



# MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

*A weekly update for medical staff*

**April 12, 2022**

## ***In this issue***

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[COVID-19 clinical guidelines](#)

[COVID-19 news and updates](#)

[Other organizational news](#)

[COVID-19 Virtual Clinic data](#)

[Wellness and more](#)

## **Overdose prevention and response**

### **Coroner Reports for Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths up to February 28, 2022. Released April 12, 2022**

#### **Summary**

- In February 2022, there were 174 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths. This is the highest number of deaths ever recorded in the month of February.
- The number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in February 2022 equates to about 6.2 deaths per day.
- In 2022, 74% of those dying were aged 30 to 59, and 78% were male.

#### **Northern Health Summary**

- **In 2022, NH has the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 62.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=32).**
- February 2022 saw a decrease in the NH rate from January; the rate decreased to ~50 deaths per 100,000 individuals (n=13) from ~75 deaths per 100,000 individuals (n = 19)
- **NW** has seen 7 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 53.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the fifth highest rate in BC.
  - 4 illicit drug toxicity deaths in February 2022
- **NI** has seen 19 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 85.2 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the third highest rate in BC
  - 8 illicit drug toxicity deaths in February 2022
- **NE** has seen 6 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 81.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the sixth highest rate in BC.
  - 1 illicit drug toxicity death in February 2022.

## Resources

[Illicit drug overdose death report](#) (Data to Feb. 28, 2022)

[Illicit drug toxicity: Type of drug data report](#) (Data to Feb. 28, 2022)

## COVID-19 clinical guidelines

---

### Update: Treatment of COVID-19 in mild-moderately ill patients

Today, the BC COVID Therapeutics Committee has released new guidance that remdesivir to be used as the first-line alternative IV treatment if nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid®) cannot be prescribed.

On March 25, 2022, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revoked the Emergency Use Authorization for sotrovimab (Xevudy) in regions where the prevalence of the Omicron variant BA.2 exceeds 50%. The proportion of BA.2 in BC has continued to increase in an exponential way. In the surveillance period ending March 14th, 2022, whole genome sequencing showed a 75% prevalence in all Health Authorities except Interior Health (~55%). BCCDC predict that in April, BA.2 prevalence will exceed 90%.

All updated materials have been posted on the [BCCDC website for professionals](#). Patient information has also been updated on [BCCDC website](#) and the [government website](#). Please see posted information on [NH physician website](#) for more details.

### Transitioning from a COVID-19 Safety Plan to a Communicable Disease Exposure Control Plan

As COVID-19 restrictions are easing across the province, Northern Health will also see the easing of some control measures in our facilities as we move to a Communicable Disease Exposure Control Plan (ECP). However, even as these measures are reduced, we need to continue working in ways that reduce transmission of COVID-19.

For example, room capacity limits and set physical distancing requirements that were put in place for COVID-19 may be removed, but rooms/areas should be still be arranged to maximize the distance between people and respect personal space.

For more information on changing restrictions in health care facilities, see the [Transitioning from a COVID-19 Safety Plan to a Communicable Disease ECP FAQ](#).

## 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 April 7\*, **29, 443** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- New cases: **145**
- Currently in hospital: **16**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **3**

- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **330**

\*Please note that the [BC COVID-19 Dashboard](#) will be updated every Thursday afternoon at 1 pm. Please see the [BC Government website](#) for more information.

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 weekly pandemic update](#) – April 7, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – April 7, 2022

### 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

---

#### Locum Opportunity: Fort St. James, April 14, 2022

Please see the document attached to the weekly digest email for an opportunity (including compensation information) to accept a locum opportunity in Fort St. James on April 14, from 5 pm-8 am. Contact information to accept the opportunity or ask any question you may have is on the attached document.

#### NH physician highlight: Family doctors and specialists work together to improve patient health pre- and post-surgery (Doctors of BC)

Bring together family doctors and specialists, a team of other health care professionals, and the right supports to spur innovation - and magic happens.

Urologist Dr Alym Abdulla, family physician Dr Rachel McGhee and a surgical support team at University Hospital of Northern BC (UHNBC) are great examples of this. With funding and support from all four Joint Collaborative Committees, the team prepares patients for elective surgery by helping to manage their health challenges before they go into the operating room.

To continue reading the article, please visit the [Doctors of BC website](#).

## **TECVancouver 2022: Technologies in Emergency Care "Virtual+" Conference**

Registration is now open for the [TECVancouver 2022 Technologies in Emergency Care "Virtual+" Conference](#) on May 13-14 in Vancouver. Please see the website and document attached to the digest email for more information.

