



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

February 24, 2021

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COVID-19

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of February 23, **4,417** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **305**
- New cases: **66**
- Currently in hospital: **41**
 - Currently admitted to HAU/ICU in hospital: **12**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **104**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

As well, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#), which visualizes COVID-19 in BC in comparison to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, at the HSDA level. It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – February 24, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 24, 2021

The COVID-19 vaccines were developed so quickly – are we sure they're safe?

Yes. It's much safer to get the vaccine than to get COVID-19. The vaccine was developed quickly, but no corners were cut, and all the correct processes were followed to ensure the vaccine is safe for Canadians.

Get the answers to this and other common vaccine questions on the "[Facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#)" 11 x 17" poster on Northern Health's [COVID-19 vaccine plan](#) page – feel free to share!

Enforcement information: New resource for communities

A new document on northernhealth.ca, [Enforcement information for Communities](#), provides important information on:

- The leadership role of the Provincial Health Officer
- How to respond if people in a community aren't following provincial health orders
- The role of compliance and enforcement officers
- And more!

Video from the FNHA: Dr. Nadine Caron on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy

"I completely understand the questions being asked, the hesitancy," says Dr. Caron. "But at the same time, while I share some of the concerns, I myself am excited to get the vaccine."

Check out the video (just over 1 minute long) on the FNHA's Facebook page: [Do you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine? Talk to a health professional you trust](#)

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#) – watch for a fully updated version (coming soon!)
- [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 COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- For **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

Reflecting on the overdose crisis in 2020

As the five-year anniversary of the province's illicit drug toxicity public health emergency approaches, [the BC Coroners Service reports](#) 2020 was B.C.'s worst year yet in terms of number of lives lost due to the effects of the toxic illicit drugs.

BC had 1,716 deaths due to illicit drugs in 2020, a 74% increase over 2019 (984). The number of deaths in 2020 equates to 4.7 preventable deaths every day, and is two deaths per day higher than in 2019 (2.7). This toxic drug supply has claimed more lives than motor vehicle crashes, homicides, suicides, and prescription-drug-related deaths combined.

In Northern Health we must continue working to keep people who use drugs safer. Resources to help staff, clients, and families stay safer:

- [Toward the Heart](#)
- [Stop Overdose BC \(Lifeguard app\)](#)

Other organizational news

Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest, Issue # 17: Information for residents and families

The long-term care task group is continuing to produce updates twice a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[This issue](#) provides an update on COVID-19 vaccines and visiting restrictions.

Sign up for the Health Career Access Program: A paid education opportunity to become a Registered Health Care Assistant

The new Health Career Access Program (HCAP) gives you the opportunity to receive paid education and on-the-job training to become a registered Health Care Assistant. Your course fees will be covered, and you'll also be paid for your time while you study and work.

The program consists of employment, education, and training, and takes up to 18 months to finish.

Overview:

Successful applicants must meet both Northern Health's job requirements and the requirements of the college they'll attend. Which college you attend depends on where you live.

After finishing your education to become a health care assistant, you'll start as a health care support worker before moving on to a health care assistant position.

- Health care support workers earn a starting salary of about \$39,000.
- Health care assistants earn an average annual salary of about \$45,090.

The HCAP process

1. Complete an [expression of interest form](#). Your information is collected through the Ministry of Health, which shares it with Northern Health.

2. A Northern Health representative will contact you to encourage you to create a profile on Northern Health and submit your resume. Once you have been short-listed, a Northern Health representative will contact you about next steps.

On completion of the program, you earn a recognized post-secondary credential and are eligible to register as a health care assistant.

[Learn more about what Health Care Support Workers and Health Care Assistants do and the required qualifications for the program.](#)