

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: September 9, 2021

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

Alberta has entered the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a rapid increase in the number of active cases across the province and in First Nation communities; and the highly infectious B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant has become the dominant COVID-19 strain. As a result of the rising cases and hospitalizations, largely in unvaccinated individuals, the Government of Alberta has announced [temporary measures](#) to reduce transmission and prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed. ISC-AB and the Medical Officers of Health (MOH) team are available to work with First Nations communities to maintain an enhanced COVID-19 response, which includes supporting First Nations with vaccination, testing, case management, and contact tracing efforts as needed, and as available. Individuals and communities are encouraged to continue choosing lower-risk activities and settings to protect themselves and others. The most important intervention to reduce transmission and stop the spread of COVID-19 is vaccination for those eligible aged 12 and older. A full vaccine series of two doses at the recommended interval (4-12 weeks between doses) is proven to be the best mechanism to significantly reduce the risk of severe health outcomes from COVID-19, including the Delta variant.

Status Update

Number of Cases Reported* as of September 9, 2021:

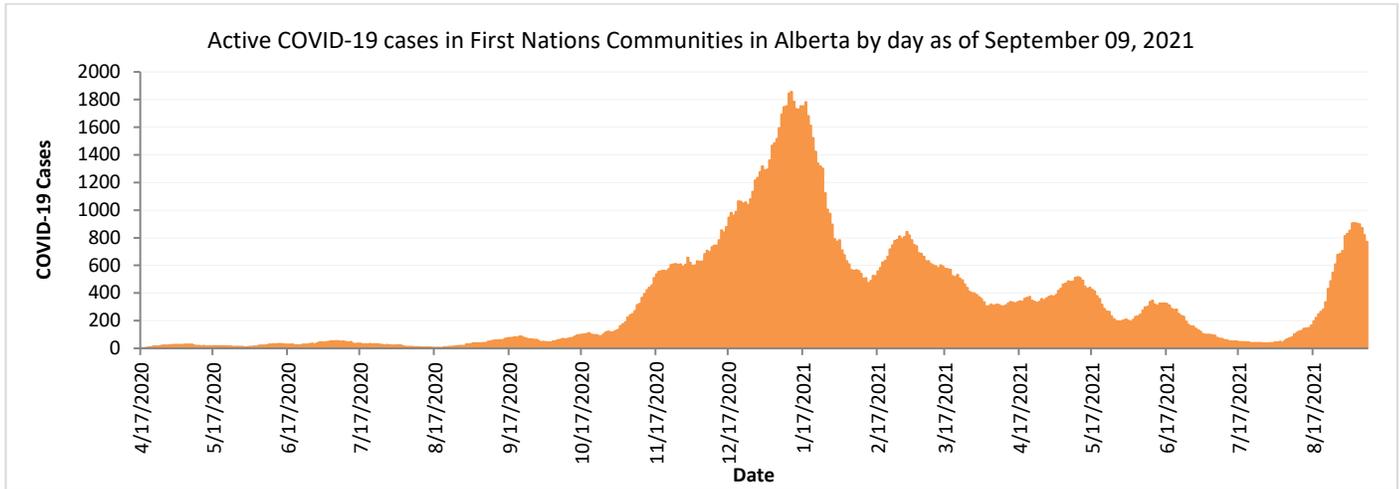
**numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

Alberta: There are 15,618 Active Cases of COVID-19 in Alberta.

First Nations in Alberta: First Nations in Alberta: Aggregate data on COVID-19 First Nations cases in Alberta is available at: <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/index.php?id=home> and <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>.

First Nations	Total Cases	Recovered Case	Active Cases	Deaths	Currently Hospitalized	Communities with Active Cases
Living on Reserve in Alberta	10,335	9,468	771	96	17	36
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	20,650	18,922	1,549	179	78	NA





COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta				
Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	4,671	252	4,384	35
Treaty 7	2,551	136	2,378	37
Treaty 8	3,113	383	2,706	24
TOTAL	10,335	771	9,468	96

Variants of Concern (VOCS) in First Nations Living on Reserve in Alberta

As of September 9th, **1,888** VOCs have been detected in **44** First Nations communities in Alberta.

