



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

September 28, 2021

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Clinical guidelines

Important update regarding mandatory vaccinations

On September 13, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) announced that all employees, medical staff and other service providers who work in identified care locations in the health sector will be **required to be fully (two doses) vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 26, 2021**. This expands the current requirement, which applies to health care workers in long-term care, assisted living for seniors and other residential care settings, to other care settings. The PHO Order in support of this announcement, with specific details, is expected to be issued in the coming days.

For more information, please review [the full memo](#).

COVID-19 news and updates

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 27, **10,678** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **1,165**
- New cases: **116**
- Currently in hospital: **57**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **16**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **172**

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 27, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – September 22, 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:

- [October 6 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [October 12 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [October 21 \(5-6 pm\)](#)
- [October 25 \(5-6 pm\)](#)

These town halls will be recorded. Please contact physican.education@northernhealth.ca for access to the latest town hall recording.

COVID-19 Service Plan for Pediatrics

While COVID-19 is primarily affecting the adult population and infection in children rarely results in severe illness requiring critical care, it is still imperative to address the needs of pediatric patients. In support of the overall UHNBC surge plan the plan for Pediatrics has been outlined in the [COVID-19 Pediatric Service Plan Memo](#) (OurNH link).

Clinical management of pediatric patients should be directed at all times by the most current guidance available on the [BCCDC COVID-19 Pediatric Clinical Care](#) webpage. In the instance pediatric patients require transfer to a higher level of care they would need to be transferred to in line with *Appendix E: Maternal, Infant and Pediatric (MNPs) Patient of the COVID-19 Provincial Patient Transfer Surge Response Plan* further detailed in the memo.

Update on Tocilizumab Supply for COVID-19

Tocilizumab is currently in short supply in Canada and access to future supply for COVID-19 is uncertain at this time. NH Pharmacy Services has been obtaining stock as available intermittently through a federal reserve from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and has also been collaborating with the other health authorities in BC to redistribute tocilizumab as required. PHAC continues to work with the manufacturers of both tocilizumab and another interleukin-6 (IL-6) inhibitor, sarilumab, in an effort to secure supply for the

provinces. At this time, sarilumab does not appear to be an available option. The manufacturers are also working to ensure that they continue to have enough supply for patients receiving these agents for approved indications (i.e. rheumatoid arthritis), which also limits their capacity to provide additional supply for COVID-19 (off-label) use.

Given the uncertainty around future supply, and after consultation with NH Critical Care, Internal Medicine, and Pharmacy leadership, it has been determined that the following mitigation strategy be implemented immediately to ensure judicious use of tocilizumab for COVID-19 patients:

*If an Intensivist or Internist working in ICU has not already been consulted/involved, a **second** clinical opinion must be obtained from an Intensivist* or Internist working in ICU in order to confirm that tocilizumab is appropriate.*

The regional order set for [Critically ill Tocilizumab Infusion Orders \(For COVID-19 only\)](#) will be adjusted to include this new information for prescribing.

For more information on NH supply and availability please see [memo](#) or contact Regional Medication Use Management Pharmacists at mumpharmacist@northernhealth.ca

Northern BC community immunization coverage

For vaccination information for specific communities in the Northern Health region (including first and second dose counts and percentages), please visit our [Northern BC community immunization coverage page](#). This information is updated every Wednesday (update date is on the top left).

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- On the NH physician website:
 - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- On OurNH:
 - [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
 - [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)
- [Northern BC community immunization coverage page](#)
- [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

Clarification: There is no shortage of injectable naloxone for Take Home Naloxone Kits

In a recent media coverage the premier announced that there was a provincial shortage of naloxone. This communication was referring to intranasal naloxone for police and RCMP members. There currently is **no shortage of injectable naloxone** for the Take Home Naloxone program.

BCCDC continues to closely monitor their naloxone inventory, and currently have no supply issues. There may be delays in shipping due to increases in weekly order volume, but BCCDC will communicate any delays with distribution sites if they come up. BCCDC will also monitor for any urgent Naloxone requests and if a site is urgently needing any supplies they can contact naloxone@bccdc.ca

BC THN kits are available to those who are likely to witness and respond to an overdose. There are **no supply issues with the Take Home Naloxone Program** or Facility Overdose Response Box Programs. Use the site finder to locate a site near you:

www.towardtheheart.com/site-finder

Interested in becoming a Take Home Naloxone (THN) site?

- Visit: <https://towardtheheart.com/naloxone>

Other organizational news

Doctors of BC 2021 Health Authority Engagement Survey seeks your input

Beginning Monday, September 13, Doctors of BC will be conducting its 6th annual Health Authority Engagement Survey. This important survey seeks input on your level of engagement and interaction with our Health Authority. You are encouraged to participate and provide your feedback. The results will help us collaborate with you and your colleagues in shaping programs and policies at a regional and local level, to improve physician engagement.

The deadline for responses is midnight on Wednesday, October 13th

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

Orange Shirt Day

[Orange Shirt Day](#) is a time of collective remembrance during which we honour those who attended Residential Schools as well as their families and communities. It is also a time to demonstrate personal and organizational commitments to reconciliation. This year Thursday, September 30 is Orange Shirt Day across Canada.

