



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

May 2024

Welcome to the Northern Health community update! Stay connected as we bring you monthly updates and valuable insight into health care in the North.

Organization and community news

Helpful wildfire resources

Wildfire season has arrived and we have compiled a list of resources to help you stay informed and prepared:

- [Northern Health – Wildfires and your health](#)
- [Extreme heat and heat warnings](#)
- [Wildfire preparedness](#)
- [Latest air quality advisories](#)
- [BC Wildfire fire list](#)
- [Emergency Info BC Advisories](#)
- [Heat Warning in BC](#)
- [Disaster stress](#)
- [BCCDC – Wildfire smoke](#)
- [FireSmoke Canada – BC smoke forecasts](#)
- [Recover after a wildfire – Re-entering your home or business](#)

Wildfire smoke information

Poor air quality can be harmful to health, especially for those with chronic conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, diabetes, and for pregnant people, infants and children, and older adults.

Take steps to keep you and your loved ones safe and healthy:

- Reduce the amount of time spent outdoors
- Stay hydrated
- Avoid rigorous outdoor activities, like exercise
- Keep windows closed in vehicles and homes

- If you have one, use an indoor air cleaner or filtration system, or recirculate indoor air in a forced air system that is filtered (turn on your furnace fan)

For more information on how to stay safe in smoky conditions visit the [BCCDC Wildfire Smoke page](#).

Celebrating Nursing Week!

Northern Health and the Canadian Nurses Association celebrated National Nursing Week, May 6-12. We are proud to [share stories](#) from our nurses across Northern BC to celebrate this week!

Visit our [Stories site](#) to recap all of the new stories check out the Canadian Nurses Association website to learn more about this year's theme: <https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/news-events/national-nursing-week>

A new travel option for Northern BC – Bus the North!

Bus the North is your go-to hub for affordable travel across the North. Whether you're planning a family weekend getaway, a medical appointment, or a Northern BC adventure, there are options to get you there. Visit: www.busthenorth.ca

Reminder – the Northern Virtual Clinic is here to help

The Northern Health Virtual Clinic is open and available to help you, 7 days a week (10am to 10pm PST). Whether you need medical help after hours, or you don't have a family doctor, you can get the help you need from the Virtual Clinic.

Call 1-844-645-7811 to speak to a family doctor or nurse practitioner by phone or video. Find out more on our [website](#).

Appropriate use of the emergency department and options for accessing health care

Emergency rooms in the North are under increasing strain. Help take the pressure off the doctors and nurses that serve our communities by seeking care through these options, when you can:

- Call your family care provider
- Visit an urgent primary care centre or primary care clinic if one is available in your community
- Check out HealthLinkBC.ca or speak to a nurse at 8-1-1
- Talk to your local pharmacist about their expanded services [Book an appointment with a pharmacist](#).
- Book an appointment with the [Northern Health Virtual Clinic](#) at 1-844-645-7811
- Call 1-855-344-3800 to book an appointment with the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)

For life-threatening emergencies like chest pains, difficulty breathing, broken bones, or severe bleeding, the ER is the place to be. Call 9-1-1 for transport to your nearest available and appropriate facility. For more information, please visit our [service interruptions page](#).

Review your health information with HealthElife

At Northern Health there are a number of digital health tools to help you better understand and manage your health information.

One tool is HealthElife, the Northern Health patient portal that gives you secure 24/7 online access to review your hospital digital health information and more.

Learn more about HealthElife and other digital health tools on our [website](#).

Save the Date! Five Days in May (FDIM)

Northern Health is joining Five days in May (FDIM), a province-wide health research showcase. Every year, this event brings together researchers, patients and healthcare providers, decision-makers and members of the public to learn, share ideas and spark health care innovation in BC. Events are via Zoom every Thursday in May. More information and upcoming registration [here](#).

Red Dress Day 2024

Red Dress Day was first observed in 2010 and happens every May 5. This day honours the memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. We recognize the pain and loss felt by loved ones and survivors. To learn more about the significance of this day, what is being done about it, and supports for people impacted, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023FIN0032-000650>

Respiratory illness season

The Province of BC has announced the [launch of spring COVID-19 vaccine boosters and the end of respiratory illness season](#).

