



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**October 5, 2021**

## ***In this issue***

[Clinical guidelines](#)

[COVID-19 news and updates](#)

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[Other organizational news](#)

[COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data](#)

[Wellness and more](#)

## **Clinical guidelines**

### **Updated risk stratification tool – Level of care guide for adults with COVID-19**

With ongoing pandemic planning, and considering our experience to date with patients infected with COVID-19, the NH Therapeutics Committee (NHTC) has reviewed our health authority Risk Stratification Tool Level of Care Guide and updated it accordingly.

- Updates are based on experience of the clinician members of this committee and include:
- Adjusted formatting to make it clear which path to follow based on patient's clinical status
- Highlighted the difference between moderate and severe patients (i.e. stable versus unstable)
- Clearly stated that oxygen support requirements are the main reason for hospital admission of any COVID-19 patients
- Added Internal Medicine consults for stable moderately ill patients
- Updated ICU regional support to Regional COVID-19 Intensivist on-call via UHNBC switchboard
- Updated hyper-links as needed
- Removed COVID-19 progression timeline and added note to beware of patients deteriorating at any point during their illness (no longer limited to 5 – 8 days from symptom onset)

Any questions or comments please see the [updated algorithm](#) and or contact the NHTC Co-Chairs via [Jennifer.Bogh@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Jennifer.Bogh@northernhealth.ca)

## 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 October 4, **12,312** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **974**
- New cases: **125**
- Currently in hospital: **79**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **18**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **176**

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](#) – October 4, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – September 29, 2021

### Northern Health residents can now book a COVID-19 test online!

Starting October 4, 2021, symptomatic Northerners that require a COVID-19 test will be able to access an online [NH COVID-19 test booking form](#). This form will initiate the process for individuals to access a test at their preferred testing site. People can still continue to call the NH Virtual Clinic or contact their primary care provider for a COVID-19 assessment and test.

Health Care Workers (HCWs) can book their test online through the new [test booking form](#) or continue to call the NH Virtual Clinic at 1-844-645-7811. The Virtual Clinic will continue to have the HCW line option which codes the requisition as HCW and prioritizes the requisition at the testing site for booking. Just a reminder that this prioritization is only for health care workers and not their family members. The prioritization for HCWs is not available with the online booking form.

The website for the [COVID-19 test booking form](#) is now live, and will be shared with the public on the [Northern Health website](#) and social media channels.

### Take a survey, be entered to win a \$100 gift card

Employees within the Northern Health Region are being invited to participate in an online survey about vaccine intentions. The survey has been approved by the Northern Health Authority and UBC's Research Ethic Board, and is being led by Dr. Claire Lenouvel, Family Medicine Resident, with the supervision of Dr. Gina Ogilvie.

The team at UBC is inviting participants to complete this short (max: 10 min) anonymous online survey to better understand attitudes around COVID-19 vaccines, the influential

factors on deciding to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and perceived risks of COVID-19 vaccines. The data will be used to guide public health policies to support vaccine confidence. Your responses will be completely anonymous.

At the end of the survey you will be invited to enter to win a gift card valued at \$100.

The link to the survey can be found on the [vaccine intentions in the Northern Health region website](#).

### **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](mailto:physican.education@northernhealth.ca) for access to the latest town hall recording.

### **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

---

### Overdose alert for Prince George

There has been an increase in overdose events in Prince George. The reported substance is green and chalky. This substance is highly toxic, causes heavy and prolonged sedation, and requires more naloxone to reverse. Overdoses are happening when the substance is smoked and injected.

For more information, please see overdose alert information on the [Northern Health stories site](#).

For a printable poster, please visit the Northern Health [overdose prevention site](#).

### Illicit drug toxicity deaths for July 2021 now available (BC Coroners Report – released September 29)

Attached are the most recent Coroner Reports for Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths that contain data until the end of July 2021.

#### Summary:

- July 2021 (N=184) was the second largest number of suspected deaths ever recorded in a month. June 2020 had more deaths. (N=186).
- The 1,204 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths between January and July 2021 are the highest ever recorded in the first seven months of a calendar year and represent a 28% increase over the number of deaths recorded between January and July 2020 (941).
- In January to July 2021, VCH had the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 47 deaths per 100,000 individuals. Northern Health had the second highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 46 deaths per 100,000 individuals

#### Northern Health Summary

- NH saw 12 illicit drug toxicity deaths in July 2021 (35 deaths per 100,000 individuals)
  - **NW** has seen 23 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 51.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the third highest rate in the Province
    - There were 7 deaths in July
  - **NI** has seen 36 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 41.8 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the seventh highest rate in the Province.
    - There were 3 deaths in July
  - **NE** has seen 18 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 46.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals, which is the sixth highest rate in the Province.
    - There were 2 deaths in July

These reports can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#)

## Other organizational news

---

### Upcoming deadline - 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 13<sup>th</sup>**

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

### Workplace violence prevention – Learn more about the Required Organizational Practice!

Required Organizational Practices (ROPs) are evidence-informed practices addressing high-priority areas that are essential and that the organization must have in place to enhance patient safety and minimize risk.

Participation and achievement of national standards of care gives reassurance to the public, patients and families, caregivers and the entire organization that Northern Health is providing high-quality services.