VOC Type	Total Cases	Recovered Case	Active Cases	Deaths	Communities with Active Cases
B.1.1.7 (Alpha)	1,059	1048	0	11	0
B.1.351 (Beta)	11	10	0	1	0
P.1 (Gamma)	27	27	0	0	0
B.1.617.2 (Delta)	791	354	436	1	34
Total (VOC)	1,888	1,439	436	13	34

COVID-19 Vaccine

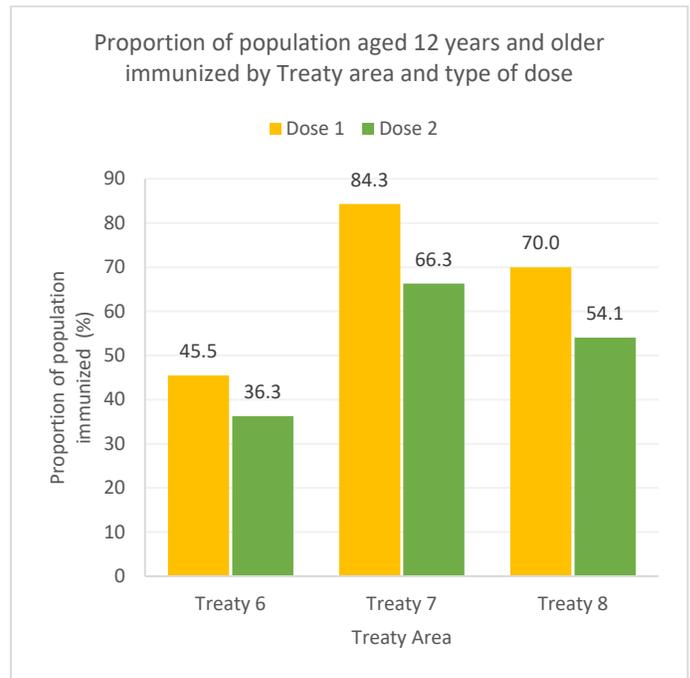
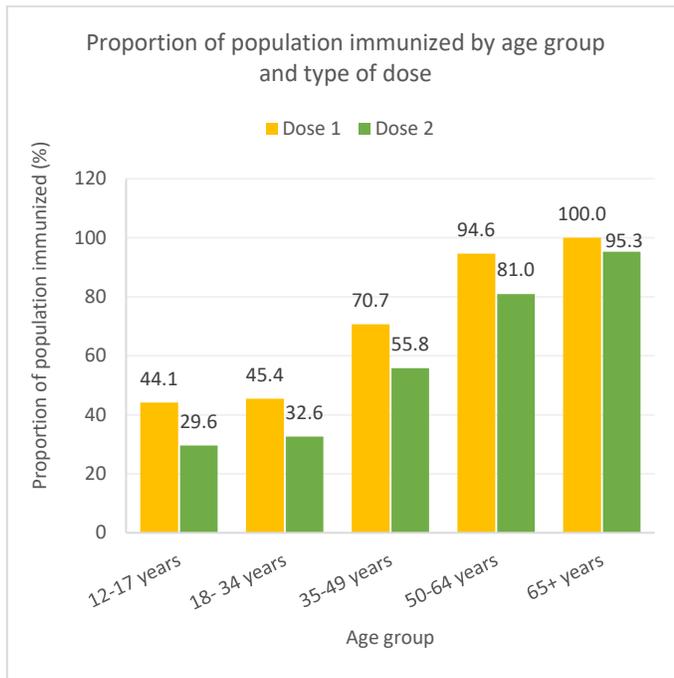
COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of September 9, 2021

- **72,971** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **40,881** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **32,092** First Nations people living on reserve are fully immunized (2 doses)

Approximately **63.8%** of the total population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose and approximately **50.1%** have been fully immunized (2 doses).

