



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

February 15, 2022

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Overdose prevention and response

Coroner Reports for Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths up to December 2021

Provincial Summary:

- November 2021 (N=210) and December 2021 (N=215) saw the two largest numbers of suspected deaths ever recorded in a month, which equates to approximately **seven deaths per day**
- In 2021, VCH had the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 49 deaths per 100,000 individuals.

Northern Health Summary:

- Northern Health saw the highest number of deaths ever in 2021 (N=146)
- **NH was second highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province** with a rate of 48 deaths per 100,000 individuals.
- **NH saw the highest rates of illicit toxicity deaths in November and December in the province**
 - November 2021 - 19 illicit drug toxicity deaths (~75 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals)
 - December 2021 - 15 illicit drug toxicity deaths (~60 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals)
- **NW** has seen 41 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 53.2 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the third highest rate in BC.
 - There were four deaths in November
 - There were three deaths in December
 - In 2021, Upper Skeena LHA had the highest rate in BC with a rate of 175.7 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals, with a total of 8 deaths

- In 2021, Terrace LHA was also in the top 10 in BC with a rate of 68.1 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals, with a total of 15 deaths
- **NI** has seen 79 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 51.6 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the fourth highest rate in BC
 - There were 14 deaths in November
 - There were 10 deaths in December
 - In 2021, Nechako LHA was eleventh in BC with a rate of 66.7 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals, with a total of 11 deaths
- **NE** has seen 26 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 35.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the tenth highest rate in BC.
 - There was one death in November
 - There were two deaths in December
 - In 2021, Peace River South LHA was twelfth in BC with a rate of 63.3 illicit toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals, with a total of 18 deaths

Full reports can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We continue to see illicit toxicity deaths primarily in private and other residences. There have been **no deaths at supervised consumption or drug overdose prevention sites**. There is **no indication that prescribed safe supply is contributing to illicit drug deaths**.

Fentanyl and analogues continue to be detected in over 80% of deaths, and there has been an increase of benzodiazepines found in illicit substances making it difficult to respond to drug poisonings/overdoses.

Further resources

- [Benzos with Opioids](#)
- [Fentanyl | Toward the Heart](#)

Clinical guidelines

Primary Care Provider support needed to administer COVID-19 antiviral medication therapy

Patients who test positive for COVID-19 (by PCR or RAT) and are considered clinically extremely vulnerable are eligible for COVID-19 antiviral medication therapy with Paxlovid or Sotrovimab. As time is of the essence for these high-risk individuals, support is needed to ensure at-risk patients can access treatment. Primary Care Providers are asked to help identify patients who meet the risk criteria for COVID-19 antiviral medication therapy and follow up with them if treatment is required.

Please continue reading the memo attached to the original email.

Updated COVID-19 Unit Discharge Checklist

This updated [COVID-19 Unit Discharge Checklist](#) provides steps for discharging COVID-19 patients from hospital. Northern Health public health will no longer contact patients after

discharge to determine any remaining self-isolation requirements. Updated guidance on ceasing isolation for COVID-19 patients is provided in the checklist.

Supporting Indigenous clients seeking COVID-19 testing

If a patient self-identifies as Indigenous (First Nations/Inuit/Metis) at a NH COVID-19 collection centre, how do we support them?

- Symptomatic Indigenous clients are prioritized for COVID-19 testing. They may have been referred to Collection Centres for testing through avenues other than the online booking form (CommForms) and the Virtual Clinic.
- Symptomatic Indigenous clients who request a test through the online booking form or Virtual Clinic are currently prioritized for PCR testing. If they would like a rapid test to take home following their PCR test, please provide one.
- To support Indigenous individuals either living off-reserve or being referred to the Collection Centre by their community provider, please dispense take-home rapid tests regardless of whether there is a requisition in the queue.
- Please do not turn away or deny a take-home rapid test to anyone who self-identifies as Indigenous (First Nations/Inuit/Metis). ID is not required.

For more information, see the [Take-home Rapid Antigen Testing Frequently Asked Questions – COVID-19 Collection Centres](#) or contact [Courtenay Keliher](#).

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 February 14, **27, 239** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- New cases: **61**
- Currently in hospital: **49**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **15**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **293**

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](#) – February 13, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 10, 2022

COVID-19 Restrictions that are changing

Starting February 16 at 11:59 pm, many restrictions will be eased. With proof of vaccination and masks, these activities can return to normal.