For more information about Orange Shirt Day, please visit orangeshirtday.org, and read [the articles](#) Shelby Petersen (Lead, Knowledge Translation and Community Engagement with Indigenous Health) has written.

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. Shannon Douglas](#), of the Lakes Omineca area. Dr. Douglas is passionate about health care, and accessibility of health care in rural Northern BC.

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.

Educational opportunity: ECHO for Chronic Pain Series on Opioid Weaning

The BC ECHO for Chronic Pain is a free virtual learning community comprised of health care providers who use case-based learning to gain improved competence in providing care for complex pain cases. The program is offering a limited noon-hour series for primary care providers that focuses on prescribing, and medical pain management concerns and questions related to opioid tapering and OAT. Participants will be supported to understand current guidelines and feel confident implementing best practices with their patients. This education is CME-accredited.

The Fall cycle runs from noon-1pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday, October 12
- Tuesday, October 26
- Tuesday, November 9
- Tuesday, November 23

Visit the [Daytime Series on Opioid Weaning website](#) to view learning objectives and background information on the series, as well as to [register](#).

Educational opportunity: Interdisciplinary Pain Education Day – October 22, 2021

Providence Health Care and Pain BC are hosting their annual Interdisciplinary Pain Day on Friday, October 22. This year's virtual event is focused on back pain and will feature:

- Keynote presentations from a patient advocate and the incoming Canadian Pain Society president
- Plenary presentations from Drs. Tasha Stanton, Owen Williamson, and Vishal Varshney
- Six concurrent workshops to learn about chronic back pain and apply practical skills to your practice
- Poster presentations highlighting projects and research on chronic low back pain
- A panel comprised of people with lived experience of pain

The conference is CME accredited and is open to all health care providers, as well as people living with pain. For more information, and to register, visit the [Interdisciplinary Pain Education Day website](#).

Celebrate National Breastfeeding Week October 1-7

October 1-7 is National Breastfeeding Week in Canada. Given this year's theme "**Protect breastfeeding: a shared responsibility**", it's an opportunity to spark conversation and action within our roles as health care providers. Over the next few weeks, watch for stories on the [Northern Health Stories](#) website that will feature different health care providers sharing how they protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in their role.

Resources to support NH staff and physicians:

- Become familiar with the [BCC BFI Implementation Guideline](#) and the NH clinical practice standard 1-1-3-150: [BFI: Protect, Promote, and Support Breastfeeding](#).
- Register for the week-long Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) [Baby-Friendly Initiative \(BFI\) Virtual Symposium](#)
- Enroll in the UBC CPD eLearning course [Latching on: How family physicians can support breastfeeding patients](#) (1.5 hours, 1.5 Mainpro +)
- Display the following two resources in patient care areas, waiting rooms, and other high traffic locations (note: copies are in the mail for various NH sites)
 - [Our Baby-Friendly Pledge for Families](#) (Document Source # 10-030-6115)
 - [Breastfeeding and Human Milk Public Webpage Poster](#) (Document Source # 10-030-6124)

To learn more:

- Read the article [Breastfeeding: The role of the primary care provider](#)
- Visit the NH public webpage [Breastfeeding and Human Milk](#) and share with your clients
- Explore more resources on the OurNH page for staff [Breastfeeding and Human Milk](#)
- Email us your questions at NHBreastfeeding@northernhealth.ca

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@bccbf.com

Preferred proponent chosen for new Dawson Creek hospital

People in Dawson Creek and area are one step closer to a new hospital now that a preferred proponent has been selected for the design phase.

“The selection of the team that will design the new hospital means another important milestone has been reached for people in the region,” said Adrian Dix, Minister of Health. “The new and bigger facility will deliver public health-care services to people in the South Peace for decades to come.”

As a result of the evaluation process, in co-ordination with Northern Health and Infrastructure BC, Clark Builders-Turner-HDR Architecture was selected.

See the [full Ministry of Health release](#).

For more information on the new Dawson Creek and District Hospital, [visit Let's Talk](#).

COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data

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 20

- 327 nursing assessments
- 64 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Houston, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, Terrace, Vanderhoof, Prince Rupert, Thornhill, and Dawson Creek

Tuesday, September 21

- 454 nursing assessments
- 46 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Houston, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Hudson's Hope, Moberly Lake, Hazelton, Smithers, Summerland, and Telkwa

Wednesday, September 22

- 439 nursing assessments
- 46 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Thornhill, Calgary (AB), Chetwynd, St. Peters (NS), Fort St. James, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Smithers, Tumbler Ridge, Dawson Creek, Hazelton, Kitwanga, Miniota (MB), and Westlock (AB)

Thursday, September 23

- 465 nursing assessments
- 42 primary care provider appointments from Baldonnel, Cecil Lake, Arras, Fort St. John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, Terrace, Chetwynd, Hope, Kinuso (AB), Moberly Lake, and Dawson Creek

Friday, September 24

- 399 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Chetwynd, Kitwanga, Arras, and Nanaimo

Saturday, September 25

- 395 nursing assessments
- 28 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Kitchener (ON), Mackenzie, Thornhill, and Fort Nelson

Sunday, September 26

- 429 nursing assessments
- 32 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Vanderhoof, Charlie Lake, Dawson Creek, Thornhill, Burns Lake, Prince Rupert, and Tumbler Ridge

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](#).