



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

*The latest from Northern Health*

**Wednesday, December 16, 2020**

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

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## COVID-19

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### COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of December 15, **1,368** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **367**
- New cases: **37**
- Currently in hospital: **48**
  - Currently admitted to HAU/ICU in hospital: **18**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **15**

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.

Surveillance reports, including a breakdown of cases by HSDA, are [posted each Friday by the BCCDC](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – December 15, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – December 11, 2020

## **NH receiving first Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine**

The planning for COVID-19 immunization clinics is in progress across the Northern Health region. Northern Health is expecting to receive the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine within the next week. The amount of locations the vaccine can be initially offered is limited recognizing the complex storage and handling procedures, but we are planning for delivery in the coming days, weeks, and months across the system.

NH is working closely with the BCCDC to roll out the vaccine in accordance with the priority vaccine groups determined by the Ministry of Health, beginning with high-risk health care workers and then long-term care residents. As more vaccines are approved by Health Canada and shipment volumes ramp up, more communities will receive the COVID-19 vaccine. We expect to be able to immunize all Northern BC residents who wish to have the vaccine by the end of 2021.

More information about the vaccine rollout will be shared with stakeholders in the coming days and weeks.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine research, priority populations, and the provincial rollout plan, visit the Government of British Columbia [COVID-19 vaccines website](#).

## **Changes to Public Health case and contact management**

The recent surge in lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region is putting pressure on public health case and contact management (contact tracing) resources. There is currently a backlog of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, but have not yet been contacted by public health.

To address these challenges, Northern Health is:

- Deploying additional staff to its case and contact management teams
- Making other necessary changes to how cases are notified, monitored, and cleared from self-isolation, to clear the backlog and speed up the process in the weeks and months ahead

Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will receive a call as soon as possible from Public Health – this will not change.

More information can be found (and shared widely) with this [public information bulletin](#).

## **Facility outbreak declared at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George**

Northern Health is implementing enhanced COVID-19 precautions at Jubilee Lodge in Prince George, following lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff and residents.

Communication with Jubilee Lodge staff, residents, and families is ongoing.

NH Medical Health Officers have declared a facility outbreak. NH care facilities have implemented very clear policies and procedures for COVID-19 infection prevention and control, to lower the risk of transmission to residents, staff, and physicians in a health care facility.

Northern Health is proactively testing residents to identify anyone who may have been infected, and taking additional steps to protect the health of all Jubilee Lodge staff and residents.

For more details, see the [full information bulletin](#).

## **COVID-19 case data will now be reported on a local health area level through the BCCDC**

The BCCDC is releasing a weekly map showing COVID-19 case counts by local health area on the [COVID-19 data page](#). On the page, search for “local health area.”

This map shows the cases for the prior week, and is updated every Wednesday.

## **New Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue #13: Food and gift guidance, Christmas decorations, and more**

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

[This issue](#) provides information on the provincial guidelines for social gatherings, guidelines for bringing gifts and food into the facility, information on Christmas decorations, and an overview on outbreak guidelines for long-term care homes.

### ***From the FNHA***

## **The pandemic and winter blues: A one-two punch to our mental health**

If you're struggling with your mental health and wellness more than usual during these strange times, know that this is perfectly normal. The pandemic has caused more isolation, leaving us feeling loneliness, anxiety and/or depression.

On top of that, winter brings shorter days with less sunlight, and colder weather that might prevent us from getting together outdoors for physically distanced walks as often as we'd like.

Indigenous people rely on being connected to each other, either with family and friends, or with large in-person cultural gatherings and ceremonies. Now that we can't gather, we've had to learn how to continue connecting socially, emotionally and spiritually while maintaining safe physical distance.

[See the full story on the FNHA page.](#)

## Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#)
- [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

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### Rural, remote, and Indigenous overdose grants are available until Jan 22, 2021

In partnership with the Provincial Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC), the Community Action Initiative (CAI) is offering funding for rural, remote, and Indigenous overdose initiatives or projects.

Applications must be in alignment with the OERC's core package of comprehensive interventions, and applicants are encouraged to align with recommendations made during the October 2019 [Rural and Indigenous Overdose Action Exchange](#). Applicants can apply for up to \$50,000 in one-time-only funding.

Applications are due January 22, 2021.

To learn more and apply, visit <https://caibc.ca/rural-remote-indigenous-overdose-grants/>.

## Other organizational news

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### *From the FNHA*

### **The 2021 Winter Wellness Grants are coming soon!**

The Winter Wellness Grants available through the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) are intended to support innovative ways for people to stay safe and well in the New Year – including through online activities.

The FNHA recognizes the impacts that physical distancing and social isolation may have on the health and well-being of First Nations individuals, families and communities. With this in mind, the FNHA is providing Winter Wellness Grants to support community-led, virtual

celebrations in honour of Winter Solstice. These celebrations are intended to promote culture, resilience and community while maintaining physical distancing.

First Nations communities, schools, and health and social organizations that provide wellness services to Indigenous British Columbians will be eligible for up to \$1,000 to conduct their own virtual/online celebration to honour Winter Solstice.

The grant process will open Jan. 4, 2021. More information and grant applications will be provided later.

Reminder: To qualify for a grant, you must ensure that your organization or school has your up-to-date wellness grant reports. You may check on your reporting status by emailing [Active@fnha.ca](mailto:Active@fnha.ca).

For more information, see the [full story on the FNHA site](#).