



COVID-19 DAILY DIGEST

MEDICAL STAFF

Monday, April 20, 2020

Physician updates will be sent out Monday to Friday. For the latest news and resources on COVID-19, visit the [Coronavirus page on OurNH](#) or on the [physician website](#). Printable PDFs of these updates are on the physician website.

Provincial case counts and statements

- **As of April 18, 2020**, there were **34** confirmed COVID-19 cases in NH.
- **Province of BC statistics:**
 - Confirmed cases: **1647** (**29** new)
 - Deaths: **81** (**4** new)
 - In hospital: **115** (**54** in ICU)
 - Recovered: **987**
- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – April 18, 2020

New dashboard provides detailed look at BC data

For data broken down by health authority, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#) (may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested).

BCCDC testing guidelines have changed: COVID-19 testing now available to all who need it

As the Province moves to the next phase of its COVID-19 testing strategy, access to COVID-19 testing is expanding. Until now, we needed to focus our testing resources on those who were most at risk: health-care workers, essential services providers, and people who were vulnerable to complications due to COVID-19.

We now have capacity in the health care system to broaden testing to help make sure we are not missing cases, outbreaks and clusters in communities. This means that any British Columbian who has symptoms of a cold, of influenza, or of COVID-19 can now be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test from a physician, nurse practitioner, or local community collection centre (testing centre). For information on NH tests and collection centres (testing centres), call the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line at 1-844-645-7811, or see the [list of NH collection centres](#).

While testing is now broadly available, not everyone needs a test. If you have no symptoms, the test has limited benefit. If someone has no symptoms, even if they're a contact of a confirmed case or a returning traveller, they do not require a test.

For more information:

- [NH handout /poster](#)
- [BC COVID-19 testing guidelines](#)
- [Updated BCCDC Testing page](#)
- [Updated BCCDC Lab Testing page](#)
- [Interactive map of BC collection centres \(testing centres\)](#) (may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested)

COVID-19 in-house testing

- **COVID-19 in-house testing available at UHNBC starting April 21.**
 - **In house testing will be expanded to Mills Memorial Hospital and Fort St. John Hospital in the near future.**
- Due to a limited supply of test kits, testing will be limited to:
 - Inpatients or patients likely to be admitted
 - Residents of long term care facilities
- Other urgent requests for testing can be discussed with a pathologist on a case-by-case basis. We hope to expand testing if the supply of test kits improves.
- Samples that are not tested in-house will continue to be tested at LifeLabs.

For further details, see the [full memo](#).

Inpatient echocardiogram during COVID-19

- Continue protocolling echocardiogram requests as previously instructed.
- Inpatient echocardiogram for patients with pending COVID-19 results should be postponed until the Covid-19 results are available.
- Before proceeding with an echocardiogram on a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, always consult with the scheduled locum echocardiogram radiologist/cardiologist to discuss a focused/limited study for a specific clinical question.

For further details, see the [full memo](#).

Covid-19 Palliative Care Symptom Management – patients outside ICU

The Northern Health palliative care consultation team has adapted a provincially developed [symptom management algorithm](#) for Northern Health use. This algorithm has been shared and endorsed by the NH palliative care task group.

The algorithm is based on provincial palliative care best practices, symptom guidelines, and input from palliative care specialists and will be adapted as necessary.

For further details, see the [full memo](#).

New “5-minute drill” sessions on COVID-19 ethics for LTC / AL staff and physicians

These discussion-based exercises take only 5 - 20 minutes. The short sessions are less taxing for staff in respect to shift coverage and time constraints, and can be done on duty.

These facility-led drills can be conducted with your staff at a time that works for your team. To conduct a drill, please use the [Facilitators' Package](#) for assistance, and then report the completed drill to hembc@northernhealth.ca using the [5-Minute Drill evaluation form \(OurNH\)](#).

Defending against COVID-19 cyber scams

Northern Health's Information Security team warns individuals to remain vigilant for scams related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Cyber criminals are sending emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites to trick victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities or causes. Exercise caution in handling any email with a COVID-19-related subject line, attachment, or hyperlink, and be wary of social media pleas, texts, or calls related to COVID-19.

For further details, see the [full memo](#).

Autopsies on suspected and confirmed COVID-19 decedents

- An autopsy request on a suspected COVID-19 death should have samples taken to assess for COVID-19 infection before the decision of a post-mortem exam is made.
- Northern Health will not offer autopsy services on confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 decedents.
- The decision of being able to provide medical autopsy service at a given hospital during this public health emergency of the COVID-19 infection outbreak will be made by the pathologist based on the ability to provide the service with the consideration of an appropriate facility and personal protective equipment on a case by case basis.

For further details, see the [full memo](#).

Concerns about those not following public health advice or orders

- **Individuals are asking who they can call to report when they observe people not following public health advice or orders.**
 - Concerns regarding compliance with the Provincial Health Officer's orders should be directed to **1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319)** or a local bylaw office.
 - Local bylaw officers in most communities have been asked to help ensure compliance with the Provincial Health Officer's orders around physical distancing.
- These officers will provide public health agencies with recommendations and advice on whether further action is necessary; any enforcement by police will be at the direction of the Provincial Health Officer or local medical health officer.

- **To ensure officers are available to deal with serious issues, the Province is asking that people contact bylaw officers only for blatant and egregious offences that are putting everyone's safety at risk.**

Physicians in self-isolation

If you're a physician in self-isolation, email Susan Trenholm: Susan.Trenholm@northernhealth.ca

Resources available for stress and emotional support

Support Lines

- **Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)**
 - **1-844-751-2133** – 24/7 crisis counselling support and/or referral to community resources.
- **Physician Health Program** – supports available through Doctors of BC
 - Refer to information online at: [Doctors of BC: Physician Health Program](#)
- **BC Crisis Line**
 - Call **310-6789** for access to 24/7 crisis services.

Trusted links and resources

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control new today page](#)
- [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 COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- For **non-medical information or to report concerns regarding non-compliance with public health orders**, 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 webpage on current health topics](#). This page has links to the latest joint statements and orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer and a link to the Government of Canada's travel advice and advisories.

24/7 Physician Call Centre

- Number: 250-645-7897
- Local: 507897
- Toll Free: 1-833-645-7897

Rural Outreach Support group (ROSe) for COVID-19

24/7 additional information, support, or guidance

- Toll Free: 1-888-918-0626