



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

Tuesday, August 26, 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 25, 2020, there were **128** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region. Thirteen cases are considered active. As always, 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 25, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – August 20, 2020

Update on exposure event: It's Time Canada - event in Deadwood, Alberta

A recent event in Deadwood, Alberta, "It's Time Canada", has been linked to a number of COVID-19 cases in Northern BC. The majority of these cases are in the Fort. St. John area; however, the exposure alert applies to all of Northeast BC.

Latest COVID-19 case numbers related to the exposure event:

- 24 total cases

- 3 active
- 21 recovered
- 13 primary cases
- 14 close contacts under active daily monitoring

Given the location of the event, it is most likely that residents of Northeast BC may have been in attendance, or had contact with attendees. If you live in Northeast BC, you're strongly encouraged to self-monitor for [COVID-19 symptoms](#). If you have symptoms, self-isolate and seek testing.

COVID-19 Online Clinic: Information on wait times

The COVID-19 Online Clinic was launched in March to help give Northern BC residents access to information and health advice on COVID-19, and virtual screenings by a nurse, physician, or nurse practitioner if required. The NH COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line can be reached at 1-844-645-7811.

The Clinic operates Monday to Friday, 10 am to 6 pm and Saturday, Sunday, and holidays, 10 am to 2 pm. Call volume is higher Monday to Wednesday.

Weekday wait times:

- Very high between 10 am and 12 pm (approximately 1-2 hours' wait)
- High between 12 pm and 2 pm (approximately 15-30 minute wait)
- Little to no wait time between 2 pm and 6 pm

B.C.'s back to school plan

Students in B.C. will return to in-class learning September 2020. B.C.'s plan includes new health and safety measures, increased funding for protective equipment like masks and new learning groups to help keep everyone safe.

For more information, see the [B.C. government's back to school page](#).

Visiting guidelines for long-term care

Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Facilities are currently advised to restrict visitors. Under these guidelines, residents will be able to visit with **one designated** family member or friend.

Visitor protocols

- Visits must be booked in advance.
- Visits will take place in specific "visiting areas," which will be organized by each residence.
- Visits are not allowed if there is an active COVID-19 outbreak at the residence.
- Visits are not permitted if the visitor or resident are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, prior to every visit.

- All visitors are required to bring and wear a mask.
- Visitors must clean hands before and after visit.
- Visitors should cough or sneeze into their elbow and not touch their face.
- Visitors should maintain a distance of two arm lengths from others.

For more information, see the [BCCDC page on long-term care](#).

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 is updated regularly online.

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

Dual public health emergency increasing unpredictability in the illicit drug supply

In the context of the dual public health emergencies (opioid overdose and the COVID-19 pandemic) the illicit drug supply has become increasingly unpredictable, with more chance of dangerous contaminants. In addition to a Provincial [Overdose Alert](#) that was issued on March 22, [a regional overdose alert](#) was issued June 18, 2020 due to the rise in both fatal and non-fatal overdose events within our region. A local Overdose Alert was also recently issued in Prince George.

We are encouraging both NH and non-NH Take Home Naloxone (THN) sites to consider increasing distribution of naloxone and providing more than one THN kit to individuals that provide peer distribution within their community.

Within communities, access to harm reduction supplies should remain low-barrier, available in a variety of settings, and include both injection and smoking supplies — ideally in every community.

For further information please see [the BCCDC website](#).

Other organizational news

Share your thoughts on getting health care by video, phone, or text

Virtual health care is health care you get by video, phone, or text. We're asking everyone in Northern BC what a successful virtual health care experience would look like for them – take part and tell us your thoughts!

[Click to take the survey now](#) (it's 100% anonymous). Please note the survey closes Sept. 9. Feel free to share the link!

We want everyone to have a chance to share their perspectives and understand what's most important to other Northern British Columbians. Your input will help us set priorities and inform virtual care opportunities for people in the north.

Thank you in advance for taking part! We'll be sharing the results...watch for details!

The Youth Development Instrument (YDI) is looking for Youth Ambassadors

Do you know a youth who's passionate about improving youth well-being?

Researchers at SFU and UBC invite 15-18 year-old youth who are interested in health and development issues affecting them and their peers to apply to join the YDI youth advisory council (YAC). The YAC will provide an important youth voice in the creation of the YDI, a survey which aims to measure youth well-being and development in British Columbia.

- [Click here to learn more and apply](#).

NH Check In now live in Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Dawson Creek – give it a try!

NH Check In helps NH provide better patient-centred services and support physical distancing during the pandemic. If you've used the similar Save My Spot service by LifeLabs, NH Check In will be familiar. Patients can safely wait in their cars, homes, or offices just before arriving for appointments, which should make waiting rooms less crowded.

NH Check In is now live for lab services in Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Dawson Creek: If you use lab services in either of these communities, [give NH Check In a try](#)

To try NH Check In yourself, see the full instructions on the [NH Check In page on northernhealth.ca](#) – it's easy to get set up on your phone, tablet, or computer!