



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

July 27, 2021

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New BCCDC resource: immunosuppressive therapies and timing of COVID-19 vaccination

The [Immunosuppressive Therapies and Timing of COVID-19 Vaccination](#) resource (found on the [COVID-19 vaccination toolkit for health professional](#) webpage, under: “Special Patient Populations”) summarizes guidance regarding the timing of COVID-19 vaccination and immunosuppressive treatments/medications from five of the COVID-19 clinical immunization guidelines for special patient populations. These include: people with autoimmune neuromuscular disorders, people with autoimmune rheumatic disease, people with hematological malignancy, people with inflammatory bowel disease, and people with solid cancers. It’s intended to provide information to frontline immunizers regarding when to provide COVID-19 vaccination and when to direct individuals to speak with their healthcare team prior to vaccination.

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 26, **7,821** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **14**
- New cases: **2**
- Currently in hospital: **2**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **4**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **158**

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 26, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – July 21, 2021

Supporting people experiencing vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme heat and wildfires

As we move forward with British Columbia's re-opening plan, elected officials and local governments can continue to help protect vulnerable people. The suggestions below can be adopted or adapted to suit local circumstances, as many vulnerabilities and access barriers highlighted in this report persist outside of the context of COVID-19.

Supportive Strategies for Municipalities

- NH recommends priority be given to continuance of social services, including community emergency food provision (i.e., food banks, soup kitchens)
- Local governments are to support social agencies that are providing essential services (i.e., harm reduction services, communal shelters).
- For many, the ability to access a cool, indoor safe space is limited during periods of extreme heat and smoke. Municipalities can offer people who lack secure housing cooling centers and access to sheltered spaces and clean drinking water. Due to the ongoing risk of COVID-19 please follow [Guidance for Community Cooling Centers during B.C.'s Restart Plan](#).
- To maintain hand hygiene recommendations and prevention of heat related illness during periods of extreme heat, consider the following:
 - Provide/extend access to public washrooms in parks and green spaces
 - Create 24/7 public bathroom facilities that are safe and accessible for all community members
 - Deploy portable water stations and extend access to water parks and fountains
 - Consider installing additional temporary handwashing stations and public washrooms where possible
 - Post signs directing people to handwashing stations, encourage people to practice frequent [hand hygiene](#).
 - Advocate that local utility companies do not halt or cancel service during periods of extreme heat.

- Allow people to shelter in parks with the necessary sanitary and hygiene facilities. Allow food distribution from community agencies.
- Allow people sheltering outside to leave belongings and tents in place during the day. Forced relocation can lead to spread of COVID-19.
- Train municipality staff, bylaw and partner agencies on the symptoms of heat related illness and overdose.
- Support staff to carry [Take Home Naloxone](#) kits. Provide education on the [LifeGuard](#) and [BeSafe App](#) to municipal staff.
- Continue to support NH and BC Housing to maintain self-isolation spaces for people who are precariously housed in order to adhere to COVID-19 public health guidelines. Ensure that these spaces offer a variety of nutritious foods.
- Provide access to credible and up-to-date information. Display information in public spaces such as parks and transit stops.
 - [COVID-19 Resources for NH Staff and Community Partners Working with Populations who Experience Vulnerabilities](#)
 - Create wildfire risks communication plans that include reaching marginalized groups
 - Connect with local non-profits, local first nations, peer organizations and housing sites to strategize relocation plans in the event of evacuation
 - Review plans to develop emergency lodging see: Local Government Toolkit to Plan and Develop Emergency Lodging
- Support equitable access to personal protective equipment (PPE) for people experiencing vulnerabilities.

For additional information about NH's recommendations for Supporting People Experiencing Vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Extreme Heat and Wildfires, please follow-up directly with your local [Healthy Communities \(Settings\)](#) Advisor.

Post COVID-19 care supports for health care providers

The Provincial Health Services Agency (PHSA) is leading the development of a Post Covid-19 Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network (PC-ICCN). The PC-ICCN refers to a provincial network focused on patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and have ongoing care needs. It is comprised of:

- [Post COVID-19 recovery clinics](#) providing care and coordination to specialists through an interdisciplinary care
- A provincial registry to capture key clinical information
- Guidance and education to health care providers
- Research activities

PHSA has committed more than \$1.8M to support PC-ICCN infrastructure which will help to stabilize and expand the reach of post-COVID-19 recovery care. Resources available include:

- [Real Time Virtual Support](#) is now linked to the St. Paul's Hospital Clinic for rural and remote physicians.
- [Provincial RACE](#) for expert advice.
- [Project ECHO](#) for post COVID-19 recovery care is available on monthly basis. This is a free virtual learning community that gives health care providers the knowledge

and support needed to care for patients experiencing symptoms after a COVID-19 infection.

- [Patient videos and information](#) are now uploaded and available online.

A provincial triage team is in development to support health authorities that do not have a post COVID-19 recovery clinic. This team is expected to go live the week of August 16, at which point real time virtual support will be redirected to this team to collect referrals, register them in the system, and forward the patient information to the post COVID-19 recovery clinic with the shortest waitlist so that they can set up a virtual visit.

