

ISC-AB Vaccine Update January 4, 2022

General Updates (data as of Dec 30, 2021):

- Across the province, 17,396 active cases are increasing and we have seen the positivity rate increasing to 20.55%. Driven by Omicron variant.
- Provincially, there are 349 hospitalizations, 57 individuals in ICU. Just over 7.5M doses administered. 89% of the 12+ population have received at least one dose, and 85% 12+ population have received two doses. 27% of eligible children have received the vaccine
- In First Nations communities, we have seen 14,744 cases to date and 327 active cases.
- Lots of communities are still impacted
- Regional immunization summary: Over 109,099 doses administered. 56,462 are first doses, 45,705 are second doses, and 6,932 third doses. Doses do not always capture individuals who are residents, could be people living off-reserve, and/or working in the community.
- 85.8% of 12+ population has received at least one dose. 75% of 5+ population has received at least one dose. 70.6% of the entire population
- 71.3% of 12+ population has received at least two doses. 60.7% of 5+ population has received two doses. 57.1% of the total population has received at least two doses.
- 10.9% of 12+ population has received three doses. 9.2% of 5+ population and 8.7% of total population. (Note that only 18+ are eligible for third dose).
- There has been a steady increase in third dose administration over the course of the last several weeks, particularly before the break
- 20% of our doses are imported in from AHS/ pharmac data. Not all Nations have reconciled data so could be a bit higher than 20%.
- Immunization rates have been increasing for those 5 years and older with 74.6% first dose immunization and 60.5% second dose immunization.
- Roughly comparable number of doses administered across all three treaty areas.
- Two doses were very effective against Delta, however 30% effectiveness for Omicron for preventing against symptomatic infection; 70% effective for preventing severe outcomes. Three doses are much more impactful against preventing symptomatic disease at 70% effectiveness.
- Those aged 60+ are more likely to have severe outcomes
- Boosters have not been approved for those under the age of 18 – more to come

Omicron

- South Africa has seen high transmission but not a high hospitalization rate
- UK/ Denmark (both with older population demographics) are seeing a slightly higher hospitalization than South Africa
- Hospitalization stays are for a shorter duration

- PPE – AHS guidance regarding the use of N95 masks in clinical settings: when working with suspect, probable or confirmed COVID cases; HCWs encouraged to do their point of care risk assessment (PCRA). Encourage the same in Health Centers, order through AHS if availability is an issue please reach out to the region
- Provincial announcement – quarantine for close contacts, legal order for isolation of 10 days for unvaccinated individuals or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longest; vaccinated – isolate for 5 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer and masks must be worn in public for remaining 5 days. Anyone symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms is required to isolate as per the public health order
- Testing approach is shifting towards a blended approach (ie. PCR testing and Rapid Antigen Tests) as we move forward. High number of cases are expected with Omicron and it is anticipated that that lab capacity will be exceeded by the need.
- Rapid antigen test kits – positive results require isolation, available in communities
- Testing available to First Nation communities, can send the PCR swab to Prov Lab
- Looking to delay the spread of virus in community in order to minimize impact on health/ other sectors and focus on immunization, especially third doses for those over 60 years of age
- Availability of staff might be impacted and may result in a change of process

Communicable Disease Control Update:

- Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca Biological Pages– Dec 21 is the most current version; J&J Dec 8 most current version
- Dec 22 and 23 Christina Smith sent out updated COVID-19 Biological pages – 18+ spacing between 2nd and 3rd reduced to 5 months
- Dec 24 email - Health care workers encouraged to get 3rd COVID-19 dose as soon as eligible; enhanced PPE measures for health centre staff in light of omicron variant
- Adverse events following immunization – 121 reports investigated by CDC team; only 40 met criteria for reporting to AH Health. The 5-11 age group have had no reportable AEFIs

Questions:

- ***Given preliminary data from Israel, will a 4th dose be approved in Canada***
 - Have not seen data, early data is showing potential, our data is a bit different, we will need to wait whether 4th doses are required and if so, when
- ***Clarification for testing –kits and PCR. Advice is to use rapid testing, or do individuals have a choice?***

- It will be a blended approach moving forward. PCR testing is helpful to establish the presence of COVID in the community and support initial contact tracing to slow down the virus.
 - If you do take Rapid antigen test and it is positive, treat as positive and isolate
 - Follow up to question: Fear of not reporting a positive result and being in public (not isolating)
 - We can reach out to the health centers/nursing team and lay out the testing strategy
 - Homeless, transient etc are of a concern as well – need a systematic approach
- ***What do we know about Flurona?***
 - Not seen reported here in Canada but Israel has reported, don't know vaccination status, will look for more data
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- ***Issues procuring rapid tests for communities - On reserve lower than total Nation members***
 - On reserve lower than total Nation members. Based on initial supply province has supplied communities with 20% of the request now. Province will be able to supply more as more tests are procured. Please reach out to FNIHB should you require additional rapid antigen tests to support outbreak management.
 - Specific to school setting: 2 kits per students/staff and masks – Alberta emailed all schools on and off reserve to get numbers of students and staff for masks and kits. 2 masks per day for 8 weeks is what is being shipped
- ***Should we expect more variants? With positive antigen test, if clients phone the Health Centre, why is it no longer important or necessary to send in a NDR/Contact list***
 - I hope not, but most likely we will see variants.
 - Required by law to report on positive PCR test results. Rapid Antigen Test results are not reportable to Alberta Health..
- ***Asking for data breakdown of Omnicron and vaccine status – is that available?***

We will try to identify
- ***Asking when the 3rd booster will be available for 12+ seeing as its coming up 6 months***
 - Still waiting to see when the booster doses will be approved for those between 12-17.