



COVID-19 DIGEST

MEDICAL STAFF

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Physician updates will be sent out Monday, Wednesday, and 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 28, 2020, there were **45** confirmed COVID-19 cases in NH.
- **Province of BC statistics:**
 - Confirmed cases: **2,053** (**55** new)
 - Deaths: **105** (**2** new)
 - In hospital: **94** (**37** in ICU)
 - Recovered: **1,231**
- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – April 28, 2020

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).

NH risk stratification tool to guide level of care for adult patients with COVID-19

- The NH COVID-19 Therapeutics and Treatment Committee has developed [clinical criteria to guide decision-making regarding where patients should be receiving care](#).
- Research was done to review guidelines, decision tools, and experiences of other centres documented in the literature. The NH Transfer Algorithm was also consulted.
- The patient characteristics included in this document are subjective and never a replacement for clinical judgment. Emphasis is placed on early consultation with specialists and early consideration for higher-level acute care.
- The Therapeutics Committee will continue to monitor the literature for additional evidence and information and will provide updates to the algorithm as appropriate.

COVID-19 testing guidance: April 27 update – new code added

- Guidelines for COVID-19 testing in BC are updated based on testing capacity, changing epidemiology, and our evolving understanding of test sensitivity in clinical settings.
- There is evidence that community transmission of COVID-19 has decreased. In this context, it is critical to ensure timely identification of new infections and their contacts to prevent a re-emergence of COVID-19.
- The [most current guidelines](#) are available on the BCCDC website and in the [full memo](#) (revised on April 27).
- **IMPORTANT:** Please note that the following new code was recently added to both the memo linked to above, and to the BCCDC site:
 - **CGT** – People living in congregate settings such as work camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors' residences.

New package of palliative care resources

The Northern Health EOC Palliative Care Task Group has developed a package of palliative care clinical resources to assist clinicians in providing palliative care for COVID-19 patients.

These resources are intended to provide guidance for primary care providers who are palliating COVID-19 patients across various care settings and include:

- Clinical Guidelines and pre-printed order sets
- Guiding principle documents
- Supportive documents for clinicians, patients and families

For further information, including links to supporting documents, see the [full memo](#).

Ventilator filtration resource guide now available

- Five additional adult ventilators have been received from the provincial emergency supply, bringing our total to 21 ventilators.
- With lower than expected hospital admissions, ventilator capacity exceeds demand at this time, a good position to be in.
- A [resource guide on ventilator filtration](#) has been developed: proper ventilator filtration is important in reducing the risk of infection spread.

ICU communication toolkit available

As part of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak response, a [communication toolkit](#) was developed in anticipation that we will see an increase in patients who require intubation and are not able to communicate easily. Each ICU nursing leader in Northern Health will soon receive several copies of the toolkit from DocumentSource.

The use of standardized assisted communication will ensure all patients experience safe, high quality, and patient-centred care. We encourage all ICU teams to implement this newly developed toolkit.

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

FAQ about home health care services

- This is a challenging and stressful time for all Northern BC residents. The [in-home FAQ document](#) outlines the precautions and actions that Northern Health is taking to ensure services continue to be provided safely.
- It's important for patients and families to know that our practices align with the direction of the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- We strongly encourage patients and families to continue to engage with their home health care providers during this time.

New ethical guidance to support decision-making in long-term care

In a follow up to the [ethical frameworks and resources to support COVID-19 decision making](#), which were circulated on April 6, 2020, three new [SBAR](#) ethics documents are available to support decision-making in long-term care and assisted facilities:

- [Shared rooms](#)
- [visitor restrictions](#)
- [Unnecessary transportation to higher levels of care](#).

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

Expression of interest pandemic prescribing

- Northern Health is planning to implement a regional virtual care model to enhance patient access to these protocols for those who are eligible and who do not have a current means of access.
- For patients who are not able to reduce their use, the guideline provides prescribing recommendations that facilitate self-isolation without the need to seek "street drugs", thereby reducing potential for overdose, unsafe withdrawal, and transmission of COVID-19 within this population and the broader public.
- The Addiction Medicine Team is seeking expressions of interest from prescribers who feel comfortable working within the pandemic pharmacotherapy protocols established by the [BC Center on Substance Use](#) to join a network of prescribers who will provide virtual coverage across the region.

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

Physicians in self-isolation

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

Resources 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](#).

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