

Bulletin #170: COVID-19 Information

Sept. 30, 2021



In This Issue: COVID-19 Bulletin

[A thank you from Horizon's CEO](#)

[Mandatory twice daily COVID-19 symptom screening for all admitted patients](#)

[Remember to take time for yourself and access mental health supports](#)

[GNB update](#)

[Horizon dashboard data from Sept. 29, 2021](#)

COVID-19 Bulletin

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This letter is from Dr. John Dornan, interim President and CEO

Eighteen months into the pandemic and we are currently experiencing record breaking numbers of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and outbreaks. Since the beginning of the pandemic there has been constant change across our organization, and while change is not easy, the one constant has been the dedication, drive and commitment of our health care staff and physicians.

You have played, and continue to play, an important role in keeping New Brunswickers safe from COVID-19, and healthy by continuing to provide the health care services they need. Thank you!

On the best of days, being a health care worker isn't easy, and in today's COVID-19 reality, there are additional challenges to overcome. It will get better; brighter days are ahead. Health care is important and essential work and you are living examples of resilience and strength.

The sad fact some people are choosing to take their frustrations out towards health care workers, with protests at health care facilities, and targeted threats and acts of vandalism is disheartening. This is unacceptable and is not representative of how most people feel.

While the daily parades, honking and balcony cheers may have stopped, our health care workers continue to be, and will forever be heroes.

What we're experiencing now is a pandemic of the unvaccinated and our health care system is feeling its effects. There are outbreaks across the province, in our hospitals, nursing homes, schools and shelters. But our staff and physicians continue to show up to work, show up for their patients, their communities and each other.

I've heard many inspiring stories of our staff giving it their all. Our assessment centres continue to reach new records for testing every day. Our vaccination clinics are available early mornings and evenings, in communities, big and small, across the province to ensure people have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Bulletin #170: COVID-19 Information

Sept. 30, 2021

Horizon's mental health teams provide support to patients and staff during outbreaks across the province. COVID-19 affects not only a person's physical health, but mental health as well.

Every day, every shift, staff in ALL areas of Horizon are stepping up to ensure patients and clients receive quality care and feel safe in our facilities.

On behalf of Horizon's Executive Leadership Team, I celebrate the work you are doing, and I encourage you to congratulate your colleagues on a job well done and thank each other for the continued support.

With your collaboration and dedication, I am confident we will get through the fourth wave as a stronger organization. I am grateful Horizon has such a dedicated team.

Mandatory twice daily COVID-19 symptom screening for all admitted patients

In April 2020, the Regional Infectious Diseases Infection Prevention and Control (ID-IPC) COVID-19 Committee mandated ongoing monitoring of all admitted patients twice daily (every 12 hours) to assess changes in health status and to document accordingly in the health record using a focus note.

The symptoms for monitoring include:

- Fever/signs of fever (e.g. chills, feeling cold, shivers, etc.)
- New cough or a cough that is getting worse



- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- New onset of myalgia (muscle pain)
- New onset of fatigue
- Purple markings on fingers or toes (for children)

If a patient has been identified with at least two of the ten COVID-19 symptoms:

- Notify Infection Prevention and Control
- Collection a nasopharyngeal swab for COVID-19 (as per [Directive: DIR-IPC-40041](#))

Documentation:

- Temperature will be documented on flowsheets and graphics as established in the Inpatient Nursing Practice Standards,
- Focus Charting will be done every 12 hours in the Interdisciplinary Progress Note using the focus word COVID-19 Monitoring,
 - Example:
Focus: COVID-19 Monitoring

Response: COVID-19 Monitoring completed with no symptoms present

Bulletin #170: COVID-19 Information

Sept. 30, 2021

The focus note for patients with symptoms would include a description of presenting symptoms from screening and any actions taken.

Nurse Managers are encouraged to audit their own units regularly to ensure that any issues are resolved in a timely manner and to verify that screening is occurring every 12 hours.

Remember to take time for yourself and access mental health supports

With the recent increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, and hospital and ICU admissions, across Horizon and in New Brunswick, tensions are running high and it's important to not let anxiety get the best of us.

Horizon's [Employee Health and Wellness page](#) on Skyline contains many supportive resources, including information about Horizon's Employee and Family Assistance Program provider Homewood Health, which is a leader in mental health resources for employers and employees.

In addition to Homewood Health, the Government of Canada introduced a free program for all Canadians in March 2020:

- A toll-free 24/7 crisis hotline is available at 1-844-751-2133. Individuals will receive crisis counselling support and/or referral to community resources.



- A global mental health support program called [Wellness Together Canada](#). It consists of free online resources, tools, apps, as well as connections to trained volunteers and qualified mental health professionals.

The increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases may be weighing heavily on your minds.

Feeling stressed and fearful every day takes a toll on our health and well-being very quickly.

As well, the [Canadian Mental Health Association New Brunswick](#) contains multiple resources for mental well being including information about pandemic-related anxiety, and tools such as webinars, tips, and workshops.

GNB update

Public Health has confirmed that two people, one in the Fredericton (Zone 3) area and the other the Edmundston area (Zone 4) have died as a result of COVID-19. There are 99 new cases of COVID-19 and 64 recoveries, bringing the number of active cases to 690.

Public Health also reported today that 80 per cent of eligible New Brunswickers are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and 88.9 per cent have received their first dose of a vaccine.

Click [here](#) to read the entire news release.

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