



NORTHERN REGION

First Nations Health Authority

## Update from FNHA Northern Regional Team on COVID-19 and the Opioid Crisis

March 4, 2021

These updates are provided weekly on **Thursday**.

These roundups are intended to highlight northern specific updates from FNHA North, Northern Health, Emergency Management BC and other partners. This includes sharing of best practice documents from community. Our hope is that this will minimize multiple information emails. If you prefer not to receive these, please contact [carol.whetter@fnha.ca](mailto:carol.whetter@fnha.ca).

All Previous FNHA North Daily COVID Updates and Attachments can be accessed here:

<https://fnha.sharefile.com/share/view/s5b73cdbbb8c4f51b/fo0c6f84-c2e0-4131-b577-bdefc4752d05>

*Please Keep Safe!*

- **all gatherings of any size have been suspended indefinitely** (they are the biggest source of COVID infection)
- stay home if feeling unwell
- stay 6 feet apart
- wear a mask if social distancing cannot be maintained
- wash hands frequently
- cover our mouths with our elbows or tissues when we cough or sneeze
- disinfect hard surfaces regularly, especially ones that are touched often
- stay kind and caring

### Stats, New Orders and Notices from Government of BC

#### Number of vaccines administered in First Nations in Northern BC:

5502 (reported as of March 3, 2021)

- 4649 confirmed cases in Northern BC since March 2020 (as of Mar. 2, 2021)
- 30 currently hospitalized
- 11 currently in Critical Care
- **107 confirmed deaths since March 2020**

**4256 recovered**

(Source: BC Centre for Disease Control)

#### Orders | Notices | Guidance

Guidance: [Ministry of Health – Overview of Visitors in Long-Term Care and Seniors' Assisted Living](#), February 25, 2021

### FNHA Updates

#### Extending gap between 1st, 2nd dose

Rhianna Schmunk · CBC News · Posted: Feb 28, 2021 7:49 PM PT | Last Updated: March 1

On Monday, the province announced it is extending the time between first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccine to four months. The change, as well as Health Canada's approval of a third vaccine, means every eligible person in B.C. will receive the first dose of their vaccine by mid- to late July.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said data from the B.C. Centre for Disease Control — and countries around the world such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand — **shows "miraculous" protection of at least 90 per cent from the first dose of a Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.**

She said the National Advisory Committee on Immunization is expected to issue a statement to align with B.C.'s decision, which frees up 70,000 doses for younger age groups.

"This is amazing news," said Henry. "These vaccines work, they give a very high level of protection and that protection lasts for many months."

"This gives us a very real and important benefit to everybody here in B.C.," Henry added. "That means we can move everybody up the list and more people will be protected sooner." ([Read full article here](#))

## Phase 2 of COVID-19 Immunizations Opens Appointments for Indigenous People Age 65 and Older

As of March 8, all Indigenous people in BC age 65 or older will be able to register for a COVID-19 vaccination appointment as part of the province's next rollout of vaccination clinics. Registration will take place for appointments for first doses of vaccine. Immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as March 15.

This provincial vaccine rollout will speed up distribution of vaccine to older populations at greater risk from COVID-19. Regional health authorities are organizing these clinics with planning support from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) regional teams. Current community-based vaccination clinics organized by the FNHA in partnership with First Nations communities will also continue and dates will be confirmed as vaccine supply becomes available. [More information here](#).

**[Vaccine Registration Contact Information for the Northern Health Authority](#) is: 1-844-255-7555**

## Updated Community Support Guide

The [Community Support Guide](#) is updated regularly and new additions are indicated in **RED**. It includes **funding available** for COVID-19 response and vaccination rollout.

### FNHA Teleconferences and Webinars

DATE	TIME	TOPIC	AUDIENCE	HOW TO JOIN
<b>Additions - weekly</b>				
<b>TUES.</b> <b>MAR. 9</b>	10:00- 11:00AM (PST)	<b><i>Community of Practice</i></b>	Addictions & Wellness Workers MST Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teleconference: 1-877-385-4099</li> <li>• Participant Code: 7332761</li> </ul>
<b>Northern Sky Traditional Wellness Circle - weekly</b>				
<b>THURS.</b> <b>MAR. 11</b>	10:30- Noon (PST)	<b><i>"Healing Circles" hosted by Merle Williams, healer from Old Massett</i></b>	Health and wellness leadership and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom: <a href="https://fnha.zoom.us/j/64387801519">https://fnha.zoom.us/j/64387801519</a></li> <li>• Meeting ID: 643 8780 1519</li> <li>• Dial: 855-703-8985</li> </ul> <p>Wellness basket draw once a month</p>
<b>Finding Your Way Through Grief - with We'es, Sandra A. Martin Harris</b>				
<b>Choose 1 of the following dates:</b> <b>Mar. 6:</b> 3-4:30PM <b>Mar. 8:</b> 6-7:30PM <b>Mar. 12:</b> 10-11:30AM <b>Mar. 15:</b> 6-7:30PM (all PST)		<b><i>Finding your way through grief using culturally rooted methods</i></b>	Front Line Workers Health Leads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom: <a href="https://fnha.zoom.us/j/6285563040">https://fnha.zoom.us/j/6285563040</a></li> <li>• Meeting ID: 628 556 3040</li> <li>• Dial: 1-855-703-8985</li> </ul> <p>For more info, see attached <a href="#">Finding Our Way Through Grief Poster.jpg</a></p>

