



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

July 20, 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

Visit the new [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) from the BCCDC, to see graphs, maps, and data showing COVID-19 case rates, test positivity and vaccination coverage by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

As of July 19, **7,811** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **33**
- New cases: **0**
- Currently in hospital: **2**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **2**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **157**

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.

- [BC COVID-19 pandemic update](#) – July 19, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – July 14, 2021

Sign up to take the COVID-19 vaccine safety survey!

The Canadian National Vaccine Safety (CANVAS) Network is a national platform that monitors vaccine safety after vaccines are approved for use. We are monitoring the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines in Canada and we need YOUR help.

Using a web-based survey we will collect information about whether or not health events occur after receiving COVID-19 vaccines. We will also collect health events from people who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine.

[Sign up to take the survey!](#)

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, July 12

- 49 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Fort St. John, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Hudson's Hope, Mackenzie, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Hazelton, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers, Selkirk, Telkwa, Thornhill, and Williams Lake

Tuesday, July 13

- 50 nursing assessments
- 32 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Quesnel, Chetwynd, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Kitimat, Smithers, Charlie Lake, and Taylor

Wednesday, July 14

- 53 nursing assessments
- 35 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Terrace, Hudson's Hope, Taylor, Chetwynd, Houston, Prince Rupert, Campbell River, Prince George, Tumbler Ridge, Drydon (On), Charlie Lake, Thornhill, Fort St. John, Smithers, and Sidney Mines

Thursday, July 15

- 34 nursing assessments
- 38 primary care provider appointments from Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Thornhill, Yorkton, Chetwynd, Kitimat, Nanaimo, Terrace, and Dawson Creek

Friday, July 16

- 42 nursing assessments
- 36 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Endako, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Prince George, Mackenzie, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Atlin, Houston, and Smithers

Saturday, July 17

- 31 nursing assessments
- 18 primary care provider appointments from Fort St. John, Prince George, Quesnel, Dawson Creek, 100 Mile House, Terrace, Hudson's Hope, Telkwa, Smithers, and Medicine Hat

Sunday, July 18

- 19 nursing assessments
- 19 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Terrace, Bonanza, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Burns Lake, and Fort Nelson

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 Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **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

Extreme Heat, Wildfire and Harm Reduction

British Columbia is experiencing above average temperatures and with these hot, dry conditions we have witnessed the development of several wildfires across the province. Both extreme heat and wildfires pose significant health risks to community members.

Including:

- People who use substances
- People who are unstably housed or homeless
- Individuals with low socioeconomic status and limited supports

Supporting harm reduction and overdose prevention in community

Harm Reduction (HR) messaging regarding wildfire and high temperature risks encourage individuals stay indoors, keep hydrated and limit outside exposure to heat and smoke. Although well intended this messaging can pose an increased risk for overdose deaths and

limit access to HR supplies. When people are unable to access regular supports due to heat and smoke it can lead to isolation and using drugs alone. Furthermore, people who use stimulants and illicit benzodiazepines are at a greater risk for heat related illness due to the effects these substances have on body temperatureⁱ.

Recommendations

- NH sites and community partners that distribute HR supplies should ensure their HR supplies are well stocked including naloxone in anticipation of potential courier route closures or shipping delays due to wildfire activity
- Distribute quantities as requested by the clients, do not limit supplies including naloxone as many peers supply others
- Those offering outreach services may wish to extend hours or increase outreach to individuals at risk during this time
- Outreach services should distribute HR supplies, naloxone as well as clean drinking water, electrolyte replacement, sunscreen, food and bowls for watering pets
- Offer episodic overdose prevention service (e-OPS) in community in an outreach model
- NH staff and community partners who identify clients with limited lung function or respiratory issues should check in on them regularly and connect clients with a primary care provider with any changes in the health conditions
- Link individuals to overdose prevention apps including [Life Guard App](#) or [BeSafe App](#)
- Suggest peers connect with the [National Overdose Response Line](#) (NORS) for additional support over the phone
- Work with local community action team (CAT) tables, municipalities, community groups, first nation communities and peer organizations to assess and understand specific community needs and barriers that exist due to changing situations
- Connect and support peer organizations to disseminate health related messaging to people who use drugs and those who are unhoused

