



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**November 2, 2021**

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## **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 29\*, **15,315** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **817**
- New cases: **104**
- Currently in hospital: **82**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **24**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **212**

**\*Please note** that the BC COVID-19 Dashboard was not updated on November 1, the above numbers represent the October 29 numbers. Per the [BC COVID-19 pandemic update for November 1](#), Northern Health had 203 new cases, for a total of 764 cases.

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](#) – November 1, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – October 27, 2021

## NCCIH acknowledges health care workers

On behalf of the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), we would like to express our deepest and most sincere gratitude to health care workers for their ongoing commitment and dedication to providing care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To continue reading this acknowledgement, please see the attachment in the emailed version of this digest.

## Town hall for medical staff regarding COVID-19

During the next month, 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:

- [November 3 \(5 – 6 pm\)](#)
- [November 9 \(5 – 6 pm\)](#)
- [November 17 \(5 – 6 pm\)](#)
- [November 22 \(5 – 6 pm\)](#)
- [November 29 \(5 – 6 pm\)](#)

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](#)
- OurNH resources:
  - [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
  - [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)
- [Northern Health online booking form – COVID-19 test](#)
- [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

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### Safer tablet injection – New resources available

Tablet medications contain fillers that can cause harm when injected, which can be reduced by using harm reduction supplies and techniques. New pamphlets are available about [safer drug use](#) and tablet injection:

- [Sterifilt FAST](#)
- [Cotton Filters](#)
- [Preparing for Injection](#)

To order pamphlets email [harmreduction@northernhealth.ca](mailto:harmreduction@northernhealth.ca). There are also [videos](#) available about filtering tablet medication for injection.

#### Key Messages:

- Filters remove fillers; they don't steal your drugs.
- Tablet medications have fillers in them (e.g. coatings and powders). When injected, fillers can cause serious infections, abscesses and damage to the veins, skin, heart, and lungs.
- Filters effectively filter some harmful particles from the solution.
- You can use filters and other harm reduction supplies for safer injection.

## Other organizational news

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### Registration is open for the 2021 Northern BC Research and Quality Conference! December 7-9, 2021

The Northern BC Research and Quality Conference is a forum enhanced with resources and skill development workshops to share health and health services research, evaluation, evidence-based practice and quality improvement initiatives in the North.

Join in workshops, presentations, and discussions about these timely themes in health care:

- Innovations
- Equity
- Cultural Safety
- Health and Wellness
- Sustainable Systems

Connect virtually with other health care providers, researchers, quality improvement experts, students, and people seeking health care services.

#### Key Note Speaker:

Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond,  
Senior Associate Counsel, Woodward and Company

#### Plenary Speakers:

Dr. Danielle Lavalley,  
Scientific Director for the Michael Smith Health Research BC

Shirley Wong,  
Executive Project Manager, Strategic Data Initiatives at the Ministry of Health

**Conference Highlights:**

- Patient Partner engagement
- 36 oral presentations
- 5 rapid fire presentations
- Over 40 posters
- Door prizes and prizes throughout the event
- Connect and network with Quality and Research colleagues across the North

This is a free virtual event open to everyone, but registration is required. [Please register here.](#)

Feel free to join the sessions that appeal to you. Your attendance is not required for the whole event.

[Conference Poster](#)**Talking to youth about cannabis vaping: A guide for health care professionals**

The *Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions* (CSSA) has developed a new guide for health care professionals on [Talking to Youth about Cannabis Vaping](#)

This guide provides healthcare professionals with the questions they need to ask youth to start a meaningful conversation about the risk associated with vaping cannabis.

**Medication management reminder - 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.

Independent double checks maximize the chance of catching an error before administration. It is not a question of competence, but rather recognizing that mistakes happen, even when people are doing their best. Effective independent double checks reduce the probability of errors reaching the patient.

The Institute for Safe Medication Practice (ISMP) reports that 95% of mistakes are found with independent double checks.

N Ref. Insert link to the High Alert meds Requiring Independent Double check.

- Adult Poster 10-110-6069 (IND Rev. 09/19)
- LTC Poster 10-110-6069 (IND Rev. 09/19)
- Peds Poster 10-110-6069 (IND Rev. 09/19)

[Medication Management Poster](#) (OurNH link)

For more information on all ROPS, see the [ROP Handbook](#)

If you have any questions, please email [Arlene.Crawford@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Arlene.Crawford@northernhealth.ca).