## Improve Connectivity for Teleconferences

In remote FNHA locations with limited bandwidth, on important calls, let everyone know to limit or stop their use of the internet (e.g. no surfing videos, Netflix, YouTube, etc.)

## Opioid Updates

### Mental wellness and cultural supports listing for Northern BC Communities



If you would like phone numbers, websites and chat numbers of current mental wellness supports, please see attached [Mental Wellness Listing for Community\\_poster.pdf](#) (shown above) and the [Northern Mental Health and Substance Use Services for Communities-FINAL.pdf](#) which gives more details about services.

### BC Centre on Substance Use: Clinician support line available 24/7 for health care professionals

The [24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line](#) provides telephone consultation to physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, midwives, and pharmacists who are involved in addiction and substance use care and treatment in British Columbia. The Support Line will connect these health care providers to an Addiction Medicine Specialist who has expertise and knowledge in addiction medicine (including emergency, acute, and community care). Consultation can include support in screening, assessment, treatment and management of substance use and substance use disorder(s).

The Support Line is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year to provide rapid response for time sensitive clinical substance use inquiries.

### Resources

We must continue working to keep people who use drugs safer. Resources to help health care staff, clients, and families stay safer:

- Toward the Heart: <https://towardtheheart.com/>
- Stop Overdose BC: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca/theweekly/get-lifeguard-app>

### Overdose Alert for 100 Mile House

An increase in fatal overdoses is occurring in 100 Mile House. Some deaths may be linked to a white powder substance (unknown if a stimulant or an opioid). There is also continued presence of benzodiazepine and fentanyl in the drug supply. Multiple colours and textures. [Read the full alert here.](#)

### Parents: interactive mental wellness supports are now available online

We know how tricky it can be for families to navigate the mental health system. Hopefully the information in our new [Ask Kelty Mental Health tool](#) can be helpful when looking for supports and services in BC for children and youth.

With the help of our FamilySmart parent peer support workers at the Kelty Centre, this 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 am struggling to cope with my child's illness. Where can I get support?*

If you have questions, this may be a place to find answers.

## Northern Health Updates


Northern Health has issued the following information bulletins. Please feel free to share among your networks and stakeholders.

The following information is for First Nations **Elders born in or before 1956 and who are living out of community (off-reserve)**. You may call to **book your appointment starting March 8, 2021 (phone lines will not be operating until then)**.

AGE	DATE PHONE LINES ARE OPEN TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR FIRST NATIONS LIVING OUT OF COMMUNITY (OFF-RESERVE)	NUMBER (7 a.m. to 7 p.m., 7 days a week)
65+	March 8, 2021	1-844-255-7555
60-64	March 31, 2021	1-844-255-7555

If you would like more information about calling about a vaccine appointment for yourself or a family member, for a friend or neighbour, [click here](#).


## COVID-19 Phase 2 Vaccine appointments for 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 through the Northern Health call centre, according to the staggered schedule below.

Immunization clinic locations will be confirmed at the time of booking, with vaccinations starting as early as **March 15, 2021**.

# 1-844-255-7555




**Hours: 7am to 7pm  
seven days a week**

Following the schedule below, seniors and Elders can call the Northern Health call centre to book their vaccine appointment.

When you can call is based on your age (subject to change).

