



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**November 30, 2021**

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## **Clinical guidelines**

### **Update: Tocilizumab and Baricitinib for COVID-19**

In follow up to the [memo circulated October 28, 2021](#) (Baricitinib: Alternative Therapy to Tocilizumab for COVID-19), as expected our provincial supply of tocilizumab (which is distributed across BC based on COVID hospitalization rates) is no longer able to effectively sustain its use as the primary treatment for critically ill COVID-19 patients in our BC health authorities. The Public Health Agency of Canada has advised that we should not expect any substantial supply of tocilizumab for use in COVID-19 for the foreseeable future and they will continue to supply the provinces as able.

NH Pharmacy Services will continue to closely monitor supply of both tocilizumab and baricitinib and transfer available stock to NH sites as required to ensure equitable access as much as possible. Thank you for understanding the fluid nature of this situation. NH Pharmacy Services will continue to provide updates as required.

For more information on current NH supply and availability please see [the posted 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 November 29, **17,189** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **398**
- New cases: **36**
- Currently in hospital: **48**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **14**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **255**

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 29, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – November 24, 2021

## COVID-19 orders

Northern Health's regional Public Health Order on Gatherings and Events has been updated. Effective midnight, November 30, 2021, updated measures go into effect for the entire Northern Health region.

Changes to the order reflect the ongoing risk of COVID-19, rates of transmission, and the impact they continue to have on health care resources. But gradual improvement in case counts and hospitalizations are allowing for some increased capacity at gathering and events, for those who are fully vaccinated.

The updated orders will be in effect until at least January 31, 2022, and allow for:

- Up to 10 fully-vaccinated people gathering inside personal residences, and up to 25 outside (increased from 5, and 15)
- Increasing capacity for indoor seated events, including weddings, funerals and theatre and performing arts events, to 50% of capacity venue (increased from 50-person cap) with proof of vaccination
- Increasing outdoor event capacity to 50% (increase from 100-person cap) with proof of vaccination
- Allowing drive-in worship services in addition to virtual services

For full details, visit: <https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-orders>

## 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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### **British Columbia Emergency Alert**

The BCCDC has issued a province wide emergency alert due to flooding/road closures and the impact on the illicit drug market.

Disruptions to supply chains include illicit substances can create increased toxicity of substances and as a result communities may experience increase numbers of overdoses.

Please share the provincial alert found [here](#).

### **For your safety**

- Use an Overdose Prevention Site, if you can. [Find an OPS](#).
- Pick up a naloxone kit and harm reduction supplies near you. Some distribution sites may be affected by delivery disruptions so when possible, check in with the site first. [Find a site](#).
- Get your drugs checked. [Find a location](#).
- Avoid using alone. Find a buddy or have someone check on you.
- When using with a buddy is not possible, consider using an app like [Brave](#) or Lifeguard or virtual spotting. [Learn how to spot someone \(video by the Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs\)](#).
- Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner about how to access prescription medications to reduce overdose risk and prevent withdrawal. Refer them to these [guidelines](#) or [visit BCCSU for more information](#).

Pharmacies in BC can provide emergency refills of prescription medications – check with your local pharmacy for emergency refills as needed.

## **Other organizational news**

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### **Physician highlight**

The [NH Stories site](#) is a great place to read stories about NH physicians, staff, events, insights, and much more! This month, we are featuring [Dr. Jamil Akhtar and his work with aerosol intubation box technology at UHNBC](#).

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](mailto:kimberly.matheson@northernhealth.ca).

Don't forget! The PQI team also has a new [podcast](#), where you can hear more about NH physicians and their projects!

### **PQI Virtual Action Learning Series**

Do you have an idea to improve quality in your workplace? Bring your quality improvement (QI) project idea and lead an interprofessional team through virtual QI training with the support of a [physician quality improvement \(PQI\)](#) coach. [Continuing medical education \(CME\)](#) credits and physician reimbursement for your time is available.

For more information, please see the poster attached to the email digest.

To register, please contact [physicianqi@northernhealth.ca](mailto:physicianqi@northernhealth.ca)

### **Maternity/Perinatal and Pediatric care units and vaccination status of partners, secondary labour supports (Doulas), parents and visitors**

A perinatal patients' partner and parents of pediatric patients are considered essential components of the care encounter at Northern Health sites. For more information on current visitor guidance, see the [Ministry of Health – Overview of Visitors in Acute Care guidance document](#).

Recommendations for planning safe, family-centred care on perinatal and pediatric units include the following:

1. In the antenatal period, pregnant women/individuals should be strongly encouraged to become fully vaccinated. Evidence demonstrates full vaccination reduces adverse outcomes. For more information, review [Planning for your vaccine: pregnancy or breastfeeding](#)
2. Vaccine status recommendations apply to antenatal outpatient service areas, in-patient antepartum, labour and delivery, postpartum units, neonatal intensive care units and pediatric units.
3. A pregnant patient's *primary* support person (a partner, a doula, a friend or family member) will be exempt from the vaccine requirements for hospital visitation.
4. With the recent opening of visitor restrictions, pregnant patients may have one other support people at delivery. Additional support people will be asked about their vaccination status and may be denied entry similar to other visitors to the hospital if they are not fully vaccinated.
5. Doulas are considered part of the care team (not visitors) and are required to be vaccinated and show proof of vaccine status, unless the Doula is the primary labour support person (see number 3).
6. Parents of pediatric patients are not required to show vaccine status, though are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated.

Some unique care situations will present and units will plan for compassionate exceptions as required.

Please contact [Vanessa Salmons](#) for any questions.