Harm reduction messaging

- Avoid using alone, use in the presence of others
- If you plan on using in an outdoor space, use with a buddy and pick a shady location that remains out of the sun at all times of the day
- Get trained on overdose recognition and response, carry a naloxone kit
- Access eOPS/OPS services in your community, where available
- Avoid mixing substances including alcohol, it can increase your risk of overdose and dehydration during periods of extreme heat
- If you use stimulants be aware that it may be harder to cool yourself, have a heat plan, stay hydrated, take a cold shower or access outdoor water parks to cool off
- Look after each other, in particular people who are elderly and have chronic health conditions or those who use alone
- If you choose to use alone download and use the [Life Guard App](#) or [BeSafe App](#) on your phone, these apps can be used to rescue you in case of overdose

- Suggest peers connect with [National Overdose Response Line](#) (NORS) for additional support over the phone
- Avoid strenuous outdoor activity during the hottest times of the day or when wildfire smoke is present in community
- Seek shade and shelter whenever possible but ensure someone knows where you are especially if you plan on using drugs
- Stay hydrated, access cooling centers, water stations, outreach teams or non – profits who may have bottled water and food for distribution
- Create a safety plan in case of an evacuation alert or order you can self register online [here](#) for support services
- If you do not have a home, connect with your local shelter or community support service who can assist you in registering

Other organizational news

NEW Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 25: Information for residents and families

The long-term care task group is producing updates once a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[Issue 25](#) of the long-term care and assisted living digest is now available. This issue provides an update on changes to long-term care and assisted living visitor policies effective July 19, 2021, information about volunteers in facilities, and the re-opening plan for adult day programs.

Dragon Medical One Speech Recognition Training

We are pleased to offer remote Dragon Medical One (DMO) training by experts from Clinical AI Solutions, Inc. (CAIS), sponsored by Nuance Corporation. In 50 minutes, you will learn DMO time saving tips that will increase documentation efficiencies and productivity.

Agenda

- Observe your workflow
- Optimize microphone options and settings
- Learn helpful and powerful voice enabled commands
- Correct words properly and efficiently
- Easily Add/train words in the vocabulary
- Create meaningful Auto-Text
- Create time saving Step-by-Step commands

Training is available for both new and existing DMO users.

Remote Sessions:

Microsoft Teams will be used to conduct the interactive remote sessions at your convenience and your desired location. Please sign on to DMO and your EMR prior to joining the session. If using a PowerMic, when joining Microsoft Teams, use a speakerphone in lieu of the computer audio. If using PowerMic Mobile, when joining Microsoft Teams, use the computer audio in lieu of a speakerphone.

Date of Sessions:

August 10 – August 13, 2021

Registration:

[Click here to schedule](#) and/or view the attached flyer to register for your desired session quickly and easily.

Space is limited, and is first-come, first served. If there are no more training sessions available from CAIS, you can submit a request for DMO training to the Service Desk 1-888-558-4357 or servicedesk@northernhealth.ca and receive training from the NH training team.

Prescriber Participation in the Northern Health Virtual Substance Use Stream

Northern Health would like to invite physicians and nurse practitioners to indicate their interest in participating in the delivery of prescriber services through the Northern Health Virtual Substance Use Stream. This service is seeking prescribers who are comfortable with virtual OAT prescribing and/or Pharmaceutical Alternatives prescribing. For more information on how to apply, review the [expression of interest](#).

Emergency preparedness planning

With the recent heatwave, and current wildfire and flood situations, we have put together [resource lists](#) to help keep important information at hand.

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](#).

ⁱ Cusack L, de Crespigny C, Athanasos P: Heatwaves and their impact on people with alcohol, drug and mental health conditions: a discussion paper on clinical practice considerations. J Adv Nurs 2011, 67(4):915-922.