COVID-19 may occur in individuals who have received the COVID-19 vaccine however, the disease is less severe in those who have had a complete vaccine series. In Alberta about four in every 1000 people (0.4%)

with one dose were diagnosed with COVID-19 14-days after their first immunization date and four in every 10,000 people (0.040%) with two doses were diagnosed with COVID-19 14 days after their second immunization date.



13 Communities
Have vaccinated over 70% of eligible members with the first dose

18 Communities
Have vaccinated 50 - 70% of eligible members with the first dose

15 Communities
Have vaccinated less than 50% of eligible members with the first dose

COVID-19 Vaccine *New Developments*

1. Effective September 1st, a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine is available for all seniors living in congregate care facilities, including those in First Nation communities, and for some immunocompromised individuals living in Alberta.
 - The third dose is available at least eight weeks after receiving the second dose for individuals who are immunocompromised. See here for a list of [eligible immunocompromised conditions](#).
 - The third dose is available for residents of congregate facilities at least five months after receiving the second dose.

Receiving a third dose will boost immunity levels and improve protection for seniors living in congregate care facilities and individuals with compromised immune systems.
2. Additional mRNA doses (Pfizer and Moderna) will be made available to Albertans who are travelling to a jurisdiction that does not accept visitors who have been vaccinated with Covishield/AstraZeneca or mixed doses.
3. Official vaccine records may be accessed through the Nation's community health centre or through [MyHealth Records](#), an online tool that lets an individual view their personal health information from any computer, tablet or smartphone. Individuals signing up on [MyHealth Records](#) will require a current Alberta ID and mailing address to validate their account.
4. A [one-time incentive](#) of \$100 is now available for all Albertans 18 years or older who receive a first or second dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine between September 3 and October 14. After vaccination, register online, or by phone, starting on September 13th.

5. Effective September 7 all foreign nationals who qualify as fully vaccinated will be allowed to enter Canada for discretionary travel. For more information on Canada's border measures for travellers entering Canada, see [here](#).

Reminders

1. Immunization continues to be one of the most important measures that can be taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 in First Nations communities and for the protection of the most vulnerable members of the community. There is strong evidence that cases of COVID-19, and severe outcomes, have been significantly reduced amongst those already immunized.

Alberta's Relaunch - Update

- **[New]** Effective September 4, the Government of Alberta has announced temporary measures to slow COVID-19 transmission. The mandatory measures include:
 - Mandatory masking in all indoor public spaces and workplaces
 - Mandatory restriction of alcohol service after 10 p.m. in all licensed establishmentsMore information about the temporary mandatory and recommended measures, including masking exceptions can be found [here](#).
- **Reminder:** The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has developed an [infographic](#) and general guidance on [Going out Safely](#) to help individuals make informed choices when going out.
- The Alberta Government has released a [Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#) document to help your Nations plan to reduce respiratory illness and infection in schools. Students and school staff should screen daily for symptoms using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) and must isolate if they test positive or have the core COVID-19 symptoms. ISC-AB recognizes the autonomy of First Nations and First Nations school boards to implement additional measures that are best fit for their communities and members. ISC-AB MOH and Environmental and Public Health Officer (EPHO) teams remain available to work with Nations on their specific school strategy that emphasizes the safety and well-being of children, teachers and other staff.
- **Reminder:** Any Albertan 18 and older who has received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine can enter the province-wide lottery to win \$1 million and other prizes in the September draw. Registration closes September 23 at 11:59 pm. Eligible individuals must be able to provide proof they have received their second vaccine dose. See the [Open for Summer Lottery](#) for more information and to register online.

What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB are Doing

- **[New]** Agriculture and Agri-Food has increased total AgriRecovery funding to up to \$500 million to address extraordinary costs faced by producers due to drought and wildfires. This includes initial funding of \$100 million announced on August 6, 2021. Producers can also apply for interim payments under AgriStability to help them cope with immediate financial challenges. The Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta have agreed to increase the 2021 AgriStability interim benefit payment percentage from 50% to 75%, so producers can access a greater portion of their benefit early to meet their urgent needs. More information can be found [here](#).
- **[New]** ISC-AB is presenting an MOH Update telehealth session on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Thursday **September 16** from 1.30-3 pm. More information about the session and how to register can be found [here](#).
- **Reminder:** Nations that require additional surge supports for COVID-19 response or vaccine clinics including contact tracing, testing, and vaccine administration support should submit a [request form](#) to ISC-AB at: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca.
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada extended the eligibility for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support until October 23, 2021 and has increased the rate of support employers and organizations can receive during the period between August 29 and September 25, 2021. The Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit have also been extended until October 23, 2021. More information is available [here](#).

