

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: July 15, 2021

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

Alberta is now in Stage 3 of the [Alberta's Open for Summer Plan](#) and all public health measures have been lifted, except in specific settings. Although new cases and deaths from COVID-19 are still being recorded in Alberta, there is a steady decline in COVID-19 active cases across the province as more than half of eligible individuals living in Alberta have now been fully vaccinated with two doses. The provincial re-opening plan is however not mandatory and some Nations may choose to keep public health measures in place even as restrictions have been lifted. ISC-AB's MOHs recommendations on easing public health measures for First Nations in Alberta recognizes that vaccination rates in many First Nations communities in Alberta are not at the re-opening provincial target of 70% for first doses. Individuals and communities are encouraged to continue to choose lower-risk activities and settings to protect themselves and others. Vaccines continue to be the best path forward towards protecting our health and the health of our communities and the ISC-AB MOHs strongly recommend First Nations aim to have at least **80% of eligible persons** (70% minimum) fully immunized (first and second doses) against COVID-19. ISC-AB is available to support Nations to address key concerns and develop strategies to increase vaccination rates.

Status Update

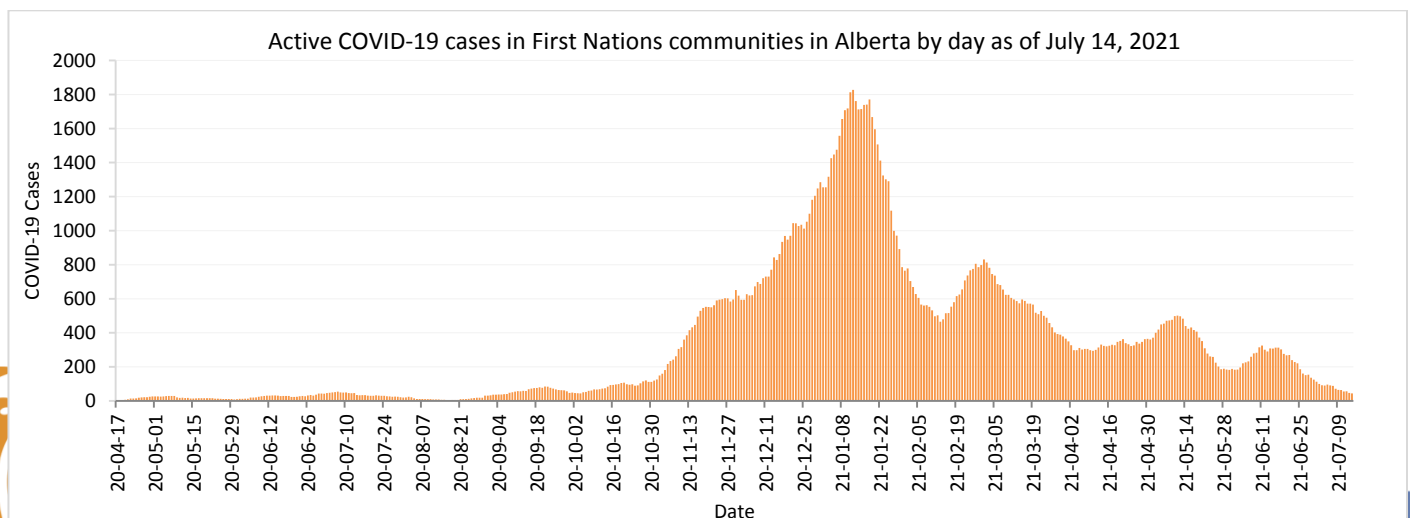
Number of Cases Reported* as of July 15, 2021:

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

Alberta: There are **569 Active Cases** of COVID-19 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	8,987	8,854	44	89	14	11
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	17,903	17,648	89	166	22	NA



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta				
Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	4,153	8	4,156	35
Treaty 7	2,339	11	2,308	33
Treaty 8	2,401	25	2,390	21
TOTAL	8,964	44	8,854	89

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

As of July 14th, **1,061** VOCs have been detected in **39** First Nations communities in Alberta.