- No restrictions on indoor and outdoor personal gatherings
- Full capacity allowed for:
 - Indoor and outdoor organized events
 - Indoor events at venues
 - Exercise and fitness, adult sports activities, tournaments and swimming pools
- Full capacity and fewer restrictions in restaurants, bars, pubs and nightclubs:
 - No limits on table size
 - Normal liquor service hours
 - Customers don't have to remain seated
- Dancing is allowed when wearing a mask indoors

Masks continue to be required in all public indoor settings for all people born in 2017 or earlier (5+). Proof of full vaccination also continues to be required to access some events, services, and businesses in BC.

For more information about all orders, and mask and proof of vaccination, please see the [Government of BC website](#).

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](#).

Other organizational news

NEW Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism practice standard for BC nurses and midwives from BC College of Nurses and Midwives

The BC College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) board approved a new practice standard for all nurses and midwives, *Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism*, on January 27, 2022. This new standard will take effect February 25, 2022.

The purpose of the *Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism* standard is to set clear expectations for BCCNM registrants in providing culturally safe and anti-racist care for indigenous clients. The terms are set out within six core concepts and principles:

1. Self-Reflective practice
2. Building knowledge through education
3. Anti-racist practice
4. Creating safe health care experiences
5. Person-led care
6. Strength-based and trauma-informed practice

The Indigenous cultural safety and humility and anti-racism practice standard and education will be available on the BCCNM website within the practice standard on February 25, 2022. Until that time, here is a link to the new standard: [Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism](#).

Further resources:

- [Cultural safety and humility from the BCCNM site. This includes recommended videos, courses, and reports](#)
- [Information about the In Plain Sight report](#)
- [Northern Health Indigenous Health cultural safety site](#)

Reminder: Required Organizational Practice (ROP) - Home safety risk assessments

Safety risk assessments are conducted for clients receiving services in their homes.

Providing safe care in an unpredictable and/or inconsistent environment poses unique challenges that require engagement and active involvement of staff, clients and their family. The safety of staff, clients and family's needs to be considered for all visits. Empowered and well-informed clients and families are essential to ensuring safety at home and in the community.

See Clinical Practice Standard [Home Safety Risk Assessment](#), the [Home Safety Risk Assessment Poster](#). For more information on all ROPs see the [ROP Handbook](#).

Online survey for health care practitioners – Healthy eating resources and tools

Are you a physician, nurse or nurse practitioner working in primary care? Do you provide food and nutrition guidance to your patients?

The BC Centre for Disease Control would like to better understand your needs around food and nutrition resources and tools to support your practice. The results will help inform the development of new provincial healthy eating resources and tools in the future.

Take the survey

Please click [here](#) to participate in our survey! The survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Enter for a chance to win a \$250 gift card

To show our appreciation for your participation, at the end of the survey you can enter your name into a random draw prize for one of six \$250 e-gift cards from a selection of retailers (like VISA, Amazon, and Walmart).

This survey will close on February 27, so please click [here](#) to participate today.

Webinar: Infant formula - Marketing the \$55 billion industry - Wednesday, February 23

Join this [WHO webinar: Marketing the \\$55 billion formula milk industry](#) for the launch of a new report related to the marketing of infant formula, on Wednesday, February 23 (from 8-9:30 am).

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners will launch a new report, "How the marketing of formula milk influences our decisions on infant feeding."

This report - the largest of its kind to date - draws on the experiences of over 8,500 women and 300 health professionals across eight countries. It exposes the aggressive marketing practices used by the formula milk industry, and highlights impacts on families' decisions about how to feed their babies and young children.

Please visit the webinar [Eventbrite page](#) to register.

Employed Student Nurse Program is accepting applications! Postings open from January 24 – February 18, 2022

The Employed Student Nursing (ESN) Program is now accepting applications for the 2022/23 year.

This year, we are seeking candidates for both summer and year round positions, starting as early as April 2022. We have also revised our application process so that students can identify their preferred practice areas and communities where they are available for work, rather than having to select a single position to submit their application. As part of the application review process, our team will look to match you with an ESN position based on your preferences and availability.

To submit your application, please visit [ExpectMore Competition #5531463](#).

For more information about the program and application process, please visit [the student practice education and new graduate support website](#).

Upcoming conference - Putting Patients First: Registration now open! Deadline March 4, 2022

British Columbia's only patient-oriented research conference will be held virtually this year.

This year's theme is "Listening, Learning, Collaborating and Changing." The two-day virtual event will allow reflections on what we have learned and discussions on where we need to go next informed by phenomenal work occurring across our province and beyond.

