



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

March 3, 2021

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COVID-19

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of March 2, **4,649** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **270**
- New cases: **17**
- Currently in hospital: **30**
 - Currently admitted to HAU/ICU in hospital: **11**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **107**

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](#) – March 2, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 24, 2021

Phase 2 COVID-19 immunization plan update

The Province of BC has released more information about Phase 2 of the COVID-19 immunization plan, which focuses on protecting our seniors and Elders.

Beginning March 8, 2021, seniors aged 80 and older, and Indigenous peoples aged 65 and older, who are not living in independent or seniors' supportive housing can call to book their appointment according to a staggered schedule.

There is no requirement to register before booking, and immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at the time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as March 15, 2021.

Contact information, hours, and call-in schedules for the Northern Health region, as well as step-by-step instructions on how to call to book an appointment for yourself or a loved one, will be available on March 8, 2021, through www.gov.bc.ca/bc seniorsfirst, and on the [Northern Health website](#).

Community clinic locations and details for the Northern Health region will be available by the end of the week.

For more information, see the [full article on the NH stories site](#) and the [Government of B.C. news release](#).

COVID-19 vaccine second dose delayed to 16 weeks after first dose

The province is delaying the delivery of second dose to 16 weeks after first dose. As a result, Northern Health will be delaying all Dose 2 immunizations and clinics. The second dose will be provided 16 weeks following the first dose and clinics will be organized to accommodate this new time frame.

Is it safe for my second dose to be delayed?

Yes, Health Canada supports a longer delay between first and second doses. Many countries have delayed second doses and found that people still have a strong immune response against COVID-19.

Am I protected by one dose?

Studies around the world are showing that even one dose of COVID-19 vaccine provides very good protection against transmission of COVID-19 and serious illness.

This change will help ensure that the maximum number of British Columbians are able to receive their first dose of immunization.

For more information on the extended dose interval, please see the recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): [Rapid Response: Extended dose intervals for COVID-19 vaccines to optimize early vaccine rollout and population protection in Canada](#)

Is the vaccine safe if I'm pregnant or breastfeeding?

The Canadian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, and public health experts in BC all agree that the vaccine is safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women. If you have questions, talk to your health care provider.

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!

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

New Treatment Approaches in the Opioid Crisis – RN/RPN Prescribing

In September 2020, the Provincial Health Officer [issued an order](#) that allows nurses to prescribe medication to treat Opioid Use Disorder as part of the escalating response to the ongoing opioid overdose crisis.

Initially, this expanded scope for nurses is being applied to the medication Suboxone, with more treatments to be incorporated at a later date. Registered Nurses and Registered Psychiatric Nurses can be nominated by their Health Authority to receive this training and work with the expanded scope.

A cohort of Northern nurses are already going through the education process to be able to support patients in their region, with more opportunities for additional nurses to receive this designation coming soon.

Other organizational news

"Ask Kelty" mental health tool

Developed with the help of our FamilySmart parent peer support workers at the Kelty Centre, the ["Ask Kelty" mental health tool](#) offers suggestions about where to go and what to expect when looking for support options.

You can type your question into the tool, and find answers to commonly asked questions families have, such as:

- My child needs help now; what can I do?
- How do I find counselling?
- What can I do while my child is on a waitlist?
- I'm struggling to cope with my child's illness. Where can I get support?