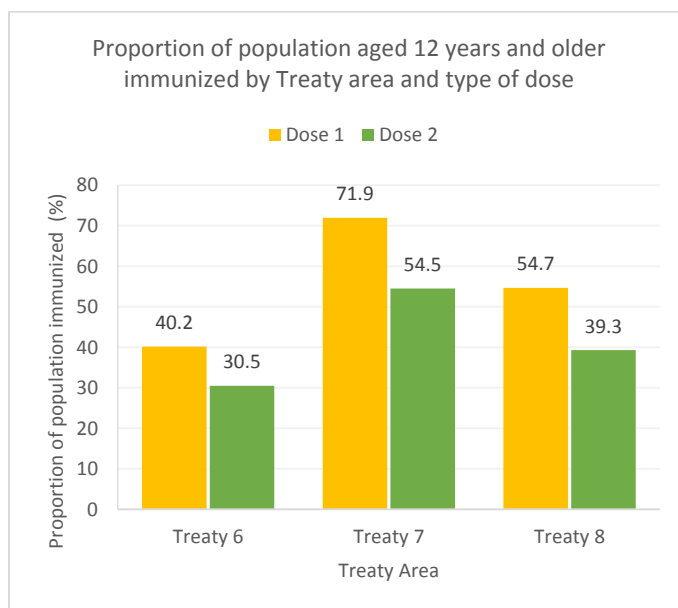
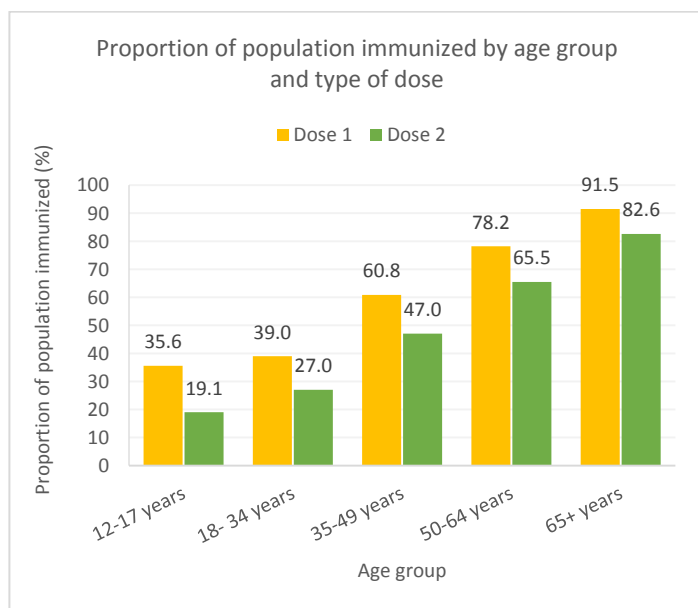
VOC Type	Total Cases	Recovered Case	Active Cases	Deaths	Communities with Active Cases
B.1.1.7 (Alpha)	1023	999	16	8	6
B.1.351 (Beta)	7	0	7	0	1
P.1 (Gamma)	27	27	0	0	0
B.1.617.2 (Delta)	4	4	0	0	0
Total (VOC)	1,061	1,030	23	8	7

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of July 15, 2021

- **60,926** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **34,791** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **26,135** First Nations people living on reserve are fully immunized (2 doses)

Approximately **54.2%** of the total population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose and approximately **40.8%** have been fully immunized (2 doses).



9 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

19 Communities

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

COVID-19 Vaccine New Developments

1. On June 30, 2021, Health Canada updated the product labels, documents that provide information for health care providers on the use of the vaccines, for the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) to include very rare reports in Canada and internationally of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the tissue surrounding the heart) following vaccination. The majority of cases have been mild and people have recovered quickly. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) continues to strongly recommend that a complete series with an mRNA vaccine should be provided to all eligible people, including those 12 years of age and older.
2. A text message alert system for vaccine checkup (the active surveillance system for adverse events in CHIP) will be piloted in three communities. Community members that opt in will receive texts asking about side effects and adverse outcomes that they may be experiencing following their vaccinations. The pilot program will be reviewed before being rolled out to further communities in the coming weeks.

Reminders

1. As of July 5th, fully vaccinated travelers who meet specific conditions may be exempt from federal quarantine rules. For more information on Canada's border measures for travellers entering Canada, see [here](#).
2. The Government of Alberta has updated the [isolation and quarantine requirements](#) for individuals who have been vaccinated.
3. Minor and temporary adverse events, such as headache, fever, fatigue, or pain at the injection site, are common after all vaccinations. All individuals are encouraged to seek medical attention if they experience any new or worsening symptoms and to [report any adverse events](#) after immunization.

