

## ISC-AB Vaccine Update May 10, 2022

### General Updates:

- We would like to acknowledge National Nursing Week (May 9 - 15). Thank you to all of our nursing colleagues for your commitment to the health of First Nations, particularly in the last two years and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a privilege to work alongside you.
- Provincial numbers are updated each Wednesday, so the numbers shared today are from last week. Additionally, the case count includes only those who test positive on a PCR test and the case count is likely significantly underestimated, as there may be more cases identified through take-home rapid antigen tests as well as unconfirmed/asymptomatic cases.
- As of May 2, the province reported 6,735 new cases reported out of 25,568 tests.; 1,267 individuals are in hospital (46 in ICU). The number of hospitalizations in the province has increased slightly since our last meeting and the percent positivity rate is still fairly high compared to previous waves (22.98%).
- Waste water surveillance is being utilized as a predictor for increased cases. Data/research being led by the Centre for Health Informatics at the University of Calgary is available online at <https://covid-tracker.chi-csm.ca/>. Waste water surveillance is a useful tool as the province continues to move to an endemic response. If any First Nations are interested in more information on implementing waste water surveillance in community, please reach out to Dr. Parminder Thiara or Dr. Chris Sarin. Currently, we are seeing a decrease in COVID-19 viral load in most sites across Alberta who are testing wastewater.
- As of May 9, there have been 20,146 probable and confirmed on-reserve cases of COVID-19. Of these total cases – 19,818 have recovered and 142 are active cases in 26 First Nation communities; four communities have 10 or more active cases. There are 14 individuals in hospital (two in ICU) and, sadly, 182, individuals have passed away. As with provincial numbers, the number of cases on reserve is likely lower than the number of actual current cases. Hospitalizations, which are more reliable, have decreased since the last update – a good sign.
- As of May 2 – 8,741,621 immunizations have been administered in Alberta, with approximately 90.4% of the population age 12 and older having received at least one dose (81.2% of the total population) and approximately 86.9% having received two doses (76.9% of the total population).
- As mentioned at previous vaccine updates, ISC-AB uses Indian Registry data for the population age 12 and older living on reserve as the denominator. The numerator consists of all the doses administered on reserve and doses reconciled through the provincial registry. The doses administered on reserve would also include individuals not residing on reserve, etc. Includes CHIP data/provincial registry as reconciled by First Nations.
- As of May 9 – 122,743 immunizations have been administered in First Nation communities in Alberta, with approximately 60,333 first doses, 50,246 second doses, 12,164 third doses, and 399 fourth doses. Approximately, 89.2% of the population age 12 and older living on reserve have received at least one dose (75.4% of the total

population), 76.6% have received at least two doses (62.8% of the total population), and 19.1% have received three doses (15.2% of the total population).

- As of May 9:
  - 5-11 year olds: Approximately 30.0% first doses, 11.7% second doses.
  - 12-17 year olds: Approximately 77.3% first doses, 62.7% second doses, 2.7% third doses.
  - 18-34 year olds: Approximately 70.2% first doses, 57.0% second doses, 7.9% third doses.
  - 35-49 year olds: Approximately 97.7% first doses, 85.0% second doses, 20.9% third doses.
  - 50-64 year olds: Approximately 100% first doses, 92.0% second doses, 35.2% third doses.
  - 65+ year olds: Approximately 100% first doses, 95.4% second doses, 53.9% third doses.
- We are still seeing first, second, and third doses and fourth doses. However, we are seeing a reduction in the number of doses being administered on a weekly basis compared to the thousands of doses that were being administered weekly earlier in the pandemic when vaccines became available.
- Vaccine coverage (third doses and boosters) for adults age 50+ remains a priority, as they may be more vulnerable to severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection.
- Results from research on Moderna's bivalent vaccines (targeting the original strain of COVID-19 and the Omicron strain) is expected to be announced later this spring and may become available for administration in the fall. It isn't known at this time if a bivalent vaccine for COVID-19 and influenza will be available as a single vaccine or as two vaccines.
  - Pfizer has announced they are also researching bivalent vaccines, but have not given a timeline on studies/availability.

### Vaccine Clinic Update:

- The Alberta Health Services (AHS) COVID-19 Biological Pages were last revised April 11.
- The AHS [Health Professional Immunization Information COVID-19](#) webpage provides practical information on vaccines. This is where vaccine biological pages and the following resources are located:
  - The [Defining Fully Immunized for COVID-19](#) table was updated April 19.
  - The [Management of COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Errors and Deviations](#) table was updated May 2 and includes situations involving the use of Moderna vaccine for the 6-11 year old population.
  - The [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility and Scheduling](#) table (updated May 2) includes information from all mRNA vaccine pages as well as information specific to First Nations.
- Fourth doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are available for eligible groups, which are people 70+, First Nations, Metis or Inuit 65+, and all residents of seniors congregate care, regardless of age. Fourth doses can be administered five months after those eligible received their third shot (1<sup>st</sup> booster).

- We have heard of booster shots being administered early (e.g., in error, related to travel). These shots are still effective/considered a valid booster if there was an interval of at least 28 days from the previous dose.

### Questions:

- ***Will community health needs funding related to COVID-19 continue to be provided?***
  - ISC-AB still does not have any confirmed information at this time but will provide an update as soon as possible.
- ***From Dr. Thiara: These meetings are currently held on a monthly basis – do these meetings need to continue over summer?***
  - Agreed that monthly meetings will continue, but can be changed over the summer if needed.

Thank you all for your continued hard work and dedication. We will meet again **June 7, 2022 at 1PM.**