### **Sign up for a free paid opportunity to become a Health Care Assistant!**

The new [Health Career Access Program \(HCAP\)](#) provides the opportunity to receive paid education to become a registered Health Care Assistant. The course fees will be covered, and successful applicants will be paid for their time while you study.

The program consists of education and training, and may take between 10-12 months to finish.

Application to the program is open to:

- Canadian citizens and permanent residents
- Applicants who meet post-secondary program requirements for admissions. The college they attend depends on where they live.
- Applicants who meet Northern Health employment requirements
- Valid drivers license

[Learn more about how to apply](#)

Questions? Email [HCAP@northernhealth.ca](mailto:HCAP@northernhealth.ca).

### **Clear window surgical masks available**

As health-care providers, it is our responsibility to ensure all our patients, clients and residents have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate care. This includes removing communications barriers wherever possible for those who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing.

To support health-care providers who may interact with patients and families who are deaf, deaf-blind or hard of hearing, a new health authority approved surgical mask with a clear window is available to order through [Provincial Health Services Authority's Supply Chain](#).

**ITEM: Mask HUMASK Pro Vision 2000 with window – Level 2**  
**NORTHERN HEALTH ITEM ID#: 5014072**

Due to limited supplies, please limit orders to one box per unit. To order these masks for your area, please follow your usual supply ordering processes.

## **Influenza Prevention Program 2021/22 - peer immunizers needed!**

Peer Immunizers are RNs, RPNs, LPNs or pharmacists who have volunteered to provide influenza immunization to peers and unit/site employees while working their regular scheduled shifts. This gives employees timely access to influenza immunization.

If you are interested in this role, please email: [influenza@northernhealth.ca](mailto:influenza@northernhealth.ca)

## **Prevent influenza, mask or immunize. Report your choice; it's your duty to care.**

Have you had your flu shot, or decided you won't get one this year? Don't forget to let us know.

Physicians and staff can visit [flu.healthcarebc.ca](http://flu.healthcarebc.ca) to report your choice (by December 1, 2021).

More questions or information, check out the flu page on OurNH, read the memo on the physician website, or email us at [influenza@northernhealth.ca](mailto:influenza@northernhealth.ca).

## **Flu season is quickly approaching**

Getting the influenza vaccination is more important than ever this year, especially with a health authority already experiencing a COVID-19 surge.

With more people returning to the workplace, children back in school and changes to public health mandates, it is expected to see an increase of influenza cases this year compared to last year.

Peak influenza season is from December to February, and it takes a minimum of two weeks for antibodies against the flu to develop fully following vaccination. Northern Health will start offering influenza vaccine to health care workers October 18, 2021. For more information about flu vaccination, please see:

- [Northern Health influenza information](#)
- [OurNH influenza information](#)
- [BCCDC influenza information](#)
- [CDC influenza information for health professionals](#)

For information about the flu vaccine clinics being offered in the region, please see the [Northern Health flu information site](#), and the [ImmunizeBC Find an Influenza \(Flu\) Clinic site](#).

## **COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data**

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### **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, October 25**

- 167 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Moberley Lake, Prince Rupert, Telkwa, Terrace, Charlie Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Calgary (AB), Nanaimo, and South Hazelton

**Tuesday, October 26**

- 170 nursing assessments
- 42 primary care provider appointments from Fort St. John, Mackenzie, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Cecil Lake, Terrace, Kitwanga, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Tomslake, Fort Fraser, Burns Lake, Smithers, and Kitimat

**Wednesday, October 27**

- 145 nursing assessments
- 54 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Houston, Terrace, Fort St. John, Kitimat, Chetwynd, Smithers, Moberley Lake, Cecil Lake, Taylor, Quesnel, Prince George, Houston, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, and Burns Lake

**Thursday, October 28**

- 141 nursing assessments
- 52 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Taylor, Terrace, Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Granisle, Port Simpson, Smithers, McBride, and Thornhill

**Friday, October 29**

- 105 nursing assessments
- 34 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Granisle, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Moberley Lake, Pouce Coupe, Tomslake, Chetwynd, Prince Rupert, and Thornhill

**Saturday, October 30**

- 56 nursing assessments
- 40 primary care provider appointments from Bonanza, Fort St. John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Hudson's Hope, Moberly Lake, and Kamloops

**Sunday, October 31**

- 65 nursing assessments
- 24 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Granisle, Prince George, Progress, Quesnel, Terrace, Fort Nelson, Mackenzie, and Smithers

## Wellness and more

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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](#).