



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**January 18, 2022**

## ***In this issue***

[COVID-19 news and updates](#)

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[Other organizational news](#)

[COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data](#)

[Wellness and more](#)

## **Clinical guidelines**

### **Use of personal protective equipment**

As NH sees an increase in the number of cases of the omicron variant, all staff are asked to stay vigilant in wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

- Wear a medical mask at all times unless eating or drinking.
- Avoid taking off your mask when in close proximity to other people.
- Follow droplet/contact precautions when a patient has respiratory symptoms, known or suspect COVID-19, or when the status is unknown.
- Keep eye protection on in patient care areas, including at the nurse's station.
- Perform a point of care risk assessment to determine if additional PPE is required.
- Wear a fitted N95 respirator for aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMPs) or when deemed necessary by a point of care risk assessment.
- Fit testing for all staff that wear N95s is required annually. Wearers must be clean-shaven where the N95 touches the face and must perform a successful user seal check.

For an overview of current PPE guidance, see the [PPE Required During the COVID-19 Pandemic Quick Reference Guide](#).

### **Sotrovimab: Monoclonal antibody for COVID-19 ambulatory outpatients**

Sotrovimab is a monoclonal antibody that has been shown to neutralize the spike protein of the SARS-COV-2 virus, preventing entry into human cells and replication thereby preventing progression of disease and need for hospitalization. Sotrovimab has demonstrated activity against variants of concern Alpha to Delta and preliminary data suggests it to be effective against Omicron as well. Sotrovimab has been evaluated in a single peer-reviewed, double blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, manufacturer-sponsored trial ([COMET-ICE](#)). The BC COVID Therapeutics Committee has created a [clinical practice guide](#) including an evidence

summary for this agent as well as patient eligibility criteria (please see full memo [\[link\]](#)). Sotrovimab is provided as a one-time IV infusion (500 mg dose) and a [NH parenteral drug administration monograph](#) is available with an order set in development.

NH has sotrovimab doses available from a federal supply; however, there are challenges around patient identification/notification, prescribing and administering within 7 days of symptom onset. Stock is currently available at several sites and can be re-distributed around NH as needed. If you are interested in establishing a local process for provisions of sotrovimab to your patients, please contact (available Mon to Fri 7 am to 4 pm):

- Alicia Rahier (Antimicrobial Stewardship Program Coordinator) 250-612-2030 or
- Ryan Doerksen (NH Medication Use Management Pharmacist) 778-349-5108

For more information, please see [this memo](#).

## COVID-19 news and updates

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### 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 January 10, **20**, **728** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **1, 139**
- New cases: **194**
- Currently in hospital: **10**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **2**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **278**

As of January 18, **22**, **204** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **1, 645**
- New cases: **116**
- Currently in hospital: **28**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **7**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **281**

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](#) – January 17, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – January 12, 2022

## Northern Health is seeking health care workers to provide COVID-19 immunizations

Northern Health is appreciative of all the assistance we have received to date from healthcare providers in the north supporting our COVID-19 immunization clinics. This support has been an integral component of Northern Health's COVID-19 response, administering vaccine doses to mitigate impacts of COVID-19 on our communities and healthcare system.

### Right now we need your help again.

Northern Health is seeking more qualified health-care workers to provide COVID-19 immunizations and support our current booster campaign efforts throughout the region. Qualified health-care providers include a number of occupations (e.g. midwives, practicing and non-practicing physicians, practicing nurses, retired nurses, nursing students, dentists, emergency responders). For a full list of who is qualified under current PHO orders please visit [here](#).

If you are qualified, interested and available to assist with our continuing immunization efforts we encourage you to reach out to us at [pandemicresponse@northernhealth.ca](mailto:pandemicresponse@northernhealth.ca). We will review all expressions of interests and contact you if your availability aligns with clinic opportunities. COVID-19 education and clinic orientation provided.

## COVID-19 testing and self-isolation

As Omicron activity increases across BC, guidance for when to get a COVID-19 test has been updated.

### When to get tested

Some symptoms are more likely to be related to COVID-19 than others. Learn when you should get tested:

- [When to get tested for COVID-19](#) (PDF) - BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)

If you have cold, influenza or COVID-19 symptoms, you must self-isolate:

- [How to self-isolate](#) - BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)

### How to get a test

If you're exhibiting cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms, you can arrange for a test by:

- Completing the [NH COVID-19 test booking form](#)
- Contacting your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner)
- Calling the Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic at [1-844-645-7811](tel:1-844-645-7811)

If you feel unwell and are unsure about your symptoms, contact your health care provider or call [8-1-1](tel:8-1-1).

Still not sure? Use the BC [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if you need to be tested.

More details and a full list of eligible symptoms and criteria is found here: [When to get a COVID-19 test](#).