Mental Health and Wellness

- **Reminder:** The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for many individuals, families, and communities who have all been affected in several ways. The [Hope for Wellness](#) help line offers immediate, toll-free telephone and online-chat based support and crisis intervention to all Indigenous people across Canada. Help is available in English and French, and upon request in Cree and Ojibway. Call the toll-free Help Line at **1-855-242-3310**, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.

Virtual Care Clinic

- **Reminder:** The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) has updated their hours and they are now **open until 8:30pm on Wednesdays**. The AIVCC serves individuals self-identifying as First Nations, Inuit and Métis and their families. AIVCC provides same-day care to rural and urban Indigenous people residing in Alberta via secure video or phone service and can be reached at 1-888-342-4822 or www.aivcc.ca.

Additional Information and Resources

- **Reminder:** The provincial and federal governments have rapid testing screening programs that can be used by employers and organizations for regular workplace screening of employees. Rapid testing and screening can identify pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases (people who don't know they're infected with COVID-19) so individuals can isolate early and stop the spread. Details on testing can be found at: [Government of Alberta testing](#) and [Government of Canada testing](#).
- **Reminder:** Health care staff and patients are required to wear a mask at all times and in all areas of the workplace to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. More information on mask requirements can be found [here](#).

Additional Information

If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated. **Should you have questions about COVID-19, please do not hesitate to email: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca**

OneHealth - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

InfoPoint (First Nations Health Manager Association) – This site is designed for First Nation health managers to access credible sources of information related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca

Alberta Health

- Coronavirus info for Albertans: <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Alberta Health Services

- Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>
- Indigenous Peoples & Communities (COVID-19):
https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUp06_wGmSxUc

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 (Updates available in several Indigenous languages)

- COVID-19 & Indigenous Communities: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

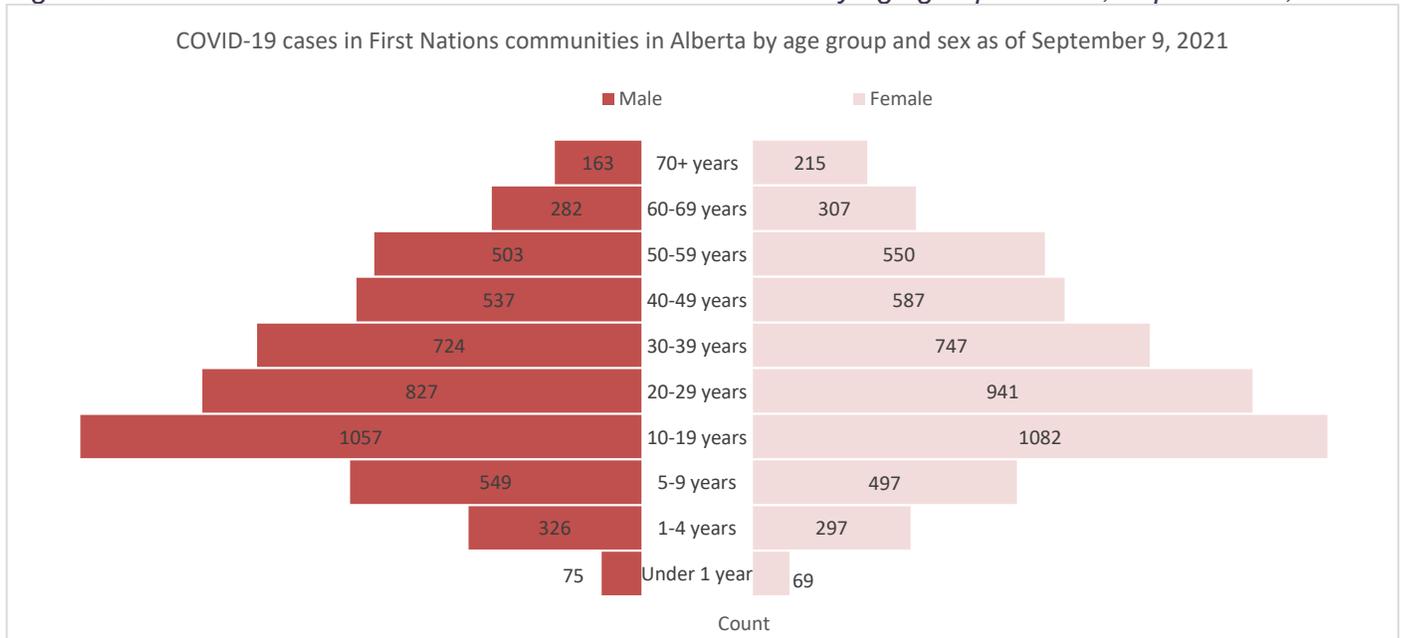
- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Family Violence Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention-resources.aspx>
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction. Text “Open2Change” to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe.

Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.



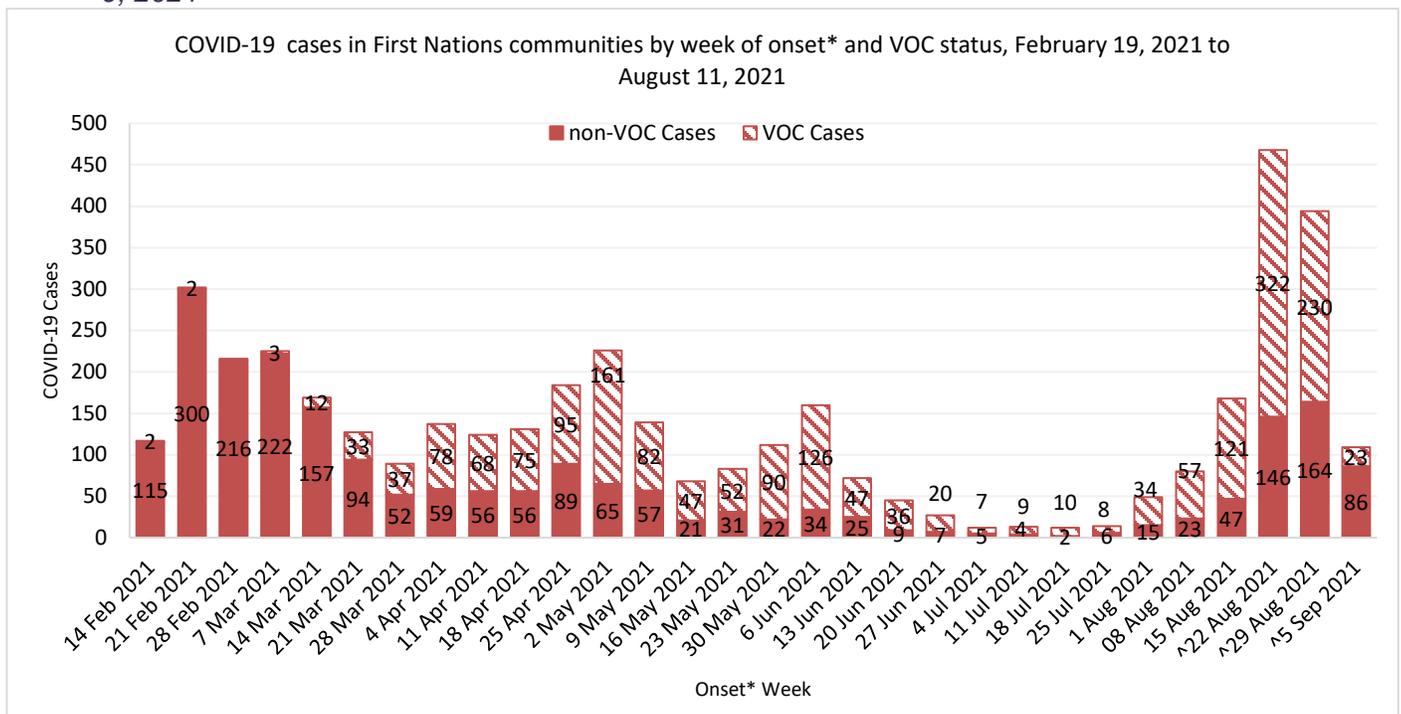
APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, September 9, 2021



