



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

March 22, 2022

In this issue

[COVID-19 clinical guidelines](#)

[COVID-19 news and updates](#)

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[Other organizational news](#)

[COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data](#)

[Wellness and more](#)

COVID-19 clinical guidelines

Masking requirements at Northern Health facilities still in effect

Following the [recent announcement from the PHO](#) of the changes to [BC COVID-19 restrictions](#), NH will be looking to transition from our COVID-19 Safety Plans to a general exposure control plan to reduce risk of all communicable disease over the next few weeks.

Until this plan is in place, all NH sites should maintain their current COVID-19 Safety Plans, including:

- Maintain capacity limits on communal spaces to ensure physical distancing, where possible.
- Staff should maintain a two-metre distance from others when eating or drinking.
- Continue to hold education sessions and staff meetings with appropriate physical distancing, where possible.
- Continue to use a principles-based approach to determine the appropriateness of travel.
- Keep existing plexi-glass barriers in place.
- Maintain enhanced cleaning protocols.
- Follow NH visitor guidelines and screening protocols.
- Uphold existing mask protocols for staff, visitors, and patients.
- Use personal protective equipment as indicated by a Point of Care Risk Assessment or department guidelines.
- Staff gatherings such as potlucks, BBQs and staff celebrations are not permitted.
- Maintain current work from home arrangements, where needed.

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 March 21, **29, 149** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- New cases: **8**
- Currently in hospital: **26**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **7**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **322**

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](#) – March 21, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – March 17, 2022

Ongoing support for PPE questions and thank you to PPE Champions

In May 2020, the PPE Champion program was established to ensure each of our communities had a contact for PPE related questions and concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. The local PPE Champions have been invaluable in supporting staff with proper use of PPE, PPE substitutions due to changes in supply chain, and escalation of PPE concerns.

As the provincial PPE supply has stabilized and PPE guidelines have remained consistent, there is no longer a need for dedicated local PPE Champions. Ongoing support for PPE questions (both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related), will be provided by a group of regional PPE Champion Leads consisting of Infection Prevention and Control, Workplace Health and Safety, and Clinical Education. Any NH staff member or physician can send a PPE question directly to PPEChampion@northernhealth.ca. Departmental concerns with local access to PPE should still be directed to the department manager or supervisor.

We would like to take this time to thank the all the PPE Champions for their dedicated work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, to help keep our staff safe.

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

Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE) harm reduction toolkit – Soft launch

A soft launch of the [CATIE Harm Reduction Fundamentals – A Toolkit for Service Providers](#) has been opened.

This toolkit provides foundational information on harm reduction for service providers working with people who use drugs (including support workers, outreach workers, nurses, and workers with lived and living experience). The toolkit is free to access and is available to anyone to use or share for personal learning, organizational trainings and/or other capacity-building efforts.

The toolkit contains four units that can be accessed individually, or completed together for a more comprehensive overview of harm reduction fundamentals. Organizations and individual learners can decide which parts of the toolkit are most appropriate for them.

- Unit 1: Setting a Foundation for Harm Reduction (open)
- Unit 2: Harm Reduction Principles and Practices (open)
- Unit 3: Drug Use, Health and Harm Reduction (forthcoming)
- Unit 4: Supporting Harm Reduction Service Provider Capacity (forthcoming)

The CATIE team would appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the evaluation surveys at the end of each unit.

Other organizational news

Enhancing orthopedic services in the Northeast

Northern Health is re-establishing an orthopedic surgical service in Fort St. John to enable a higher level trauma centre and more complex orthopedic surgery to be provided in Northeast BC. Orthopedic surgical services will be increased in Fort St. John, together with other trauma-related specialties including Critical Care, Internal Medicine, and General Surgery.

To continue reading, and for more information, please see the [NH Stories site](#).

What do you do if you're facing an ethical dilemma?

NH Ethics Service can support you to identify, analyze, and resolve ethical issues that arise during the provision of clinical care, during the creation of guidelines and policies, or during the organizational decision-making process. Please reach out to us at ethics@northernhealth.ca.

Client Identification 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.

Client identification stresses the importance of always using the two person-specific client identifiers to confirm that clients are receiving the service or procedure intended for them. This is a proven way to reduce errors such as privacy breaches, allergic reactions, discharge of client to the wrong families, medication errors, and wrong-person procedures.

Examples of person-specific client identifiers are full name, date of birth, registration numbers such as PHN (provincial health number) or MRN (medical record number), an accurate picture or double witnessing. Two person-specific client identifiers may be taken from a single source, such as the client wristband. A client's room number or name on a wheelchair is not to be used as a client identifier.

For more information, please see:

- [Patient/Resident Identification Policy 4-2-3-080](#)
- [Client Identification - FAQ](#)
- [Client Identification Poster](#)
- [ROP Handbook](#)

Beth Ann Derksen is the steward for the Client Identification ROP and can be contacted at BethAnn.Derksen@northernhealth.ca for more information.

New Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) templates now available!

Northern Health uses a privacy impact assessment to evaluate privacy compliance issues, privacy risks and related mitigations before an initiative is launched. In November 2021, significant amendments to BC's privacy law, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA), received Royal Assent. Several of these changes introduced updated or new requirements that Northern Health (NH) must satisfy, when conducting privacy impact assessments (PIA).

To support these requirements, NH PIA templates have been updated for 2022. The updates ensure NH is completing PIA activity in compliance with BC privacy law.