The spring COVID-19 booster will be available throughout the province at pharmacies, regional health-authority clinics, some primary-care offices, and community health centres. This spring vaccine remains free and available for everyone six months and older.

Given the decreased rates of viral respiratory infections in the community, additional infection prevention and control measures implemented in fall 2023 in health-care settings are no longer required at all times. People are still encouraged to wear masks in health-care settings as appropriate, to continue to cover coughs and stay away from others when feeling sick. Health-care workers will continue to wear appropriate personal protective equipment, such as masks and respirators, in accordance with their point-of-care risk assessments.

Read more: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024HLTH0036-000506>

New Release: 15th edition of the NH Research & Knowledge Translation newsletter

Interested to know more about Research and Knowledge Translation activities supported by Northern Health? Here is the 15th edition of the [NH Research & Knowledge Translation newsletter](#). This edition includes insightful articles such as:

- Strategy for patient-oriented research refresh – Visioning the future of SPOR;
- Our patients' voices: Patient-centred measurement data and person-centred initiatives at LTC Communities.

It also includes information on upcoming events, grants and more. If you would like to write and publish a short health research article for a future edition, please email: research@northernhealth.ca.

Capital Projects

Dawson Creek & District Hospital (DCDH) Replacement Project

There's a lot of exciting progress being made on the new hospital! The [April 2024 edition of the DCDH quarterly update](#) includes some of the recent milestones the project has achieved, information about upcoming road closures, and details about our ongoing engagement initiatives.

Road closure notice! As of April 28, 2024, the road south of the DCDH construction site and the rear access road to the Northern Lights College campus will be closed until further notice. There will be no access through this road until it re-opens. Visit Let's Talk DCDH for more information and to [view the map of alternative routes](#).

Mills Memorial Hospital Replacement Project – April 2024 update

Check out the [April 2024 project update](#) to find out what's going on with the MMH Replacement project in Terrace. Here's a snapshot of what you can find in this quarterly update.

- Construction is ahead of schedule!
- New timelapse videos of new [MMH](#) and [Seven Sisters](#)
- Preparing for the big move
- Highlights: Wayfinding kiosk, virtual skylights
- More MMH stories and memories

More info about the project is on [Let's Talk MMH](#).

New videos! Mills Memorial Hospital Replacement Project in Terrace

Check out two new videos of the Mills Memorial Hospital Replacement Project in Terrace. Watch the new hospital and the new Seven Sisters be built from the ground up.

- [Time-lapse video of new Mills Memorial Hospital construction](#)
- [Time-lapse video of new Seven Sisters construction](#)

For more info and videos of the project, go to [Let's Talk MMH](#)

Stuart Lake Hospital update

Construction at the Stuart Lake Hospital charges forward as we work towards welcoming patients in January 2025.

Haven't had a chance to keep up with our updates online? We've compiled highlights of the recent progress and engagement activity in the May 2024 Quarterly Update. Catch up at <https://letstalk.northernhealth.ca/Stuart-Lake-Hospital>

Northern Health Stories highlights

The [Northern Health Stories site](#) is a great place to read about what's going on in Northern Health – people, places, projects, and more! Here are some recent highlights:

- [Meet the new Professional Practice Lead for Social Work, Jill Fraser!](#)
- [Innovation, collaboration, and career-growth opportunities in Pharmacy](#)
- [Fort St. John Hospital & Peace Villa Indigenous Welcoming Signage project](#)
- [Northern Doctors Day – Practical Strategies for Better Patient Outcomes](#)
- [Teamwork leads to generous donation to Prince Rupert Regional Hospital](#)
- [Junior Volunteers at Peace Villa: Bringing joy to long-term care residents](#)
- [Qualitycast North: Avoiding physician burnout, featuring Dr. Ingrid Cosio](#)
- [Come for the employment opportunities, stay for the flexible work locations!](#)
- [Spotlight on our people: Jill Hruska, GoHealth BC travel nurse](#)
- [Northern Health nurse named recipient of PHABC's Phyllis M. Baird Memorial Award](#)
- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2024: Making a difference every day in McBride](#)
- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2024: Leadership in practice for the patient first](#)
- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2024 – Inner strength and resilience](#)
- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2024 – Empathy and responsibility](#)
- [Celebrating National Nursing Week 2024: Supporting people on their health care journey](#)

