



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

September 14, 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 September 13, **9,936** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **931**
- New cases: **64**
- Currently in hospital: **41**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **16**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **164**

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](#) – September 13, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – September 8, 2021

Town hall for medical staff regarding COVID-19

In September and early October, there will be a number of Town Hall information sessions available for medical staff to get the latest information and ask questions about the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. For each session, Northern Health's leaders Dr. Jong Kim, the Chief Medical Health Officer, and Tanis Hampe, the new VP of Public Health, will give a brief presentation, then provide an opportunity for medical staff to ask questions or provide comments.

For more information, including topics included in each presentation and how to join the (virtual) meetings, please click into the schedule of events:

- [September 15 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [September 21 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [September 27 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [October 6 \(5-6 pm\)](#)

Updated PPE guidelines

The BCCDC has released updated guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in all health care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective immediately, routine PPE is a medical mask. Eye protection is no longer mandatory for all staff that are within 2 metres of a patient. Health care workers should perform a [Point of Care Risk Assessment \(PCRA\)](#) to determine whether additional PPE is required.

Eye protection (goggles or a face shield) is required at all times when:

- A patient reports or develops respiratory symptoms
- A patient is known or highly suspected to have COVID-19 (e.g. awaiting testing)
- Working within two meters of a patient on an Intensive Care Unit, High Acuity Unit, or Emergency Department
- Working in a COVID-19 Cohorted Unit
- Working in a COVID-19 Outbreak Unit or Facility
- Performing aerosol generating medical procedures
- Indicated by a point of care risk assessment

For the most updated information on PPE requirements, please review the appropriate guidance for your sector or speak to your local PPE Champion.

- [PPE Required During COVID-19 Pandemic: Acute and Long Term-Care](#)
- [PPE Required During COVID-19 Pandemic: Community Health Services](#)
- [PPE Required in Patient Care Areas During COVID-19 Pandemic: Acute and Long-Term Care Support Services/Facilities Maintenance](#)
- [COVID-19 Mask Use Guidelines](#)
- [Eye Protection Guidelines](#)

Northern BC community immunization coverage

As of September 8, 2021, the Northern BC population as seen: 354,396 doses administered; 73% of population age 12 and older have received at least one dose (63% are fully immunized with two doses). For more detailed community information, see the [full chart](#).

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, September 6

- 248 nursing assessments
- 26 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Vanderhoof, South Hazelton, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, and Chetwynd

Tuesday, September 7

- 361 nursing assessments
- 35 primary care provider appointments (12 COVID-19 assessments) from Bear Lake, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Prince George, Terrace, Hazelton, Mackenzie, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, and Mackenzie

Wednesday, September 8

- 334 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Fraser, Fort St. John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Rose Prairie, Penticton, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Thornhill, and Moberly Lake

Thursday, September 9

- 275 nursing assessments
- 46 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Hudson's Hope, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, Edmonton (AB), Mackenzie, Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, and Sundre (AB)

Friday, September 10

- 237 nursing assessments
- 35 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Prince George, Terrace, Chetwynd, Kitimat, New Aiyansh, Quesnel, Thornhill, Smithers, Taylor, Grande Prairie (AB), Edmonton (AB), Laxkw'alaams, Telkwa, and Moberly Lake

Saturday, September 11

- 264 nursing assessments

- 33 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Thornhill, Vanderhoof, Quesnel, Terrace, and Smithers

Sunday, September 12

- 245 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Pink Mountain, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Chetwynd, and Grande Prairie (AB)

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

Supporting Harm Reduction within the context of COVID-19

Northern Health has deemed harm reduction and overdose prevention services as an essential service during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Although the messaging regionally and provincially around COVID-19 preventative measures will reduce the spread of COVID-19, they may further isolate our most vulnerable populations. Therefore it is vital that we find innovative and creative ways to meet the urgent needs of people who use drugs in our communities.

The [document linked here](#) outlines key messages and approaches aimed to support NH staff and community based organizations to continue to provide access for overdose prevention and harm reduction measures in the context of COVID-19.

Other organizational news

UPDATE: IHA Cardiac and patient transfer diversions – Diversion extended

This memo is a follow up previous memos regarding the activated Interior Health Authority (IHA) Cardiac and Patient Transfer Diversions. Due to the unprecedented wildfire activity in the Central Okanagan as well as the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases, IHA is requesting that all patients, including those requiring cardiac services, continue to be diverted from Interior Health to the lower mainland tertiary care facilities September 13 – September 20 2021.

The BC Patient Transfer Network (PTN) has been notified to help support redirection of higher level of care patient transfers and cardiac patients from IHA in discussion with physicians. As per the regular post-COVID-19 transfer process, physicians are required to call PTN at 1-866-233-2337 for all patient transfers, including cardiac patients; when a patient transfer is required, PTN will coordinate a physician conference as needed with the suggested tertiary referral centres as well as the other provincial cardiac sites.

A reassessment and update to support access and service delivery for Northern Health with IHA will be reviewed Monday, September 20 for patient transfers and cardiac referrals with follow up communication to be distributed.

Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Baby-Friendly Initiative 2021 Virtual Symposium – October 1-7 + additional FREE session October 8, 2021

Registration for the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) [Baby-Friendly Initiative \(BFI\) Virtual Symposium](#) is open

Learning objectives:

- This week-long virtual symposium will be held during National Breastfeeding Week with various sessions that focus on the theme: *Protect, promote, and support breastfeeding and BFI: A shared responsibility*
- Additional FREE session will support learners understanding of the new [BCC BFI Implementation Guideline](#) and monitoring tools

Dates:

- Symposium October 1-7, 2021 at 10 am-12 pm PST / 1-3 pm EST
- Additional free session Friday, October 8, 2021 @ 10 am-12 pm PST / 1-3 pm EST

Fees:

- \$135 for BCC members and \$150 for non-members for six sessions (two hours each)
- [Click here to become a BCC member for \\$30](#)

Registration:

- **Symposium:** Complete [symposium registration form](#)
- **Additional free session:** Complete [additional session registration form](#)

To learn more:

- See full Symposium details on the [OurNH news article published on September 7, 2021](#)
- Questions? Email Michelle LeDrew at BFIProjectDirector@bccbfi.com

Telephone number refresh: Northern Interior Health Unit and Jubilee Lodge in Prince George on Saturday, September 18

Update your phone lists! Staff at the Northern Interior Health Unit and Jubilee Lodge in Prince George are receiving new numbers. Check out the new numbers [here](#) (OurNH link).

If you have a Cisco phone you can now use their six-digit local.

Happy hour with PQI

Join the Physician Quality Improvement (PQI) team and Dr. Matthew Wahab (graduate of Virtual Action Learning Series (VALS) cohort one) in person at UHNBC in the LDC room

0513 and via Zoom on September 23 at 5:30 – 6:30 pm. This will be an evening of casual storytelling with PQI coaches and physicians within the health authority, and will allow Dr. Wahab to discuss his visual acuity project!

To RSVP, please email physicianqi@northernhealth.ca.

Join us in celebrating World Patient Safety Day on September 17

World Patient Safety Day was established in 2019 to enhance global understanding of patient safety, increase public engagement in the safety of health care and promote global actions to enhance patient safety and reduce patient harm.

Objectives of World Patient Safety Day 2021:

- Raise global awareness on the issues of maternal and newborn safety
- Engage multiple stakeholders and adopt effective innovative strategies to improve maternal and newborn safety
- Call for urgent and sustainable actions by all stakeholders to scale up efforts, reach the unreached and ensure safe maternal and newborn care
- Advocate the adoption of best practices at the point of care to prevent avoidable risks and harm to all women and newborns during childbirth

How you can participate:

- 1) Join the Safe and Respectful First Nations, Inuit and Métis Maternal and Newborn Care Webinar:
Date and Time: Friday, September 17, 2021 12-1 pm (ET)
[Learn more here](#)
- 2) Participate on Social media: Share World Patient Safety Day messages on your social media channels – let's get #PatientSafety, #WorldPatientSafetyDay and #SafeChildBirthForAll trending around across the country!

[Learn more about current Maternity Care Initiatives, Resources and Education available in Northern Health and BC.](#)

Celebrate Healthcare Simulation Week September 13-19, 2021! Changing the way healthcare professionals learn and improve patient care

The fourth annual global Health Care Simulation Week will be held September 13-19, 2021.

Health care simulation is a learning tool that recreates a healthcare environment to allow persons to experience a realistic health care event. The purpose of healthcare simulation is to teach new skills, refresh old ones and improve the delivery of safe and effective patient care.

Healthcare Simulation Week, sponsored by the [Society for Simulation in Healthcare \(SSH\)](#), celebrates professionals who use healthcare simulation to improve the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of healthcare delivery. New methods and technologies are emerging that present enhanced opportunities to improve patient care; as a result, it is an important field in which many healthcare professionals are finding a lifelong career.

How to Participate:

September 16 9:30am - 3:30pm

1. Try new VR Education Pilot (at UHNBC only) – Virtual headset and virtual training applications
2. Participate in the CPR Challenge (at UHNBC only)
 - a. 1st place receives: a prize, newsletter feature, and their name on the CPR challenge champion plaque
 - b. 2nd and 3rd place receives: a prize and their name on the newsletter feature.
3. Come by for a tour of Simulation lab

Note: All COVID cleaning and safety protocols will be followed in the Simulation center

“Healthcare simulation continues to grow at an extraordinary rate,” said SSH President Bob Armstrong. “An increasing number of professionals in the healthcare industry are waking up to simulation’s ability to help individuals and organizations improve patient care, which is so great to witness. We want to celebrate both that increased role and all healthcare simulation professionals this week.”

For more information, contact 250-645-6400 or email SimulationTeam@northernhealth.ca

[Learn more about the Northern Clinical Simulation Program](#)

Get the latest research and knowledge translation highlights! The second edition research and knowledge translation newsletter is now available

The new research and knowledge translation newsletter highlights 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.

[View the Research and Knowledge Translation Newsletter](#)

If you liked to be a contributor or have questions, please contact:

marcelo.bravo@northernhealth.ca.

Northern Health antimicrobial mobile assistant – Firstline mobile health app/website (formerly known as Spectrum)

The NH Antimicrobial Stewardship Program is pleased to share that our health authority will be joining the Firstline mobile Health team (formerly known as Spectrum) starting September 20, 2021. This means that NH prescribers, pharmacists and nurses will be able to easily and quickly access NH created guidelines and antimicrobial/pathogen information from their mobile devices and computers.

What is it?

- Firstline (formerly known as Spectrum) is a mobile app that can be customized to deliver local antimicrobial stewardship and infectious diseases resources within any hospital or health system.
- It is also accessible via desktop computers.

Why should we use this tool?

- Up to 50% of antimicrobial use in hospitals and community settings is unnecessary or inappropriate and contributes to the development of antimicrobial resistance, prolonged hospital stays, increased rates of *C. Diff* infections, increased healthcare costs and patient mortality.
- It has been shown that facility specific treatment guidelines and protocols facilitated by an antimicrobial stewardship program can lead to an increase in appropriate antimicrobial prescribing and therefore reduce antimicrobial usage, costs and adverse patient outcomes.

You can download the Firstline app for free today from your app store or bookmark it [online](#). Starting September 20, you will be able to access Northern Health specific guidelines by searching for NH in the available locations list.

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](#).