



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

July 2, 2021

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Organizational news

Staying safe in warm weather

Summer is here and the warm weather and bright sunshine can lead to increased risks for our health and safety. For ways to stay safe while working in the heat, please see:

- [Northern Health heatwave information](#)
- [BC Government tips to stay safe and cool](#)
- [HealthLinkBC's beat the heat resources](#)
- [BCCDC's Warm weather safety](#)

Wildfire safety

High temperatures across the province have increased the wildfire risk. Northern Health is collaborating with local and provincial to monitor wildfires in the North, as well as their impact on Northerners' health and Northern Health services.

- Report a wildfire by calling ***5555** on most cell phones or **1-800-663-5555**.
- [BC Wildfire Management Branch](#)
- [Emergency Info BC](#)
- [Wildfire Preparedness](#)
- [BC Air Quality Advisories](#)
- [Interactive Wildfire Map](#)
- [Wildfire App for Apple](#) and [Android](#)

Flood information

Northern Health is monitoring higher-than-normal water levels due to rapid melting and forecasted rainfall in several locations. For up to date information on flood conditions, visit [Emergency Info BC](#) for the latest updates in your area. More safety precautions and resource links:

- [Emergency preparedness, response and recovery](#)
- [Floods](#)
- [Clean-up after a flood](#)
- [Sewage systems & flooding](#)
- [Local environmental contacts](#)

COVID-19

Northern Health Resource COVID-19 Community Toolkit

To empower local partners to share helpful information, we have created the [COVID-19 Community Toolkit](#), a digital resource for community partners with **3 key goals**:

- Get more people registered for their vaccine.
- Highlight the community benefits of getting vaccinated.
- Provide direction to *trusted* sources of information about vaccines and COVID-19.

The toolkit includes:

- Links to factual sources of information.
- Digital images suitable for sharing on your website, social media platforms, email, or newsletter.
- Printable posters and infographics.

As trusted sources of information, community-based partners such as yourselves have a vital role to play in supporting public messaging, as people look for guidance and direction.

Our hope is that you, or your designated communications staff, will download and share these resources through your own internal communications channels, such as in a group email, on your website, through social media, in a digital newsletter, or printed and posted in your facility, supporting more Northern BC residents to get vaccinated.

BC Vaccination Coverage Rates and COVID-19 activity – New Dashboard

Visit the new [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) from the BCCDC, to see graphs, maps, and data showing COVID-19 case rates, test positivity and vaccination coverage by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

As of June 30, **7,799** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **39**
- New cases: **0**
- Currently in hospital: **4**
- Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **4**

- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **156**

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, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – June 30, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – June 30, 2021

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 Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **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

Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths for May 2021 now available (BC Coroners Report – released June 29)

On June 29, the BC Coroners Service released a [report on the illicit drug toxicity deaths for May 2021](#).

Summary:

- May 2021 (N=160) is the second largest number of suspected deaths ever recorded in the month of May 2020 (N=177)
- In 2021, Northern Health has had the highest rate of illicit drug toxicity deaths in the province 48 deaths per 100,000
- BC has a rate of 39.3 illicit drug toxicity deaths per 100,000 for 2021.

Northern Health Summary:

- NH saw eight illicit drug toxicity deaths in May 2021 (~35 deaths per 100,000 individuals)

- **NW** has seen 13 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 41.0 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This was the seventh highest rate in the province.
 - There were no deaths in May
 - Smithers LHA had a rate of 96.7 deaths per 100,000 person-years from Jan – April 2021 which was sixth highest in BC (n = 6)
 - Terrace LHA had a rate of 70.7 deaths per 100,000 person-years from Jan – April 2021 which was tenth highest in BC (n = 5)
- **NI** has seen 29 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 47.1 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This was the fifth highest rate in the province.
 - There were six deaths in May
- **NE** has seen 16 illicit drug toxicity deaths in 2021 for a rate of 58.4 deaths per 100,000 individuals. This was the second highest rate in the province.
 - There were two deaths in May
 - Peace River South LHA had a rate of 106.4 deaths per 100,000 person-years from Jan – April 2021 which was fourth highest in BC (n = 9)

For more information, see the BC Coroners Service report: [Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in BC \(January 1, 2011 – May 31, 2021\)](#).

Call for Grant Applications: FNHA - Northern Indigenous Opioid Response Fund (NIORF)

The Northern Indigenous Opioid Response Fund (NIORF) has been established by First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to support local opioid response efforts targeted at Indigenous people who use substances (PWUS). FNHA is partnered with The POUNDS Project for distributing and monitoring the grants awarded from the fund. This fund can be accessed for flexible and creative services that provide low barrier support options to Indigenous PWUS. These interventions and supports can take place across a continuum of health and wellness as it relates to addiction and substance use. Funding may be requested for one-time events, for fixed-term projects, or to supplement existing opioid response work taking place in communities. When applying for funding, applicants must be able to show how their proposed activities/projects/services will have a direct positive impact on Indigenous PWUS in the Northern region of BC.

Submissions for this fund will be accepted on a rolling basis until the fund is exhausted. We can provide support in completing the application package if needed; please contact NIORF@thepoundsproject.com with any questions you may have.

Please download the [Northern Indigenous Opioid Response Fund \(NIORF\) Application](#).