



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**August 3 2021**

## ***In this issue***

[Clinical guidelines](#)

[COVID-19](#)

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[Other organizational news](#)

[Wellness and more](#)

## **Clinical guidelines**

---

### **Taking care of patients with Clostridium difficile (C-diff)**

- Wash your hands with soap and water when taking care of patients with Clostridium difficile (C-diff) (alcohol-based hand rubs are not effective for spores).
- Only use alcohol-based hand rubs as you move from patient bedside to sink.
- Bacterial spores persist in the environment, equipment needs to be cleaned with a sporicidal disinfectant after each use.
- Durations of Contact Plus Precautions are until patient symptoms have resolved for 48 hours (patient is back to baseline).

## **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 30, **7,821** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **28**
- New cases: **9**
- Currently in hospital: **2**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **3**
- 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 30, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – July 28, 2021

### **COVID-19 immunization records: New option for proof of immunization for visitors and volunteers in long-term care and seniors assisted living**

BC has developed a [COVID-19 Vaccination Status indicator](#) for people who received their vaccine at a BC clinic or pharmacy. Go to [the website](#), enter your date of birth and personal health number and hit “Look up record”.

Right now the only place that proof of immunization is required in BC is to visit or volunteer in long-term care homes and seniors assisted living facilities (if visitors would prefer not to wear a medical mask during their visit with the resident).

Canada is working with other countries to determine acceptable proof of immunization for international travel. There is no “vaccine passport” yet. At this time Health Gateway, your paper record, and the new vaccine status indicator are proof of immunization within BC and are accepted for long-term care and assisted living visitation.

For information on your COVID-19 Immunization Record, visit [Northern Health's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan webpage](#).

[Health Gateway](#) remains the best place for all BC residents to access their health records including prescription medications and health visits in addition to their COVID-19 immunization record. Lab and medical imaging results and appointments can be viewed through Northern Health's [HealthELife](#).

### **Reminder to take precautions even though COVID-19 cases are declining**

With the declining COVID-19 numbers, a reminder to staff that there are still many communicable diseases that require additional precautions:

- Appropriate PPE remains a requirement for all staff members if clinically indicated for individuals on precautions, when there is a risk of contamination due to splashing of body fluids, based on [point-of-care assessment](#) or to protect against the normal hazards in regular work.

- Complete a [risk assessment](#) when caring for any patient, and wear appropriate PPE.
- Communicable disease can be both respiratory and non-respiratory in nature
- A patient may be negative for COVID, yet have respiratory symptoms that could be indicative of another disease.

### **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 26**

- 79 nursing assessments
- 36 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Lower Coverdale, Mackenzie, Prince George, Terrace, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert, Houston, Hudson's Hope, Quesnel, Arras, and Smithers

#### **Tuesday, July 27**

- 56 nursing assessments
- 28 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Fort St. John, Chetwynd, Terrace, Mackenzie, Dawson Creek, Smithers, Thornhill, Rocky Mountain House, Kitimat, Hudson's Hope, Prince Rupert, Fraser Lake, and Arras

#### **Wednesday, July 28**

- 52 nursing assessments
- 30 primary care provider appointments from Terrace, Prince George, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Mackenzie, Prince Rupert, Fort St. John, Moberly Lake, and Houston

#### **Thursday, July 29**

- 72 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, McLeod Lake, Prince Rupert, Kitwanga, Medicine Hat, Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, and Thornhill

#### **Friday, July 30**

- 55 nursing assessments
- 32 primary care provider appointments from Bear Lake, Chetwynd, Mackenzie, Hudson's Hope, Moberley Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Taylor, Terrace, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, Grande Prairie, Nanoose Bay, Quesnel, Fort St. John, and Tomslake

#### **Saturday, July 31**

- 36 nursing assessments
- 17 primary care provider appointments from Gordondale (Ab), Fort St. John, Mackenzie, Dawson Creek, Wonowon, Hudson's Hope, Prince George, Terrace, Prince Rupert, and Qualicum Beach

**Sunday, August 1**

- 27 nursing assessments
- 22 primary care provider appointments from Prince Rupert, Prince George, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Houston, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Laxkw'alaams, Quesnel, and Kitimat

**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****Myth busted: Using crystal meth with opioids does not reduce the risk of overdose**

There have been reports from people who use drugs that using crystal meth in combination with an opioid decreases the risk for overdose. Interviews with people who use drugs found that one of the most common reasons given for using crystal meth with opioids was that they “balance each other out”.

The BCCDC and the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) recently completed a study into this belief and found that the use of crystal meth did not protect against opioid overdose. In fact, using these drugs together actually increased the risk of overdose and other harms.

- [Project overview](#)
- [Infographic](#)
- [Concurrent use study findings](#)

Harm Reduction messaging:

- Meth does not stimulate the breathing center and will not reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- Using a combination of meth and opioids increases your risk of overdose and [overamping](#) (mental distress – like crashing, anxiety, or paranoia – linked to stimulant use).
- Start low, go slow.
- Have an overdose plan and carry naloxone.
- Do not use alone, tell someone if you plan to use.
- Know the signs of overdose and overamping.

For more information, visit [Stimulant Overdose Awareness](#).

## Other organizational news

---

### Kudos and a special visitor for the NH case and contact management team

For the NH case and contact management (CCM) team it's been a whirlwind 18 months. They faced incredible challenges yet accomplished so much as a small but mighty team. The Public Health Leadership team is grateful to all the team members who supported CCM over the past year - from those who helped set the foundation for Northern Health's CCM response in early 2020, to all who played a role over the past several months as we responded to the surge of COVID-19 cases across the North. Thank you for everything you have contributed to CCM and NH's COVID-19 response!

Check out [the full story](#) to learn about their milestones, impact, and a special visitor to the team.

### Northern RACE update

Northern RACE (Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise) is an advice line to support primary care providers in Northern BC. Northern specialist physicians will provide telephone support for non-urgent, patient-related questions.

- Northern RACE phone: 1-855-605-7223
- Monday to Friday (excluding stat holidays) 9 am to 4 pm PST

Northern RACE has partnered with the Rural Coordination Centre of BC's (RCCbc) [Real-Time Virtual Support Pathways \(RTVS\)](#) program to connect medical staff with other rural family physicians and midwives that have expertise in maternal and newborn care.

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

### 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](#).