March 8, 2021	March 15, 2021	March 22, 2021
Seniors born in or before <b>1931</b> (90 years+)	Seniors born in or before <b>1936</b> (85 years+)	Seniors born in or before <b>1941</b> (80 years+)
Indigenous peoples born in or before <b>1956</b> (65 years+)	May call starting on Monday March 15, 2021, to book their vaccine appointment.	May call starting on Monday March 22, 2021, to book their vaccine appointment.
May call starting on Monday March 8, 2021, to book their vaccine appointment.	For more information, what you should have ready, and step-by-step instructions on how to call to book an appointment for yourself, for a family member, for a friend or neighbour, visit <a href="http://gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst">gov.bc.ca/bcseniorsfirst</a> or <a href="http://northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan">northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan</a>	



## Other Updates

**British Columbia enters Phase 2 of COVID-19 vaccination plan – March 1, 2021**

[Watch the full announcement here.](#) (duration 1:13:04)



## Question of the Week

### I'm a 67-year-old First Nations person living in Prince Rupert. When will I get my vaccine?

As a First Nations person who is 65 or older—born in or before 1956—and living out of community (off-reserve), you can be vaccinated in a Northern Health clinic. You will need to book an appointment.

Starting March 8, you can call 1-844-255-7555 to make an appointment for the vaccine. This phone number is available 7 days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please note, the phone number will not be activated until March 8.

You can get more details about Northern Health's vaccine plan at this website: <https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan#weekly-plan#immunization-plan>

[This site](#) has information if you are calling for yourself or on someone else's behalf for all of BC.

## Sharing Your Good Ideas

Share your stories here, too.

It's the beginning of the month, which means we have a **new wellness calendar**. *March wellness 2021.pdf* is attached. Have a look and get some good ideas to treat yourself to some tender, loving, care all month long.



Calendar created by Alisa Froh, Community Engagement Coordinator for the Northeast.

## Resources and Templates for Community

If you have **questions** or would like to access FNHA materials, please email: [COVID19@fnha.ca](mailto:COVID19@fnha.ca)

These **FNHA resources** are available for your use:

- Poster: *Mental Wellness Listing for Community\_poster.pdf*

### Other resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Commonly used terms relating to opioids](#)

## Trusted Sources

Currently the best sources of information can be found at:

- First Nations Health Authority Coronavirus: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>
- First Nations Health Authority Communicable Disease Control: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/>
- BC Centre for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
- BC Centre for Disease Control **self-assessment app and website** self-assessment tools: <https://bc.thrive.health/>



- Ministry of Health: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/pandemic-influenza>
- HealthLinkBC: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>
- World Health Organization (WHO) Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
- Diabetes Canada: [www.diabetes.ca/coronavirus](http://www.diabetes.ca/coronavirus)
- Government of Canada COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- Government of Canada **benefit-finder tool** to navigate financial supports during COVID. [CLICK HERE.](#)
- WorkSafe BC: COVID-19 information and resources: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates>
- Emergency Preparedness Response: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>
- Government of BC **resources for urban First Nations**: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>
- **Interactive Map of BC Collecting Sites for COVID-19 Testing**: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3862560c5a41418e9d78f4f81688e9d0>
- **Previous** FNHA North Daily COVID Updates and Attachments: <https://fnha.sharefile.com/share/view/s5b73cdbbb8c4f51b/fo0c6f84-c2e0-4131-b577-bdefc4752d05>

## Contacts

**For Health Care providers who have specific questions** contact [cdmgmt@fnha.ca](mailto:cdmgmt@fnha.ca) to connect with the communicable disease management team in Vancouver.



**COVID-19 Northern Health Online Clinic & Info Line** 1-844-645-7811

**Non-Medical COVID-19 Questions:** 1-888-268-4319 or text 604-630-0300 7:30AM-8PM (PST)

**FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day program** to set up virtual doctor's appointments: 1-855-344-3800


## First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day

Your wellness. Your way.  
*Family doctors are on call to provide culturally safe care, seven days a week*

1. Call 1-855-344-3800 to book an appointment by video or phone.

2. See a doctor as soon as today!



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

To learn more or  
provide feedback visit  
[FNHA.ca/VirtualHealth](https://fnha.ca/VirtualHealth)

Services are open to all First Nations people living in BC and their family members, including family members who are not Indigenous.  
If you need urgent medical help, please call 911 or your local emergency response service.

# First Nations Virtual Substance Use & Psychiatry Service

Your culture. Your comfort. Your care.  
*Specialists are here to provide culturally safe support for your health and wellbeing.*



1. For a referral, ask a health provider who supports you or call the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day.



2. You and your provider can call the service together to set up an appointment by video or phone.



3. An assistant will connect you with a specialist to give you the support you need.



To learn more or  
provide feedback visit  
[FNHA.ca/VirtualHealth](https://fnha.ca/VirtualHealth)

Services are open to all First Nations people living in BC and their family members, including family members who are not Indigenous.  
If you need urgent medical help, please call 911 or your local emergency response service.

**Community enquiries, please contact your CECs** who will direct your questions to the appropriate resources.