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 52.0% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 51.5% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 51.3% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.3% among all Albertans.

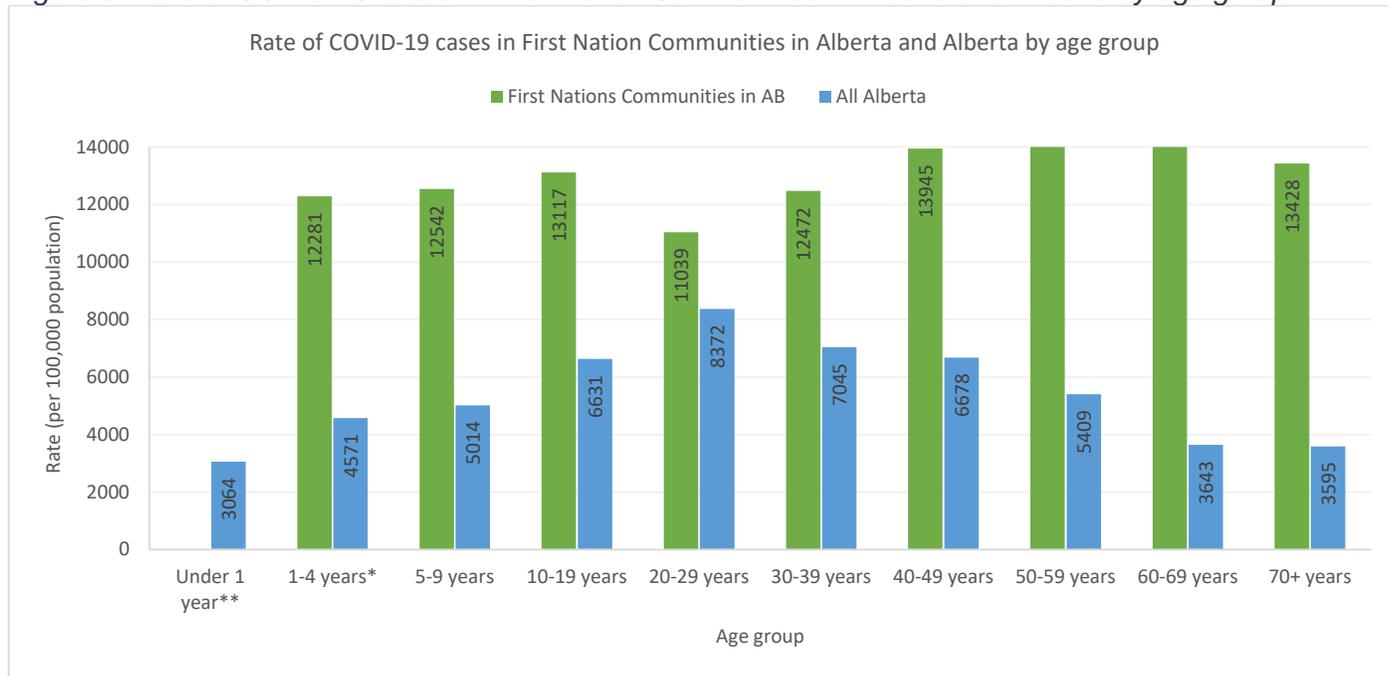
Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week and VOC status, September 9, 2021



Note: ^Data may be incomplete due to late receipt of lab reports. *Onset date is the earliest of the “symptoms onset” and “specimen collection” date.

One thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight (1,888) VOCs have been detected. Currently there are 436 active VOCs (all B.1.617.2 (Delta) variants) in 34 First Nations Communities making up 56.5% of all active COVID-19 cases in communities.

Figure 3: Rate of COVID-19 cases in First Nation Communities in Alberta and Alberta by age group

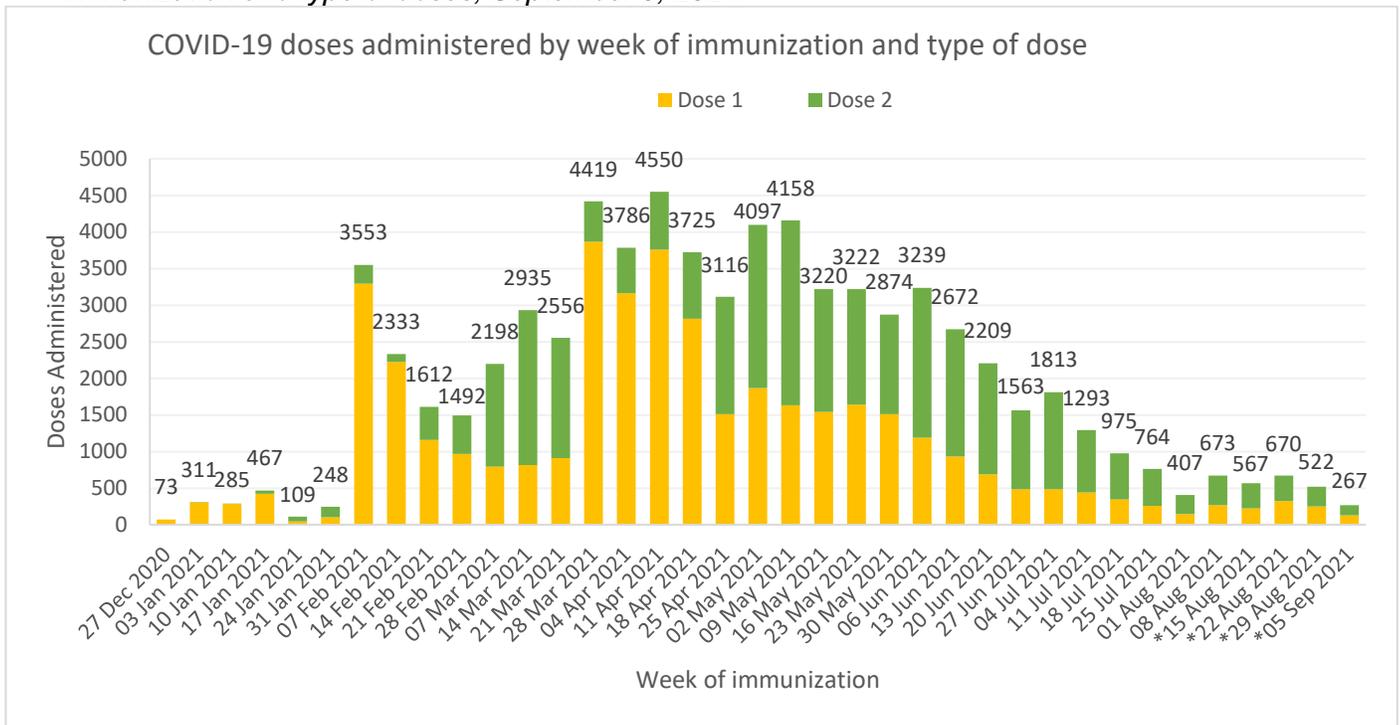


Note: **Due to late reporting and registration of birth, the rate in this age group is not calculated for First Nations communities.

*Due to late reporting and registration of birth, this rate may be overestimating.

There is a higher burden of COVID-19 cases in First Nations in Alberta compared to the general Alberta population in every age group.

Fig 4. COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered in First Nations communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, September 9, 2021.



*May be incomplete due to late reporting and data entry.

A total 72,973 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 40,881 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 32,092 are fully immunized with two doses.