## **UHNBC phones are getting refreshed! Learn more about when and how this impacts you**

We are pleased to announce the upcoming installation of the new Cisco phone system for UHNBC between Fall 2021 and Winter 2022. Please review this memo for the information that you will need and stay tuned for upcoming schedule announcement.

In addition to changing the phones, two significant changes will be taking place:

- Some phone numbers will get a new 10 digit number
- Local dialing will change from 4 to 6-digits

**Will my number change?** Wherever we can, we are trying to keep numbers the same but there will be some circumstances that require us to change your number. To find out if your number is changing, refer to the [PG Phone Refresh Master List](#). Numbers will be added as we work through different areas of the hospital. Share your new number with frequent contacts and by updating your email signature and voicemail message in advance. Number changes to the Global Address Listing will be initiated by the project team at the time of the cutover. **If your department is scheduled for replacement in the next month and you don't see your number on this list or it is wrong**, please contact

[phone.help@northernhealth.ca](mailto:phone.help@northernhealth.ca)

\*Managers with a new number that require an EARL call routing change should submit a request via the ITS Service Desk

**What about my extension?** All 4-digit dialing will become 6-digit dialing by adding a prefix of 50. For example, if you used to dial 5511 to call for IPT 1, you will now dial 505511. This allows for internal 6-digit dialing across all upgraded NH sites and no long distance charges. For a list of NH Cisco site prefixes, click [here](#).

**What about faxing?** Faxing services will also be upgraded to provide an enhanced experience. Faxing will now be 10-digits (no 9 or 1 needed). Some fax numbers will also change, but the old and new numbers will work for a period of 30 days so that contacts can be updated.

**How can I get training on my new phone?** Remote training sessions (via Teams) will be offered closer to the cutover dates for each department. Stay tune for more updates.

Issues? Contact us [Phone.Help@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Phone.Help@northernhealth.ca)

## **New Privacy Impact Assessment templates coming January 2022**

The Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) template is a tool used to ensure compliance with BC privacy law and to identify any data protection issues or privacy risks before a system, project, program or activity is put in motion (all PIA's should be done in the early development stages of a new program or initiative).

The department initiating/sponsoring a new or updated service is responsible to complete a PIA and submit it to the Privacy Office for review.

The new PIA templates were developed to:

- Align stakeholder expectations.
- Reduce the number of clarification requests on a PIA after it has been submitted.
- Better inform role expectations.
- Streamline authoring and privacy compliance/risk review.
- Increase clarity on the information being requested in the PIA.
- Simplify work required to document changes.

The new PIA includes:

- An outline of the overall PIA process.
- Increased guidance to PIA authors.
- Improved definition of roles and related expectations.
- More consistent format across all templates.
- Updated guidance questions.

Registration for Privacy Office workshops, supporting the new (2021) templates, will be available on PHSA LearningHub in January 2022.

Projects beginning in January 2022 and onward are to use the new (2021) templates. The legacy PIA templates will be removed from the Privacy Office OurNH page in December 2021.

All legacy template copies external to the Privacy Office OurNH page must also be removed in December 2021.

The new PIA templates will be available on the [Privacy Office OurNH page](#).

If you have any questions, please contact [privacy@northernhealth.ca](mailto:privacy@northernhealth.ca).

### **Dragon Medical One speech recognition webpage now available**

A new webpage has been created on the Northern Health Physicians website that provides information about Northern Health's speech recognition tool, Dragon Medical One.

Dragon Medical One (DMO) is currently available for all NH physicians, with access to be granted to other clinical staff in the near future. A number of resources have been created to help with getting started or optimizing the DMO experience, including:

- How to get started (Access and Training)
- Key Contacts
- DMO Resources
- Frequently Asked Questions
- DMO Pocket Guide
- DMO Fast Tips Pamphlet

The FAQ document, Pocket Guide, and Fast Tips pamphlet can be downloaded; printed copies will also be available in Health Records in the next few weeks.

Visit the [Dragon Speech Recognition website](#) to learn more about Dragon Medical One in Northern Health.

## 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, November 22

- 114 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Fort St John, Mackenzie, Moberly Lake, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Thornhill, Cecil Lake, Houston, Kitimat, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Dawson Creek, Smithers, Surrey, Chetwynd, Quesnel, and Telkwa.

#### Tuesday, November 23

- 85 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Hudson's Hope, Taylor, Terrace, Thornhill, Fort St John, Smithers, Houston, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, Wells, Fort Nelson, Kitimat, Moberly Lake, Prince George, and Chetwynd.

#### Wednesday, November 24

- 86 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Terrace, Kitwanga, Hudson's Hope, Smithers, Quesnel, Thornhill, Cecil Lake, Prince Rupert, Telkwa, Grand Prairie (AB), Houston, Prince George, Sundre (AB).

#### Thursday, November 25

- 63 nursing assessments
- 38 primary care provider appointments from Altona (MB), Forest Grove, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Quesnel, Thornhill, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Kitwanga, Pouce Coupe, Rocky Mountain House, Smithers, Terrace, Chetwynd, and Burns Lake.

#### Friday, November 26

- 66 nursing assessments
- 46 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Charlie Lake, Kitimat, Telkwa, Mackenzie, Quesnel, and Thornhill.

#### Saturday, November 27

- 52 nursing assessments
- 28 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Kitimat, Mackenzie, Masset, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Burnaby, Quesnel, and Victoria.

**Sunday, November 28**

- 66 nursing assessments
- 24 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Quesnel, Terrace, Smithers, Fort St John, Chetwynd, Vanderhoof, Coquitlam, Prince Rupert, Dawson Creek, and Thornhill.

**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](#).