



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

May 3, 2022

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COVID-19 clinical guidelines

Prescribing therapies for mild-moderate COVID-19 (April 28 update)

Please see the [physicians' website for an update regarding the BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee \(CTC\) guidance](#) on the most current research on the use of therapies in the management of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Case and Contact Management (CCM) transitioning to routine Reportable Communicable Disease (RCD) follow-up processes

Effective at the end of day April 14, 2022, the Case and Contact Management (CCM) team stopped calling individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (by a PCR test) to provide follow-up. COVID-19 case and contact management is transitioning to a model of follow-up that is applied to other communicable diseases. COVID-19 management is shifting to focus on clusters and outbreaks in high-risk settings, such as acute care and long-term care facilities, as the most effective and efficient approach to reduce transmission and hospitalizations in these settings. This approach reflects current risks (COVID-19 transmissibility) and protections (COVID-19 vaccinations and treatments). Surveillance for COVID-19 continues, as with all reportable communicable diseases. For more information, please see the [Memo – COVID-19 Case and Contact Management transitioning to routine follow-up](#) (OurNH link).

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 28, **29, 815** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- New cases: **118**
- Currently in hospital: **24**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **5**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **335**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated every Thursday. 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](#).

- [BC COVID-19 weekly pandemic update](#) – April 28, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – April 28, 2022

Register for the upcoming BC ECHO Post-COVID-19 Recovery session May 10! Presented by Dr. Ric Arseneau, General Internist from St. Paul's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital.

Based on the [global ECHO model](#), the BC ECHO for Post-COVID-19 Recovery (part of the Post-COVID Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network) is a free virtual learning community of specialists and community health care providers who use instructive and case-based learning to improve care for patients recovering from post-COVID symptoms. Each monthly ECHO session begins with a 30-minute presentation from specialists on participant-identified topics, followed by a case presentation submitted by any participant, and wraps with resources and recommendations.

The tenth session, "Post-COVID-19 Recovery: An Overview of Long-Haulers," will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 from 12-1pm. For information about the session, speaker, and to register, please visit [the registration link](#). For details about the presentations, future sessions, and recordings of past sessions, please visit the [BC ECHO for Post-COVID-19 Recovery website](#). Please visit the [Post-COVID Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network \(PC-ICCN\) website](#) for more information about this program as well.

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

Coroners Report for Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths: Data until the end of March 2022

Summary

- In March 2022, there were 165 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths. This is the second highest number of deaths ever recorded in the month of March.
- The total of 165 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths represent a five per cent decrease from the number of deaths in March 2021 (174) and a five per cent decrease from the number of deaths occurring in February 2022 (174).
- The number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in March 2022 equates to about 5.3 deaths per day.
- In 2022, 74% of those dying were aged 30 to 59, and 77% were male.

Northern Health Summary

- NH has the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 52.3 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=40), in 2022. Overall, the rate in BC is 42 deaths per 100,000 individuals in 2022.
- In March 2022, there was approximately a 53% drop in the rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths compared to the previous month; ~33 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=8) in March 2022 compared to ~70 deaths per 100,000 individuals in February 2022
- **NW** has seen 11 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 56.4 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the fifth highest rate in BC.
 - March 2022 there were four illicit drug toxicity deaths
- **NI** has seen 22 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 56.8 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the fourth highest rate in BC
 - March 2022 there were three illicit drug toxicity deaths
- **NE** has seen seven illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2022 for a rate of 38.2 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the ninth highest rate in BC.
 - March 2022 there was one illicit drug toxicity death

Reports

- [Illicit drug toxicity deaths in BC](#)
- [Illicit drug toxicity type of drug data](#)

Other organizational news

UHNBC Pacemaker Program Limited Coverage (May 1 – May 7, 2022)

The UHNBC pacemaker program will have limited coverage starting May 1 until May 7, 2022. The memo attached to the email digest provides direction for Northern Health pacemaker referrals during this time period.

Lab Outpatient Improvement Project

Northern Health has initiated its Lab Outpatient Improvement Project. This means we have some new features that will be implemented to improve patient care and experience. Northern Health Authority would like to take this opportunity to remind all Care providers and clinic staff of mandatory Lab Orderable requirements. For more information, please see the resources linked in the emailed digest.