Workplace violence is an issue that affects healthcare settings more than many other workplaces. One-quarter of all incidents of workplace violence occur at health care organizations. Northern Health Workplace Health and Safety provides a framework and guidelines for prevention violence including:

- Code White Response
- Violence Risk Assessments
- Violent Behavior Alerts
- Working Alone or in Isolation
- Incident Reporting and Investigation
- Orientation, Education and Training
- Supervision

Additional resources:

- [Violence Prevention Policies](#) on OurNH
- [Violence Prevention Poster](#)
- For more information on all ROPS see the [ROP Handbook](#)

### October is national occupational therapy month!

On behalf of Northern Health leadership I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our NH Occupational Therapists for their continued hard work and immeasurable contributions to the communities they serve. October is National Occupational Therapy

Month, and staff are encouraged to recognize their Occupational Therapist colleagues throughout the month.

Throughout the month of October, we'll be sharing posts on our Northern Health social media channels, as well as highlighting occupational therapists on our [stories website](#), to celebrate the work that they do.

## **Congratulations to the winners of the 2021 Clinical Simulation Week Open House CPR Challenge!**

Congratulations to Samantha Siegrist and Amanda Durrant, second year CNC nursing students, on this year's winner!

[Learn more about the event and winners.](#)

For more information on the Northern Clinical Simulation Program, contact 250-645-6400 or email [SimulationTeam@northernhealth.ca](mailto:SimulationTeam@northernhealth.ca)

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

## **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](mailto: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@bccbfi.com](mailto:BFIProjectDirector@bccbfi.com)

## Invitation to participate in BC Guidelines External Review

The [Managing Patients with Pain](#) guideline is available for External Review until October 29, 2021. This two part guideline provides practical recommendations within the primary care setting for a graded, multimodal approach to supporting adult patients ( $\geq 19$  years) with pain on a continuum from acute, subacute to chronic pain.

Please visit the [BC Guidelines External Review page](#) to download the draft guideline and submit your feedback via our [online questionnaire](#).

## New BC guidelines (via the Guidelines and Protocols Advisory Committee (GPAC))

### Viral Hepatitis Testing

The scope of the [Viral Hepatitis Testing](#) (2021) guideline is to outline the use of laboratory tests to diagnose acute and chronic viral hepatitis in adults ( $\geq 19$  years) in the primary care setting. Testing related to children or perinatally acquired viral hepatitis infection, or treatment information is outside the scope of this guideline.

### Suspected Lung Cancer in Primary Care

[Suspected Lung Cancer in Primary Care](#) (2021) provides recommendations for primary care providers, for the investigation and management of adult patients ( $\geq 19$  years of age) who present with signs or symptoms suggestive of lung cancer. Recommendations include the

clinical assessment and appropriate referral of patients to a specialist. This guideline was developed in collaboration with the BC Cancer Primary Care Program (Family Practice Oncology Network) and was based on a guideline adaptation approach including a recent systematic search of the evidence.

### **Cataract - Treatment of Adults**

The scope of the [Cataract – Treatment of Adults](#) (2021) guideline is to provide recommendations for primary care providers in the prevention, diagnosis, management and postoperative care of cataracts for adults (age 19 and older).

### **Fall Prevention: Risk Assessment and Management for Community-Dwelling Older Adults**

The scope of the [Fall Prevention: Risk Assessment and Management for Community-Dwelling Older Adults guideline](#) (2021) is to address the identification and management of older adults aged  $\geq 65$  years living in the community with risk factors for falls, and is intended for primary care practitioners. The guideline facilitates individualized assessment and provides a framework and tools to manage risk factors for falls and fall-related injuries. Hospital, facility-based care settings and acute fall management are outside the scope of this guideline, although some of the principles in this guideline may be useful in those settings.

### **Other Updates**

To stay up to date with BC Guidelines, visit the “What’s New” section of our homepage at [www.bcguidelines.ca](http://www.bcguidelines.ca) and [subscribe](#) to our e-bulletin.

## **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 27**

- 422 nursing assessments
- 54 primary care provider appointments from Buick, Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Hudson’s Hope, Kitimat, Masset, Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, Tomslake, Fraser Lake, Kitimat, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Houston, Prince Rupert, and Taylor

#### **Tuesday, September 28**

- 424 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Fort St. John, Houston, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Progress, Queen Charlotte, Smithers, Terrace, Baldonnel, Moberley Lake, Nanaimo, Telkwa, Thornhill, Fort St. James, Hazelton, and Thornhill

#### **Wednesday, September 29**

- 489 nursing assessments

- 41 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Moberley Lake, Prince George, Telkwa, Thornhill, and Progress

**Thursday, September 30**

- 434 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Prince George, Quesnel, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Dawson Creek, Hudson's Hope, Prince Rupert, Brownbirch, Vanderhoof, and Moberly Lake

**Friday, October 1**

- 421 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Kitimat, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, Houston, Rose Prairie, Thornhill, Telkwa, Hudson's Hope, Kitwanga, and Pink Mountain

**Saturday, October 2**

- 287 nursing assessments
- 38 primary care provider appointments from Cecil Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Kelowna, Mackenzie, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Burnaby, Chetwynd, and Edmonton (AB)

**Sunday, October 3**

- 377 nursing assessments
- 29 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fraser Lake, Prince George, Progress, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Williams Lake, Burns Lake, and Kitchener (ON)

**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](#).