



Northern Health Physicians

Partners in Wellness

Public Health Newsletter for Northern Health Physicians
Volume 13 . Number 1 . January 2017 • Page 1 of 2

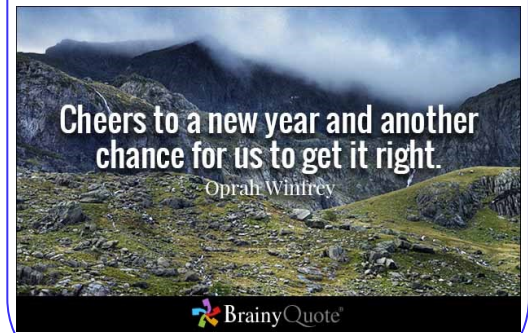
2016: Year in Review

Volume 12:		
Month/link	Issue	Topic
January	1	(No regular issue) New Year Greeting and 2015 Year in Review Bulletins: Hepatitis A virus alert
February	2	Hepatitis A Outbreak-Dawson Creek/Alberta; Reporting Communicable Diseases; Changes to BC's Smoking Cessation Program; Pearls for Immunization Practice - Self-learning course; Antimicrobial Stewardship; Influenza Update
March	3	Zika virus Update; Pharmacy Awareness Month; Antimicrobials update; Influenza update Bulletins: Drug contamination Alert, Overdose Alert
April	4	Increased Syphilis rates in BC; Antimicrobials update; North Coast First Nations video for health care providers; Travel Health; Late Spike in Influenza; Deactivation of Ebola Public Health follow-up
May	5	Mumps, Zika virus update
June	6	"Growing up Healthy in Northern BC" Consultation Process/Child Health Report; Interim Syphilis Treatment Guidelines during the Benzathine Penicillin Shortage; June is Brain Injury Awareness Month; Public Health Emergency Declared: Unintended Opioid Overdose Deaths; Antimicrobials Update
July	7	No issue
August	8	Overdose Public Health Emergency; BCCDC Update: Sexually Transmitted Infections/Benzathine Penicillin once again available in Canada; Do your patients who smoke want to quit?; Quadrivalent Meningococcal Vaccine available for adolescents; The role of serological testing: Immunizing those with no or inadequate records; Concussion Ed: App now available; Cervical Cancer Screening Policy Change
September	9	Introducing: New Northern Interior Medical Health Officer, Dr. Andrew Gray; HPV 9 valent vaccine to replace HPV 4 in grade 6 program in BC-September; Smoke free grounds; Rare but Risky – Autonomic Dysreflexia; NH Overdose Response Updates
October	10	Special Issue on Influenza: 2016-017 season-what you need to know, including: Highlights; Campaign Start Date; Vaccine Ordering, Distribution, Storage (Eligibility; Recommended Influenza Vaccine Dosage by Age; Vaccines and Recommended Usage; Egg Allergies/Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome); Pneumococcal Vaccine; Reporting Requirements (Adverse reactions following immunization; Vaccine Administered); References; Additional Resources; Enterovirus D-68 (EV-D68) circulating in BC; Influenza Control Program Policy for Health Care Workers; and, Community Vaccine Provider Influenza Vaccine Order Form
November	11	Refugee Health; Influenza Update
December	12	Regional opioid overdose response background and update; Reportable communicable diseases; Varicella (chicken pox) refresher; Options for sexual health (OPT); Influenza update

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Notable Quotable:



Back issues of NH Physicians, Partners in Wellness newsletters and bulletins are located on the NH Physicians website:
<http://physicians.northernhealth.ca/physicianResources/PublicHealth.aspx>



Northwest

Atlin, Dease Lake, Houston, Hazelton, Masset, Kitimat, Port Clements, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Stewart, Terrace, the Village of Queen Charlotte

Northern Interior

Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake, Granisle, Mackenzie, McBride, Prince George, Quesnel, Valemount, Vanderhoof

Northeast

Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe, Hudson's Hope, Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Tumbler Ridge

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northern health
the northern way of caring

Escalating trends of ODs and OD deaths continue to occur

Overdose Situation in Northern Health

Across Northern Health (NH), 38 deaths occurred from January 1 to November 30, 2016. From June 5 to November 30, 2016, a total of 174 suspected opioid overdose presentations were reported by emergency departments in NH. Sites reporting the largest numbers of ODs include UNHBC (92) and Fort St John Hospital (23).

In response to this crisis NH is focusing on specific interventions to prevent OD deaths. These include:

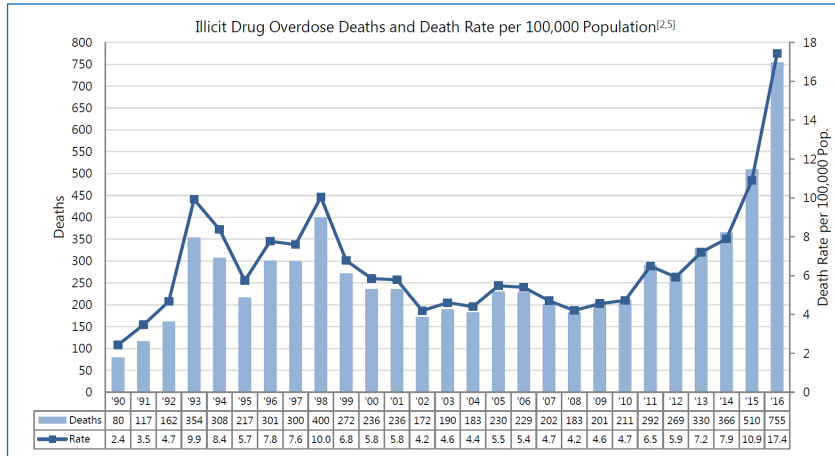
1. Surveillance of ODs presenting to emergency departments.
2. Rapid expansion of the Take Home Naloxone program and availability of harm reduction supplies and education for persons at risk of OD.
3. Establishment of an Overdose Prevention Site at the Prince George HIV/AIDS Prevention Program (Needle Exchange), where clients can be monitored for signs of overdose and receive immediate care when needed.
4. Exploration of Supervised Consumption Services in our highest risk communities.
5. Population-based prevention and health promotion through communications, media and stakeholder engagement.

Overdose Prevention and Response

What can you do to help?

Every Northern Health employee has the opportunity to be a resource of health information for their community in order to help prevent overdose deaths. Take the time to learn the tips to prevent an overdose:

- Don't mix different drugs (including pharmaceutical medications, street drugs, and alcohol).
- Don't take drugs when you are alone.
- Don't experiment with higher doses.
- Start with a small amount before taking your usual dose.
- Use less, especially if you took a break, were in detox, treatment or jail, or are new to use: your tolerance will be lower.
- Keep an eye out for your friends – stay together and look out for each other.
- Make a plan/know how to respond in case of an overdose.
- Carry a **Naloxone Kit** if you or someone you know may need it. Kits are available without a prescription and can be purchased at pharmacies or are available free to people who are at risk of overdose. A list of locations can be found at: [Take Home Naloxone Kits](https://northernhealth.ca/Portals/0/Your_Health/OverdosePrevention/Take-home-naloxone-sites-Nov2016.PDF) or https://northernhealth.ca/Portals/0/Your_Health/OverdosePrevention/Take-home-naloxone-sites-Nov2016.PDF.
- Naloxone training is free and only takes a few minutes.



To November 30, 2016/Image Source: BC Coroners Services: Illicit Drug Overdose in BC, January 1, 2007-November 30, 2016

Tips to recognize and reverse an overdose

- Recognize an OD:
 - the person is breathing slowly or not at all
 - not moving and can't be woken up
 - cold clammy skin
 - blue lips and fingernails
 - tiny pupils
 - may be snoring, gurgling or choking
- Call 9-1-1 right away.
- Give breaths and give naloxone.

For more information on NH's Overdose Response

please visit: [Overdose Prevention](https://ournh.northernhealth.ca/ClinicalPatientCare/ODPrevRspnc/Pages/default.aspx) or: <https://ournh.northernhealth.ca/ClinicalPatientCare/ODPrevRspnc/Pages/default.aspx>

Practice Support Update

- Northern Health now supports all community staff who work with people at risk for opioid overdose (OD) to administer naloxone and first aid in cases of suspected opioid overdose.
- For both dispensing and administration of naloxone, it is important to discuss these activities with your program manager/ direct supervisor.
- All staff carrying, administering, or dispensing naloxone must complete the appropriate education (see below). The average time to complete the online education is one hour.
- When any NH employed staff choose to administer naloxone from a Take Home Kit, outside of a hospital setting, whether during working or non-working hours, potential liability concerns are covered by either NH liability insurance or the *Good Samaritan Act*.

For full details, see [Overdose Naloxone Practice Support Update](https://ournh.northernhealth.ca/oursites/NHCommittees/ODPrevRspnc/OurNH%20Documents/Overdose%20-%20Naloxone%20Practice%20Support%20Update.%20Final.pdf) or <https://ournh.northernhealth.ca/oursites/NHCommittees/ODPrevRspnc/OurNH%20Documents/Overdose%20-%20Naloxone%20Practice%20Support%20Update.%20Final.pdf>

Information for Schools

Four curriculum modules have thus far been created for teachers to address the current opioid overdose crisis in the classroom. With support from the Ministry of Health and developed by the Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC), these new resources use progressive teaching methods that draw upon the competencies that aid in students making healthier choices with respect to substance use. <http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/carbc/publications/helping-schools/index.php>

First Responder Safety

With overdoses and fatalities stemming from fentanyl use reaching epidemic proportions, the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) has launched a fentanyl website for first responders which contains several useful resources: <https://fentanylsafety.com>.

Additional Suggested Resources

1. [Know your Source](https://knowyoursource.ca/) or <https://knowyoursource.ca/>
2. [Toward the Heart](http://towardtheheart.com/) or <http://towardtheheart.com/>
3. [Overdose Awareness in BC](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose) or <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose>
4. [BC Coroners Reports](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/death-investigation/statistical-reports) or <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/death-investigation/statistical-reports>

Thank you to our dedicated Northern Health Staff and Physicians working so tirelessly to address this crisis. Your compassion and commitment is truly appreciated.

Source:

Dr. Sandra Allison, Chief MHO
(Memo to all NH Staff and Physicians Dec. 23, 2016)