The 2022 NH PIA templates include the following:

- Updates to Collection, Use and Disclosure

- Updates to Security of Personal Information
- Updates to Accuracy, Correction and Retention
- New section when Disclosing personal information outside of Canada
- New section for Personal Information Banks
- New section for Information Sharing Agreement supplement
- Short cuts to 'skip' PIA questions when they do not apply to an initiative
- Increased support for PIA Authors by adding:
 - An outline of the end-to-end PIA process
 - Tips on how to complete the PIA
 - Improved definition of roles and related expectations
 - More consistent format
 - Updated guidance questions with more natural language where available
 - Increased 'white space' to ease consumption of complex PIA topics

More detailed information is available in the [Privacy Office posting](#) (OurNH link). Training [courses](#) are published on PHSA LearningHub. PIA templates are always available on the [Privacy Office OurNH page](#) under **PIA related content - Privacy Impact Assessment**. If you have any questions, you may contact privacy@northernhealth.ca.

Brown Bag Lunch Session - March 24, 2022

Please join Dr. Raelene Marceau, NP-PHC, BScN, MN, PhD (Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, Associate Professor, and Coordinator of the Northern Baccalaureate Program, School of Nursing at UNBC) via [Zoom on Thursday March 24](#) (from 12:15-1pm - meeting ID: 679 1681 0182; passcode: brownbag) for a Brown Bag Lunch Session!

Dr. Marceau will be presenting on **Sustainability Failure: Understanding the Factors Influencing Sustainability of Innovations in the Canadian Healthcare System**. For more information about the event, please see the [poster on OurNH](#). Brown Bag Lunch Sessions are all accredited and physicians are eligible for Mainpro+ and MOC Section 1 credits. Please ensure to sign in at each session in order for the CME program to provide you with a certificate of attendance. If you would like to present at a Brown Bag Lunch Session, please complete and submit a [presentation form](#). For more information about upcoming sessions, please visit the [Brown Bag Lunch series webpage](#).

NEW Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 36: Information for residents and families

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

[Issue 36](#) of the long-term care and assisted living digest is now available. This issue provides updated information on resuming social visits in long-term care and rapid point-of-care testing for COVID-19.

Get the latest research and knowledge translation highlights! The fourth edition research and knowledge translation newsletter is now available

The new [research and knowledge translation newsletter](#) (OurNH link) highlights knowledge translation and research activities being supported or developed in Northern Health or in

collaboration with our partners. It also includes useful information and educational content for researchers and various stakeholders.

If you liked to be a contributor or have questions, please contact marcelo.bravo@northernhealth.ca.

Education session – Understanding NH Lactation Services: Overview and Q+A with regional NH Lactation Consultant, Brittney McCullough

- Do you have practice questions about supporting families who are experiencing breastfeeding challenges (e.g. painful latch, use of a nipple shield, or supplementation by bottle)?
- Are you looking to strengthen your practice in providing virtual breastfeeding support?
- Did you know that NH has a lactation consultant who can provide support to health care providers and clients across the region?

Learn more in an upcoming session: [Understanding NH Lactation Services: Overview and Q&A](#). This session will provide an overview of regional NH Lactation Support services by Brittney McCullough, regional NH Lactation Consultant (LC), based in Prince George. In this session, Brittney will:

- Describe specialized breastfeeding support by an LC
- Describe how to refer clients to regional Lactation Support services
- Provide tips and tricks for offering basic breastfeeding support to families in a virtual way

Two session options are available:

- Tuesday, April 12, 2022 - 9:30-11 am
- Wednesday, April 20, 2022 - 1-2:30 pm

Register on the LearningHub: [NHA – CL – Understanding NH Lactation Services: Overview and Q+A](#)

Note: Health professionals who support families with infant feeding are recommended to take at least 20 hours of breastfeeding education, such as the Step 2 Breastfeeding Essentials course (access to which can be requested [here](#))

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:

- [April 4 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Health Authority Organizational Structures and Co-Leadership\)](#)
- [April 19 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Addressing Patient Safety Events\)](#)

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, March 14

- 45 nursing assessments
- 54 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Endako, Fort St John, Houston, Kitimat, Kitwanga, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, and Thornhill

Tuesday, March 15

- 52 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Arras, Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Fraser Lake, Kitimat, Kitwanga, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Taylor, Terrace, Thornhill, and Tumbler Ridge

Wednesday, March 16

- 40 nursing assessments
- 55 primary care provider appointments Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Kitwanga, Mackenzie, Port Edward, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Rolla, Terrace, Thornhill, and Tumbler Ridge

Thursday, March 17

- 57 nursing assessments
- 57 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Charlie Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St John, Houston, Kitimat, Moberly Lake, Port Edward, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, South Hazelton, Terrace, and Tumbler Ridge

Friday, March 18

- 33 nursing assessments
- 62 primary care provider appointments from Bella Bella, Burns Lake, Cecil Lake, Coquitlam, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Groundbirch, Mackenzie, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, Thornhill, Tumbler Ridge, Witset, and Wonowon

Saturday, March 19

- 12 nursing assessments
- 42 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Clearwater, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Kitimat, Masset, Moberly Lake, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Thornhill, Toms Lake, and Wonowon

Sunday, March 20

- 15 nursing assessments
- 39 primary care provider appointments from Assiniboine, Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St John, Houston, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Pouce Coupe, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, and Valemount

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](#).