 - Return of indoor in-person faith-based gatherings (reduced capacity) based on consultation with public health

For more information, and future steps, see the [full BC restart plan](#).

May 28, 2021: BCCDC Website Updates/Changes Daily Summary

AEFI Reporting Criteria Summary

A new [Summary of AEFI Reporting Criteria for COVID-19 Vaccination for older children, adolescents and adults](#) was added to the [Health Professionals COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit](#) under the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) tab.

Isolation requests for rural, remote, and First Nations communities process change

As of June 1, 2021, the process for [isolation support requests](#) for those living in rural, remote and First Nations community will revert to the original processes outlined in the [rural, remote and First Nations COVID-19 response framework](#) (OurNH link).

Health Emergency Management BC (HEMBC) will resume the role as liaison between NH and external partners for the support process and receive requests for people outside of First Nations communities. Isolation support requests should be sent to HEMBC@northernhealth.ca.

For those belonging to a First Nations community, please forward your isolation support request to FNHA covid19.northern@fnha.ca and/or First Nations Health Benefits at transportation@fnha.ca.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this change, please contact your HEMBC team at HEMBC@northernhealth.ca.

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, May 24

- 73 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 20 primary care provider appointments (20 primary care from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Charlie Lake, Fort St. John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, and Terrace, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Tuesday, May 25

- 154 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments (29 primary care from Chetwynd, Fort St. James, Dawson Creek, Kitwanga, Nelson, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Fort St. John, Taylor, Telkwa, and Prince Rupert, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Wednesday, May 26

- 138 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments (32 primary care from Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Hudson's Hope, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Quesnel, and Taylor, and 9 COVID-19 related)

Thursday, May 27

- 140 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 27 primary care provider appointments (27 primary care from Taylor, Prince George, Mackenzie, Chetwynd, Terrace, Burns Lake, Prince Rupert, Houston, Baytree, Kitimat, Dawson Creek, Calgary, Terrace, Vanderhoof, and Fort St. John, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Friday, May 28

- 143 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments (29 primary care from Smithers, Prince George, Terrace, Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Calgary, Burns Lake, Prince Rupert, Mackenzie, Kitwanga, Thornhill, and Dawson Creek, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Saturday, May 29

- 85 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 12 primary care provider appointments (12 primary care from Terrace, Chetwynd, Smithers, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, and Hazelton, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Sunday, May 30

- 52 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 13 primary care provider appointments (13 primary care from Terrace, Dawson Creek, Montenev, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Moricetown, and Prince George, and 0 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**Illicit drug toxicity deaths for April 2021 now available (BC Coroners Report – released April 30)**

On April 30, the BC Coroners Service released a [report on the illicit drug toxicity deaths for April 2021](#).

Summary:

- April 2021 (N=176) saw a 43% increase in the number of deaths from April 2020 (N=123).
- This has been the highest number of suspected deaths ever recorded in the month of April – it equates to approximately 5.9 deaths per day.
- In 2021, NH has had the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 50 deaths per 100,000 individuals. The 2021 provincial rate is 39 deaths per 100,000.

Northern Health Summary

- **Northern Health** saw 7 illicit drug toxicity deaths in April (~30 deaths per 100,000 individuals).
- **The Northwest** has seen 13 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 51.3 deaths per 100,000 individuals. The fourth highest rate in the province.
 - There were 3 deaths in April
 - Smithers LHA has the fifth highest rate of 96.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals (n=6), in 2021
 - Terrace LHA has the eighth highest rate of 70.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals (n=5), in 2021
- **The Northern Interior** has seen 21 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 42.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals. The seventh highest rate in the province.
 - There was 1 death in April
- **The Northeast** has seen 14 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 63.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals. The second highest rate in the province.
 - There were 3 deaths in April
 - Peace River South LHA has the third highest rate of 106.4 deaths per 100,000 individuals (n=9), in 2021

For more information, see the BC Coroners Service report: [Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in BC \(January 1, 2011 – April 30, 2021\)](#).

Other organizational news**Interested in starting or continuing a career in health care? Peace River Regional District scholarships now open! Deadline July 31, 2021**

The Peace River Regional District, in partnership with Northern Health's Education Department, offers significant funds to support local residents to either begin or continue a career in health care.

If you reside in one of the following areas below, you may be eligible to apply.

- Fort St. John
- Hudson Hope
- Chetwynd
- Tumbler Ridge
- Dawson Creek
- Fort Nelson

For more information, visit the [Peace River Regional District scholarships page](#).

For questions, please contact education@northernhealth.ca.

Project Management Office up and running for DCDH

Did you know that the new project management office for DCDH used to be a cafeteria? You'd never know by looking at it!

This office within the Dawson Creek and District Hospital has been set up as a place for our project team to work on everything to do with the redevelopment for DCDH. The door to the project management office is always open for the staff of DCDH to grab a coffee and have a chat with the project team about what's going on and provide any feedback they may have.

To see the full story, as well as the full renovation process, [visit the DCDH page on Let's Talk](#).

Calling for contributors! New research newsletter

Are you passionate about sharing research knowledge?

We are creating a new research newsletter to highlight knowledge translation and research activities being supported or developed in Northern Health or in collaboration with our partners. It will also include useful information and educational content for researchers and various stakeholders.

Towards that end, we are building a team of content contributors. As a content contributor, you will have the opportunity to support the research efforts at Northern Health and foster meaningful engagements and connections.

If you would like to be a contributor, **please reply by Friday June 11** to Marcelo Bravo, Lead, Patient-Oriented Research and KT Capacity Building, Research, Evaluation and Analytics at Marcelo.Bravo@northernhealth.ca.

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](#).