Resources

- Memo to physicians and clinics
- Unsuccessful booking form
- NH Standard outpatient laboratory requisition with highlights
- BC Ministry outpatient laboratory requisition with highlights

Announcement – HR Advisor (Medical Affairs)

Please welcome Sue Samuelson to the position of HR Advisor (Medical Affairs). Sue will be working closely with the Medical Affairs Leadership including closely with Dr. Becky Temple in the Enhanced Medical Affairs Support work development. Sue started on April 25 and will be working remotely.

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

Information & Data Hub: Facilitating access to data for secondary use

The Information and Data (ID) Hub is a centralized service used to support and coordinate information, data, and statistics requests from NH staff, physicians, partners, researchers, and anyone looking for secondary use data to support their question or project. Using the ID Hub means that important details about your data request are relayed to the right NH analytics and/or reporting team, resulting in more accurate and efficient responses.

Resources:

- Further information about the ID Hub: Please see the memo in the emailed digest
- ID Hub Data Request Form: Please see the memo in the emailed digest

Physiotherapy month – Week one challenge

Welcome to the week one challenge of Physiotherapy Month! This week's challenge is to log 15 minutes of exercise from Monday to Friday. Also, you will receive a bonus entry if you complete an exercise session with a Speech Language Pathologist to help celebrate Speech and Hearing Month. Don't forget to track your activity on the challenge tracking sheet in the emailed digest for a chance to be entered in to win a Prepaid Visa Gift Card!

Did you know?

The [24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#) recommend that Canadian adults aged 18-64 perform 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every week. Starting with 15 minutes every day is a good way to start to build up your tolerance and work towards the 150 minutes every week! If you have questions or concerns about physical activity, a physiotherapist will be able to give you specific recommendations based on your individual situation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact [Stephanie Haberstock](#) (Regional Clinical Practice Lead, Physiotherapy) via email or 250-219-0074.

Now Available: Northern Health Antimicrobial Mobile Assistant – Firstline (formerly known as Spectrum)

What is it?

- Firstline is a mobile app that can be customized to deliver local antimicrobial stewardship and infectious diseases resources within any hospital or health system.

How do we access it?

- Download the mobile app for free from your app store (available for IOS and android) or access [online](#) from your desktop.

How do we navigate it?

- Go to the [NH Antimicrobial Stewardship](#) page for an intro on navigating the application

Please note: the new guidelines for mild-moderately ill COVID-19 patients are also available in Firstline (including contact information for COVID-19 therapy support).

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:

- [May 10 \(5-6 pm\): Northern Education Rounds \(Incorporating the Physician Voice at Northern Health\)](#)
- May 25 (5-6 pm): Town Hall (Northern Health is going from paper to digital: What is the plan?)
 - Speakers: Bjorn Butow (Director, Clinical Information Systems), Dana Cole, (Regional Director, Pharmacy Services; Clinical Lead, Safer Care), and Dr. Andrew Deonarine (Medical Lead, Informatics)
 - [Join via Zoom](#)
- May 26 (12-1 pm): Northern Health Indigenous Health presents: Northern Realities in the NH region (one hour CME)
 - [Join via Zoom](#)
- June 16 (12-1 pm): Northern Health Indigenous Health presents: BC First Nations Health Governance Structures (one hour CME)
 - [Join via Zoom](#)

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, April 25

- 21 nursing assessments
- 58 primary care provider appointments from Big Lake Ranch, Burns Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, New Hazelton, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Progress, Quesnel, Smithers, and Terrace

Tuesday, April 26

- 19 nursing assessments
- 48 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Fraser, Fort St John, Hudson's Hope, Mackenzie, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Queen Charlotte, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, and Tumbler Ridge

Wednesday, April 27

- 20 nursing assessments
- 52 primary care provider appointments from Blueberry River, Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Kitimat, Masset, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Telegraph Creek, Terrace, and Victoria

Thursday, April 28

- 42 nursing assessments
- 72 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Edmonton (AB), Fort St John, Houston, Kincolith, Kitimat, Kitkatla, Port Edward, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Taylor, Terrace, and Thornhill

Friday, April 29

- 40 nursing assessments
- 64 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St James, Fort St John, Hazelton, Houston, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Smithers, Terrace and Thornhill

Saturday, April 30

- 22 nursing assessments
- 41 primary care provider appointments from Charlie Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St John, Houston, Kitimat, Mackenzie, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Rolla, Smithers, Terrace, Thornhill, and Topley

Sunday, May 1

- 10 nursing assessments
- 52 primary care provider appointments from Burns Lake, Charlie Lake, Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort Fraser, Fort St John, Houston, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Rolla, Smithers, Terrace, Thornhill, 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](#).