### Mobile clinics

The Northern Health Mobile Clinic is back, coming to a community near you! Our vans will be traveling to different areas, running mobile clinics throughout many of our Northern communities. These mobile clinics will be offering first dose and second dose to all ages, and booster doses to those who are eligible. To stay updated on a mobile clinic happening in your region, please visit our [website](#) or follow your community page on Facebook.

### 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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### Overdose Alert issued for Northern BC

There has been an increase in overdose events across the Northern region from substances sold as “down.” Down is a street term used to describe opioids or opioid like substances that depress or slow the body down.

Substances circulating are highly toxic and may be further contaminated with benzodiazepines (benzos) causing heavy and prolonged sedation. Although, benzos do not respond to naloxone, due to the presence of opioids in many substances, overdoses may require more naloxone to reverse.

**One of the first signs of an overdose is choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds.**

For more information, please see:

- [Overdose alert poster](#)

- [NH Stories feature](#)
- [NH Overdose prevention page](#)

## Other organizational news

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### Electrocardiogram (ECG)/Holter Monitor Survey

Attention all professions that perform electrocardiograms (ECGs) and/or Holter Monitors. Please complete this [short, voluntary, and anonymous survey](#) to help identify and plan for ongoing education as well as policy development.

Please note: the deadline to complete this survey is February 1, 2022 and is designed only for professions who perform ECGs and/or Holter Monitors.

### Preceptorship in Practice Training now available. Great opportunity for nurses and allied health professionals who provide clinical preceptorship to students

Preceptorship in Practice is a classroom-based learning session designed to provide an interactive learning experience for nurses and allied health professionals who preceptor students.

Topics include:

- The clinical preceptor-preceptee relationship
- How to give effective feedback
- How to facilitate clinical thinking and reasoning
- How to manage challenging preceptorship situations in the clinical setting.

[Register on Learning Hub – Course #27767](#)

**(Space is limited but you may drop in and attend if there is room in the session)**

**One hour sessions, scheduled as follows:**

**January 19 – UHNBC LDC Building, Room 513**

1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm

**January 21- UHNBC LDC Building, Room 513**

9 am, 10 am, 11 am, 1 pm, and 2 pm

**January 25- UHNBC LDC Building, Room 505**

1 pm, 2 pm, and 3 pm

**January 27 – UHNBC LDC Building Room 501**

9 am, 10 am, 11 am, 1 pm, and 2 pm

If you have any questions, contact Cara Visagie at [cara.visagie@northernhealth.ca](mailto:cara.visagie@northernhealth.ca).

## Vestibular Therapy Services

Certified Vestibular Therapist and Physiotherapist, Carly Chuby, is now accepting referrals with a two to three week wait. A referral would benefit patients suffering from or who you think may be suffering from: BPPV, neuritis/labyrinthitis, vestibular migraine, concussion, age-related dizziness and imbalance, and Meniere's disease. Diagnosis, treatment, and reports are provided.

Please send referrals to:  
Altea Physiotherapy and Wellness  
384 Quebec Street  
Prince George, BC V2L 5H4.

Phone: 250-596-0101  
Fax: 250-596-0111

### **Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 34**

The long-term care task group is producing monthly updates for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[This issue](#) provides updated information on visitor restrictions, including essential and social visitor definitions and information on visitor rapid point-of-care testing for COVID-19.

### **Discontinuation of Routine Shielding in Medical Imaging**

Effective January 1, 2022 there are new Diagnostic Accreditation Program (DAP) standards in effect across Northern Health discontinuing the routine gonadal and fetal shielding of patients during medical imaging. The Northern Health policy regarding use of shielding has been revised accordingly (MI RS 2.1).

Discontinuing the use of routinely provided gonadal and fetal shielding is supported by the Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT), Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists (COMP), and the Canadian Association of Radiologists (CAR).

#### **What's driving this update in practice?**

- The human body is not as sensitive to radiation as was once believed
- Patients receive 20-25 times less radiation now, compared to the 1950s
- Bodies are unique and shielding can easily be misplaced
- Poorly placed shielding can impact quality of x-ray and cause the procedure to be repeated
- In 70 years of research, no studies have proven harmful effects of x-rays on reproductive organs or the fetus

#### **Where do I go for more information?**

- For more information on shielding, see the [CAMRT position statement](#) or the [CAR position statement](#).
- For frequently asked questions, see [CAMRT Patient Shielding Position: FAQ](#)
- Additional guidance and [resources from CAMRT](#)
- Patient questions or concerns about their x-ray examination should be directed to their x-ray technologist

## **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 during Winter 2022. Please review this memo for the information that you will need and stay tuned for upcoming schedule announcement.

The fourth and fifth floors at UHNBC will be changed during the week of January 26.

