



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

March 2022

Organization and community news

Quality Cast North Podcast: Leadership for healthcare quality - featuring Cathy Ulrich, CEO of Northern Health

Have you ever wondered what the CEO of a large, complex, healthcare organization does, or how leadership and governance supports quality care? In this episode of Qualitycast North we further explore the relationship between quality and healthcare leadership through a conversation with the longest serving Health Authority CEO in recent provincial (BC) history, the current CEO of Northern Health, Cathy Ulrich.

Cathy shares her journey through her early career in rural nursing, to rural operational leadership, to strategic leadership. Cathy also discusses her love of gardening, her appreciation for the people within our organization and the people we serve and outlines her top four lessons for successful leadership.

You can listen to the episode here, or on any podcast platform: [Qualitycast North Podcast | Northern Health PQI \(nhpqi.ca\)](https://www.nhpqi.ca/qualitycast-north-podcast)

Province launches 10-year Cancer Action Plan

On February 24, Premier David Eby and Health Minister Adrian Dix [publicly announced](#) British Columbia's 10-year Cancer Action Plan. This 10-year Cancer Action Plan will provide new investment in research, technology and innovation to strengthen cancer care in B.C. and deliver more innovative, evidence-based care.

Mills Memorial Hospital Replacement Project - Quarterly Update – February 2023

Read the [February 2023 quarterly project update](#) to learn about all the exciting milestones and much more happening with the new Mills Memorial Hospital under construction in Terrace. For regular updates about the project, visit [Let's Talk MMH](#)

Dawson Creek and District Hospital Replacement Project - Quarterly Update - January 2023

Read the [January 2023 quarterly project update](#) to learn about all the exciting milestones and much more happening with the new Dawson Creek and District Hospital Replacement Project. For regular updates about the project, visit [Let's Talk DCDH](#)

Stuart Lake Hospital Replacement Project - Quarterly Update - February 2023

Read the [January 2023 quarterly project update](#) to learn about all the exciting milestones and much more happening with the new Dawson Creek and District Hospital Replacement Project. For regular updates about the project, visit [Let's Talk Stuart Lake Hospital](#)

Northern Health Stories highlights

The [Northern Health Stories site](#) is a great place to read about what's going on in Northern Health – people, places, projects, and more! Here are some recent highlights.

- [Connecting with a registered dietician in Northern BC](#)
- [Supporting food programs in Northern schools with “The Great Big Crunch”](#)
- [Spotlight on Oncology Pharmacy with Suni Dunn](#)
- [Commitment to community and medicine](#)
- [Managing obstetrical risk efficiently \(moreOB\) in the North](#)

Overdose prevention and response

BC Coroners Service Update

The BC Coroners Service has changed how they are reporting the illicit drug toxicity numbers. They are now providing them on a dashboard located [here](#).

The BCCDC has a number of public dashboards, please go to [Unregulated Drug Poisoning Emergency Dashboard \(bccdc.ca\)](#).

BC Summary:

- The rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in BC is 46.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals in January 2023
- In January 2023, there were 211 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths.
- The number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in January 2023 equates to about 6.8 deaths per day.
- By Health Authority (HA), in January 2023, the highest **rates** were in VCH (64 deaths per 100,000 individuals) and Island Health (52 deaths per 100,000 individuals); the highest **number** of illicit drug toxicity deaths were in Fraser and Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities (68 and 60 deaths, respectively), making up 51% of all such deaths in January 2023

Northern Health Summary

- In 2023, Northern Health has the third highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province with a rate of 50.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=13).

- In January 2023, there was approximately a 29% decrease in the rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths compared to the previous month; 4.2 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=13) in January 2023 compared to ~5.9 deaths per 100,000 individuals (N=18) in December 2022
- **The Northwest region** has seen **4** illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2023 for a rate of 61.4 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the fourth highest rate in BC.
 - January 2023 there was **4** illicit drug toxicity death
 - In 2022
 - Terrace Local Health Area (LHA) 110.5 illicit drug toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals – second highest in BC
 - Kitimat LHA 72.8 illicit drug toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals – ninth highest in BC
- **The Northern Interior** has seen **9** illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2023 for a rate of 69.7 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This is the second highest rate in BC.
 - January 2023 there were **9** illicit drug toxicity deaths
 - In 2022
 - Prince George LHA 79.0 illicit drug toxicity deaths per 100,000 individuals – fifth highest in BC
- **The Northeast region** has seen **0** illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2023. This was one of two HSDA not to experience an overdose death in BC for January 2023.
 - December 2022 there were **2** illicit drug toxicity deaths
 - In 2022, no Northeast LHA's were among the top 25 for Illicit Drug Toxicity Death Rates

Additional statements on toxic drugs from the Ministry can be found here:

- [Toxic drugs continue to take lives of British Columbians – Public Safety and Solicitor General](#)
- [Minister's statement on lives lost to poisoned drugs in January – Mental Health and Addictions](#)

Reminder! Text alerts for toxic drugs now available in the North

In response to the toxic drug emergency, a new text message alert system has been launched across Northern Health. The system sends text alerts with timely information and up-to-date resources to people who use drugs, those who support them, and community members. It's a public health measure to prevent drug poisonings and deaths and provides. Opt-in by texting **JOIN** to **ALERTS (253787)**. [More information](#).

COVID-19

COVID is still with us, in our communities, impacting our friends and loved ones. Vaccinations remain the best defence against both influenza and COVID-19.

On Friday March 10, Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.'s provincial health officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, issued a statement about spring COVID-19 boosters. [Read more here](#).

Beyond vaccinations, we can all take key preventative measures, including:

- Stay at home if you feel unwell and try to avoid spending time with people at higher risk of serious illness.
- Practice respiratory etiquette: Wear a mask in crowded, public spaces, and cough and sneeze into your elbow.
- Clean your hands regularly.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, mouth and nose.

For more information, visit [BCCDC](#) or the [Provincial Infection Control Network of British Columbia](#).

Resources and information

The [Northern Health COVID-19](#) and [COVID-19 information](#) pages have information about immunization clinics, testing and self-isolation, the community toolkit, and trusted contacts.

For information outside of Northern Health, see [these trusted resources](#).