Ministry highlights

Including highlights from the [Ministry of Health](#) and [Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions](#) that are of interest to all BC residents:

- [More young people in B.C. will benefit from integrated care](#)
- [Premier's, minister's, provincial health officer's statements on the eighth anniversary of toxic-drug public-health emergency](#)
- [Supports increased for people with complex care needs](#)
- [Province takes more actions to strengthen primary care for people](#)
- [Launch of spring COVID-19 vaccine boosters marks end of respiratory illness season](#)

Health Human Resources (HHR)

The items in this Health Human Resources (HHR) section highlight some of NH's efforts to strengthen health care in the North by improving staff recruitment and retention as part of [BC's Health Human Resources Strategy](#).

Fort St. John Hospital & Peace Villa Indigenous Welcoming Signage project

The Fort St. John Hospital (FSJH) and Peace Villa recently added new signage with Indigenous greetings. The FSJH Art Committee focused on the Doig River and Blueberry River First Nations when searching for artists to design the signage. [Learn more.](#)

Recruiters on the road!

NH's recruiters travelled all over Canada, speaking with health care professionals, this April. Their travels included:

- Hosting a [UBC Pharmacy dinner](#) in Vancouver.
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association Congress in Vancouver.
- University of Alberta Health Care Career Fair in Banff, AB.
- Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists Conference in Niagara Falls, ON.
- [Dawson College classroom presentation](#) in Montreal, QC.
- [Vanier College classroom presentation](#) in Montreal, QC.
- Canadian Society for Echocardiography Conference in Montreal, QC.

Kitimat CARE Course

On April 6-7, health care providers in Kitimat took part in a two-day inter-professional learning opportunity called the CARE Course. This course was offered locally in Kitimat by the Rural Coordination Centre of BC.

Local physicians, nurses, and firefighters participated in the opportunity to enhance their skills and the quality of care offered, particularly airway management, trauma care, cardiac care, emergency obstetrics, pediatrics, and neonatal care.

Read more on the [Northern Health Facebook page](#).

Province of BC recruitment: UK Ireland Roadshow 2024

To bring more internationally educated nurses and allied health professionals to BC, the Province is taking its recruitment efforts across the Atlantic this May! Do you know a nurse/allied health professional from the UK or Ireland? Help them discover opportunities in BC and the North, and get in-person support navigating the international recruitment process by sharing the [Roadshow details!](#)

Public Health

Falls prevention grants available

Is your community looking to prevent falls and support healthy aging? Check out the [Northern Health Falls Prevention and Healthy Aging Grant](#). Applications open May 6, 2024 with grants up to \$10,000 being awarded.

This grant is supported by funding from the [Pacific Public Health Foundation](#)

Overdose prevention and response

Terrace Overdose Advisory

There has been an increase in overdoses in the community of Terrace. Population & Public Health has issued an overdose advisory for this community. Please distribute broadly within your networks. For more information, go to: [Overdose advisory: Terrace](#)

Prince George Overdose Advisory

There has been an increase in overdoses in the community of Prince George. Population & Public Health has issued an overdose advisory for this community. Please distribute broadly within your networks. For more information, go to: [Overdose advisory: Prince George](#) and [Overdose Prevention](#)

Text alerts for toxic drugs available in the North

In response to the toxic drug emergency, a text message alert system was launched across Northern Health. The system sends text alerts with timely information and up-to-date resources to people who use drugs, those who support them, and community members. It's a public health measure to prevent drug poisonings and deaths and provides. Opt-in by texting **JOIN** to **ALERTS (253787)**. [More information](#).