## **Celebrate National Medical Laboratory Week April 10-16**

Medical laboratory professionals perform millions of lab tests every day. The information they provide helps to diagnose everything from cancer to COVID-19, though the important work they do often goes unseen. This week, we celebrate the hundreds of medical laboratory professionals on the [Northern Health team](#) working tirelessly on the front lines. Thank you for your resilience, dedication, and invaluable contributions to the communities you serve.

To learn more about the important role medical laboratory professionals play in a patient's health care journey, [the Medical Laboratory Professionals website](#).

## **The all-new Board and Executive Scorecard is now available! Get easier access to clinical and corporate key performance indicators**

The [Board and Executive Scorecard \(B&E\)](#) (under the Managers section on the left side from this link) was re-developed, in close collaboration with several organizational leaders, to provide board and executive leadership easier access to clinical and corporate key performance indicators.

The B&E is our most strategic performance measurement tool and the new product features the following dedicated views specific to user needs, the summary tab, indicator view, comparison view, and priority view. Please [access the tool](#) to explore what is offered in each of these features (click to view the image above the "what does this report do?" title). You can also read more [information on OurNH](#). If you have any questions or feedback, please contact [StrategicAnalytics@northernhealth.ca](mailto:StrategicAnalytics@northernhealth.ca).

## **Prescribing physical activity to improve arthritis management – Public health webcast**

Based in New York State, the Center for Public Health Continuing Education is hosting a free, live [webcast](#) on Monday, May 9, 2022 at 6 am. Topics for this webcast will include how, in spite of evidence that physical activity and exercise ease arthritis pain and improve the quality of life of adults living with arthritis, most adults living with arthritis limit their physical activity levels.

Health care providers play an important role in helping patients with arthritis become physically active to reduce their pain through physical activity assessment, prescribing physical activity, and referring to arthritis-appropriate evidence-based interventions. Target Audience includes physicians, physician assistants, nurses and nurse practitioners, particularly working in orthopedics and rheumatology, along with pharmacists, social workers and community health/public health professionals. On Demand access will be available two weeks after the live webcast.

### **Community voices on tapping into tech: Parent/Guardian survey**

Parents or guardians of children aged birth to six years with neurodiversity, developmental delays, disability, and/or a complex medical conditions and living in rural or northern BC are invited to participate in a [10-15 minute survey](#). This survey is about how technologies (such as apps, videoconferencing, texting, social media messaging, or phone calls) can be used as part of a long-term strategy to access child health and/or early child development and intervention information, services and supports.

The survey is voluntary and anonymous, and your input will help to inform how technologies can be used to help parents connect with early child development and health professionals, in addition to in-person visits.

For more information, or to complete the survey by mail or phone, please contact Theresa:

Telephone: 250-472-5504

Email: [tappingintotech@uvic.ca](mailto:tappingintotech@uvic.ca)

Website: <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/tappingintotech/>

The survey is open until May 15, 2022.

### **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 19 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Addressing Patient Safety Events\)](#)
- [April 25 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Vaccine Updates with Dr. Abu Hamour, Tanis Hampe, Dr. Jong Kim\)](#)
- [May 10 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Incorporating the Physician Voice at Northern Health\)](#)
- May 25 (5-6 pm): To be determined

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](mailto: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, April 4

- 38 nursing assessments
- 53 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Granisle, Houston, Hudson's Hope, Kitimat, Laxkw'alaams, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Progress, Terrace, Thornhill, and Tumbler Ridge

#### Tuesday, April 5

- 28 nursing assessments
- 42 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Moberly Lake, Pouce Coupe, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Taylor, and Terrace

#### Wednesday, April 6

- 49 nursing assessments
- 56 primary care provider appointments from Atlin, Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Kitwanga, Masset, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, and Thornhill

#### Thursday, April 7

- 54 nursing assessments
- 56 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Fort St John, Hartley Bay, Houston, Kitimat, Marquis (SK), Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, and Thornhill

#### Friday, April 8

- 57 nursing assessments
- 24 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson, Fort St John, Groundbirch, Masset, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Rolla, Taylor, Telkwa, Terrace, and Tumbler Ridge

#### Saturday, April 9

- 42 nursing assessments
- 33 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Telkwa, Terrace, Tumbler Ridge, and Welland (ON)

**Sunday, April 10**

- 39 nursing assessments
- 23 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Hudson's Hope, Houston, Kitimat, Masset, Prespatou, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace, and Tumbler Ridge

**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](#).