This event is not only a celebration of patient-oriented research but also a testament to the hard work of each person involved in the work of the BC SUPPORT Unit. Without the commitment and hard work of each of you, we would not have the opportunity to host this conference (for the fifth time!)

Registration is available at the following [BC SUPPORT Unit registration form](#) and **closes on March 4**. If you have yet to do so, please ensure you register to secure your spot. You are also encouraged to share with your colleagues and communities.

For more information, please see the [Putting Patients First 2022 program at a glance](#).

We look forward to having you join us!

UHNBC phones (second and third floors) will be refreshed Wednesday February 23, 2022! Get the updated PG Phone Refresh Master Phone List and learn more about how this impacts you

We are pleased to announce the upcoming installation of the new Cisco phone system for the second and third floor phone at UHNBC (excluding new wings). 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 [Updated 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

*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

2022 Canadian Conference on Physician Leadership

Are you concerned about your wellbeing, your patients, your planet? COVID-19 has challenged us to improve our approach, to become more adaptive and more inclusive. Join us as we imagine the way forward at the 2022 Canadian Conference on Physician Leadership.

Please see the poster attached to the email update for more information.

Physician Quality Improvement Patient Partners Workshop

Healthcare is all about the patient, so why not ask the patient what would improve the system? NH PQI will be offering a workshop that will help suggest ways to include patient partners on your quality improvement project teams.

This virtual workshop will run on March 9 from 5:30-7:30 pm via Zoom. Please RSVP for the workshop at physicianqi@northernhealth.ca or [the Northern Health Physician Quality Improvement website](#).

Physician Quality Improvement Liberating Structures workshop

Liberating Structures are a fun and engaging way to bring a team together to create some excitement, collaboration and come away with meaningful and practical solutions for improvement. You will learn a few of the skills/tools to apply in your workplace.

This workshop will be offered on April 20, from 5:30-6:30 pm. Reimbursement and CME credit are available.

Please RSVP to physicianpqi@northernhealth.ca or via the [NH PQI website](#).

Town hall meetings and CME events for medical staff

Northern Health has been offering town hall meetings to share information about the COVID-19 pandemic, recruitment and retention strategies, to get feedback on upcoming plans and projects, and more! After every presentation, there will be time for questions and comments. There are also many interesting continuing medical education presentations coming up that we will be showcasing.

For more information about upcoming town hall and education events, including topics for each presentation and how to join the (virtual) meetings, please click into the schedule of events:

- [February 22 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(NHMAC Cultural Safety Action Plan\)](#)
- [March 2 \(5-6 pm\): Pandemic update](#)
- [March 8 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(hospital complaints process\)](#)

Dates and log-in information for these events will be posted to the [Continuing Medical Education site](#). The town hall events will be recorded.

Please contact physician.education@northernhealth.ca for access to the latest town hall recording.

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, February 7

- 204 nursing assessments
- 53 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Houston, Prince George, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Smithers, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Thornhill

Tuesday, February 8

- 179 nursing assessments
- 60 primary care provider appointments Baker Creek, Charlie Lake, Fort St John, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Chetwynd, Hartley Bay, Houston, Kitimat, Moberly Lake, Nass Camp, New Aiyansh, Prince George, Taylor, Terrace, Thornhill, Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Hazelton, and Lax Kw'alaams

Wednesday, February 9

- 161 nursing assessments
- 52 primary care provider appointments from Fort Fraser, Fort St John, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Telkwa, Terrace, Thornhill, Tumbler Ridge, Gitanyow, Kitimat, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Dawson Creek, Valemount, Chetwynd, and Pouce Coupe

Thursday, February 10

- 140 nursing assessments
- 56 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Houston, Masset, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Hartley Bay, Houston, Kitimat, Leduc (AB), Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, Wells, Fort St John, Montney, and Fort St James

Friday, February 11

- 101 nursing assessments
- 55 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Mackenzie, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, Hartley Bay, Prince George, Chetwynd, Houston, Smithers, Kitimat, and Thornhill

Saturday, February 12

- 80 nursing assessments
- 52 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Fort St John, Hazelton, Prince George, Smithers, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Progress, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelso, Haisla, Nazko, Hamilton (ON), Quesnel and Thornhill

Sunday, February 13

- 70 nursing assessments
- 26 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Fort St John, Thornhill, Groundbirch, Terrace, Montney, Dawson Creek, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, and Thornhill

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](#).