



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

Note: Please share any information in this update as appropriate.

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COVID-19

Provincial case counts and statements

As of August 4, 2020, there were **91** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region. Sixteen cases are considered active. In light of this uptick in cases, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested. Surveillance reports for COVID-19, which includes breakdown of cases by Health Service Delivery Area, are [posted every Thursday on the BCCDC website](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – August 4, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – July 30, 2020

COVID-19 stigma harms us all

It's important to be kind to one another, and not contribute to COVID-19-related stigma for individuals, including those with COVID-19, and their caregivers or contacts.

While individuals are able to disclose their own health information – or consent to having other organizations share information on their behalf – health authorities and health care providers are bound by strict privacy measures and legislation and must keep individual information confidential.

We want people, and their close contacts, to feel comfortable coming forward if they have symptoms of COVID-19 and require testing. Stigma can negatively impact this process, slowing down testing, contact tracing, and possibly leading to further spread.

Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards other people, and negatively affecting the mental health of stigmatized groups and the communities they live in. We can stop stigma, by knowing the facts, sharing only accurate information with others, and most of all, being kind.

For more information:

- [FNHA – Practice lateral kindness to help reduce stigma and fear of COVID-19](#)
- [FNHA – COVID-19 lateral kindness poster](#)
- [PHSA – Returning to work after COVID-19 isolation](#)

Long-term care/assisted living digest – issue 5

The long-term care task group will be developing updates bi-weekly for residents of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities and their families.

This issue of the update provides guidelines for bringing games into facilities when visiting and information about masks and residents with sensory deprivation.

COVID-19 Guide for communities

Northern Health's printable booklet [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#) contains all the information you need to help keep your community safe and well informed. The community guide will be updated regularly online as more resources are developed.

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [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

Provincial and regional overdose alerts

The overdose crisis reached a record high for numbers of overdose deaths in Northern Health and BC in June 2020. This has been complicated by the contamination of the drug supply with benzodiazepines and/or carfentanyl. A fentanyl/benzo combo causes an even higher risk for overdose and may require much higher doses of Naloxone to reverse.

Please share the following alerts widely:

- The Province released a new [Drug Toxicity Alert](#) on July 22/20, replacing the May 6/20 alert.
- Northern Health is continuing the [Overdose Alert](#) initially issued on June 18.

Language matters: reduce stigma, combat overdose

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) encourages the use of respectful, non-stigmatizing language when describing substance use disorders, addiction and people who use drugs.

Stigmatization contributes to isolation and means people will be less likely to access services. This has a direct, detrimental impact on the health of people who use drugs.

Help improve the conversation around overdose prevention by making these changes:

- People first language
- Use language that reflects the medical nature of substance use disorders
- Use language that promotes recovery
- Avoid slang and idioms

For more information and recommendations on what you can do:

- [Respectful language and stigma regarding people who use substances](#)
- [PHSA – Breaking through stigma and silence](#)
- [FNHA – Overdose prevention information](#)