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). **Please note** that 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.

If you have any questions or feedback, please email [phone.help@northernhealth.ca](mailto:phone.help@northernhealth.ca)

## **Announcement – Liaison, Rural Continuing Medical Education**

We are very pleased to announce that Shar McCrory has accepted the position of Liaison, Rural Continuing Medical Education.

For more information, please read the memo attached to the emailed digest.

## Seeking feedback on the NHMAC Cultural Safety Action Plan

Northern Health's work regarding cultural safety and humility focuses on ensuring equity and a system free from stigma, discrimination, and racism for medical staff, employees and those people we serve. In light of the recent attention on systemic racism in the health care system, the Northern Health Medical Advisory Committee (NHMAC) has committed to dedicated leadership and efforts to facilitate this transformation, particularly where it pertains to medical staff.

Please join Northern Health's leadership, including the Northern Health Medical Advisory Committee Chair Dr. Helene Smith, the VP of Indigenous Health Dr. Margo Greenwood, and Dr. Becky Temple, Medical Director, to provide feedback and input into the draft Action Plan. This will be a CME accredited event where leaders will present their initial thoughts on the direction we need to take and provide the opportunity for medical staff to reflect, discuss and provide input into the draft Action Plan.

A second option for this discussion (after the first on January 17) will be held on January 25, 2022 (from 5-6pm), also available on [Zoom](#). For more information, including the links to the Zoom meetings, please see the [CME website](#).

## Physician Quality Improvement champion opportunity

Northern Health would like to invite eligible physicians to indicate their interest in the Physician Quality Improvement (QI) Champion position. The Physician QI Champion will inform the overall direction of the Physician Quality Improvement Program (PQI) in the Northern Health region and co-lead the implementation of the PQI programing in a capacity mutually agreed upon by the PQI resource team and Physician QI Champion. The Physician QI Champion will be paid for up to 100 hours per year. The location is flexible to any site in Northern Health.

Please see the memo attached to the digest email for more information.

## 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, January 3

- 86 nursing assessments
- 53 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, Taylor, Kitwanga, Moricetown, New Aiyansh, and Telkwa

#### Tuesday, January 4

- 191 nursing assessments
- 62 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Burns Lake, Houston, Fort St John, Taylor, Moberly Lake, Terrace, Topley, Dawson Creek, Port Edward, Prince

Rupert, Hazelton, Pouce Coupe, Telkwa, Fraser Lake, Port Edward, Prince George, and Thornhill

**Wednesday, January 5**

- 182 nursing assessments
- 62 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Fraser Lake, Houston, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Telkwa, Terrace, Thornhill, Burns Lake, Calgary (AB), Moricetown, Smithers, and Tumbler Ridge

**Thursday, January 6**

- 190 nursing assessments
- 54 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Chetwynd, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Houston, Fort St John, Fort Fraser, Taylor, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Thornhill, Burns Lake, Tumbler Ridge, and Masset

**Friday, January 7**

- 184 nursing assessments
- 69 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Edmonton (AB), Moricetown, Iskut, Quesnel, Thornhill, Wells, Fraser Lake, Hartley Bay, and Charlie Lake

**Saturday, January 8**

- 86 nursing assessments
- 53 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, Kitwanga, Moricetown, Quesnel, New Aiyansh, and Telkwa

**Sunday, January 9**

- 109 nursing assessments
- 31 primary care provider appointments from Fort St John, Houston, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Prince George, Rolla, Sunset Prairie, Terrace, Thornhill, Valemount, Vanderhoof, Chetwynd, Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, and Moricetown

**Monday, January 10**

- 197 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Houston, New Hazelton, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Telkwa, Terrace, Topley, Fort St John, Moberly Lake, Redcliff (AB), Burns Lake, Prespatou, and Thornhill

**Tuesday, January 11**

- 174 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Fraser Lake

**Wednesday, January 12**

- 190 nursing assessments
- 55 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Hazelton, Houston, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, New Hazelton, and Smithers

**Thursday, January 13**

- 179 nursing assessments
- 53 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Kitwanga, Endako, Fraser Lake, and Telkwa

**Friday, January 14**

- 173 nursing assessments
- 54 primary care provider appointments from Houston, Dawson Creek, Mackenzie, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Fort St John, Kitwanga, Tomslake, Houston, and Topley

**Saturday, January 15**

- 157 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments from Baldonnel, Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Fort Fraser, Fort St John, Houston, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, Smithers, Valemount, Taylor, and Charlie Lake

**Sunday, January 16**

- 173 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Dawson Creek, Houston, Prince Rupert, Fort St John, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, Valemount, Kitwanga, Smithers, Burns Lake, Houston, Montney, Prince George, Witset, and Tumbler Ridge

## **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](#).