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 19

- 65 nursing assessments
- 34 primary care provider appointments from Terrace, Chetwynd, Moberly Lake, Fort St. John, Prince George, Kitwanga, Prince Rupert, Haisla, New Aiyansh, Sidney Mines, Vernon, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, and Nanoose Bay

Tuesday, July 20

- 56 nursing assessments
- 23 primary care provider appointments from Mackenzie, Kitimat, New Aiyansh, Prince George, Quesnel, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Kincolith, Peace River District, Smithers, Thornhill, and Vanderhoof

Wednesday, July 21

- 52 nursing assessments
- 33 primary care provider appointments from Kitimat, Mackenzie, Charlie Lake, Prince Rupert, Chetwynd, Kitwanga, Dawson Creek, Hudson's Hope, Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, and Fort St John

Thursday, July 22

- 52 nursing assessments
- 33 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Taylor, Terrace, Chetwynd, Mackenzie, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Dawson Creek, Muncho Lake, Abbotsford, Atlin, Moberley Lake, Prince Rupert, and Smithers

Friday, July 23

- 46 nursing assessments
- 33 primary care provider appointments from Quesnel, Fort St. John, Chetwynd, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, Kitimat, Charlie Lake, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Mackenzie, Terrace, Muncho Lake, and Moberley Lake

Saturday, July 24

- 24 nursing assessments
- 20 primary care provider appointments from Mackenzie, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Terrace, Thornhill, Smithers, Queen Charlotte, Dawson Creek, and Langley

Sunday, July 25

- 32 nursing assessments
- 11 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Prince George, Fort St. John, Mackenzie, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Terrace, Quesnel, and Chetwynd

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](#).

Other organizational news

Physician highlight

The [NH Stories site](#) is a great place to read stories about NH physicians, staff, events, insights, and much more! As a highlight of some of the work being done by NH physicians, don't hesitate to read about [Dr. Terri Aldred](#) of Prince George, has dedicated her life and career to healing Indigenous peoples in Northern communities.

If you have a story to tell, or have a colleague you'd like to spotlight, please reach out to Kim Matheson at kimberly.matheson@northernhealth.ca.

You're invited to participate in the Regional Holter Monitor Project

The Northern Health Cardiac Program is initiating a regional Holter Monitor project to help identify existing gaps in Holter Monitor service within Northern Health for the purpose of decision support and planning. By identifying gaps in current system design and functioning, collaboration with stakeholders such as healthcare providers is a key to inform efforts that drive systems change and quality improvement initiatives. A Master's student with the Northern Health Informatics Department is supporting this project and will be conducting interview meetings with all stakeholders.

Some of the key stakeholders for this project are family physicians and general practitioners, we are hoping to connect with medical staff across the Northern Health region interested to participate in this project.

- Timeframe: July 27 – August 6
- Estimated time of interview: 45 – 60 minutes
- Reimbursement: All physicians who participate will be compensated

If you are interested to participate in this project or if you need any further information regarding the regional Holter project, please contact *Yaser Ahmed, Regional Lead, Chronic Disease Strategic Initiatives, Cardiac & Stroke* by email at: yaser.ahmed@northernhealth.ca

New regional pulmonary diagnostics requisition for all sites and facilities

NHA Respiratory Services is transitioning to a standardized, regional, Pulmonary Diagnostics Requisition for all Sites and Facilities.

A regionalized approach will allow:

- All sites and facilities to order all pulmonary diagnostic tests on one requisition.
- All available pulmonary diagnostic outpatient tests and services are outlined per site.
- This requisition meets all Diagnostic Accreditation Program requirements.
- Annual information updates

We appreciate your transition to this new regional requisition. All previous site-specific requisitions for pulmonary diagnostics will remain in effect for the next 90 days to support this change over.

The NHA **pulmonary diagnostics requisition** can be accessed via:

- [OurNH: Respiratory Services page](#) (DocuSource reference: #10-123-5003)
- [Northern Health Physicians: Respiratory services page](#)

Important lab update to outpatient requisition

Historically, Lipid testing has been performed on fasting specimens. This is no longer the case.

New Information

To align with current provincial standards, the NH standard outpatient requisition, DocumentSource #10-200-5005, has been updated to state that fasting is not required for Lipid testing unless specifically requested by a Physician in select circumstances (e.g., history of triglycerides >4.5mmol/L). Please use the updated requisition and collect Lipid testing on random specimens, unless specifically requested by the ordering physician.

If you have any questions or require more information, please connect with Technical Lead Specimen Logistics, Katie Campen (katie.campen@northernhealth.ca).

New patient resources! Leaving the hospital and your hospital stay

In collaboration with acute care staff, patient partners, and communications, new resources have been developed to support patients and their families with the information they need about their hospital stay and to prepare for discharge. These resources are available now for ordering from document source and for sharing with patients and their families.

- [10-300-6419](https://www.nh.gov/10-300-6419) Understanding Your Stay Information Sheet (must be logged in to NH account to access)
- [10-300-6420](https://www.nh.gov/10-300-6420) Leaving the Hospital Information Sheet (must be logged in to NH account to access)
- [Your hospital stay webpage](#)
- [Leaving the hospital \(discharge\) webpage](#)
- [Leaving the hospital checklist](#)

Dragon Medical One Speech Recognition Training

Registration is still available for the 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 following flyer ([Northern Health CAIS DMO Provider Training Flyer.pdf](#)) to register for your desired session quickly and easily. The embedded QR code is necessary for registration.

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.

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](#).