Alberta's Relaunch - Update

- **[New]** Alberta entered Stage 3 of [Alberta's Open for Summer Plan](#) on July 1st. All public health measures have now been lifted except for isolation/quarantine requirements and masking requirements in health care settings and public transit. Alberta's requirements for isolation (if an individual has symptoms) and quarantine (if an individual has been exposed to COVID-19 through a close contact) remain in place. [General guidance](#) offering optional mitigations to reduce the transmission risk of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses is available to businesses and event organizers who would like to continue additional precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Guidance for workplaces and settings that involve children have also been updated to reflect Stage 3.
- **[New]** 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.
- **[New]** The province has developed a [two-phased plan](#) to lift restrictions for licensed supportive living, long-term care and hospice settings. In Phase 1, effective July 13, Alberta has lifted the remaining restrictions on visitors, dining and recreation. Phase 1 changes are effective as soon as operators are able to do so; however facility operators have until July 31 to fully implement all Phase 1 changes. Critical operational and outbreak protection remain in place and will be removed at a later date in Phase 2, with a return to pre-pandemic processes and expectations.
- **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 August and September. Registration for the August draw closes August 24 at 11:59 pm. Eligible individuals only need to enter once, but 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.

COVID-19 Variants

- **[New]** A new COVID-19 variant, the Lambda variant, also known as C.37, has been identified in Alberta. Two cases of this variant strain have been reported in the province however both cases are travel-related. Currently this variant is designated a **Variant of Interest** and is being monitored closely. To date, four variants of concern (VOCs) have been identified in Alberta. The Alpha, B.1.1.7, variant is the dominant strain in Alberta.

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

- **[New]** The Government of Canada has launched the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) to

help communities across the country improve key community gathering spaces to help bring members back together once public measures have eased. Applicants in Western Canada may be eligible to receive non-repayable contributions of up to \$750,000 to help revitalize public community spaces such as powwow grounds, improve or reinvent outdoor spaces, create environmental benefits and green impacts, and increase accessibility to public spaces. More details on the CCRF program, including types of eligible projects, deadlines, and the online application portal, can be found [here](#). Applicants are encouraged to submit by July 23, 2021.

- **[New]** The Government of Canada is pleased to support the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) to enhance its [COVID-19 Visit Risk Calculator](#), a scientific, evidence-based tool that provides reliable information to help reduce individual risk of COVID-19 infection when going out or visiting others. The Risk Calculator is web-based and fully accessible on any device connected to the internet with access to a web browser, including phones, tablets and computers.
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada's [Indigenous Community Business Funds](#) (ICBF) provides non-repayable financial contributions to Indigenous microbusinesses and community- or collectively- owned businesses that do not qualify for other existing business supports. Stream 1 of the funding will be transferred directly to communities and collectives to immediately support their COVID-19 economic priorities, no applications are required. Stream 2 of the funding will be proposal based. [Applications](#) must be submitted by the community or collectives on behalf of the business and funding will be transferred directly to communities and collectives.
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada's [Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative](#) (OSRICI) supports communities that have experienced a reduction in own-source revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients can use this funding to provide core community programs and important services that would have been funded by own-source revenue. Funding under this initiative is not meant to overlap with other COVID-19 measures including the Indigenous Community Business Fund, Support Fund or other health, economic and social supports. All applications must be submitted to Indigenous Services Canada by August 31, 2021. More information on eligibility and application requirements 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.

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

- **[New]** Windspeaker Radio held a virtual COVID vaccine town hall co-hosted by Dene Tha' First Nation with Chief James Ahnassay; Delbert Salopree, Dene Tha' First Nation Elder; and Dr Parminder Thiara, Deputy MOH ISC-AB, as speakers. The link to the video recordings can be found [here](#)
- **[New]** Indigenous Services Canada has updated the [ISC COVID-19 Communications toolkit](#).
- **[New]** ISC-AB is presenting a telehealth session on Long COVID on **Friday July 16**, from 10am to 12pm. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Reminder:** ISC-AB Office of the Senior MOH is amending the frequency of the bulletin to monthly. As a result, you will receive the next bulletin on **Thursday August 12th**.

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.



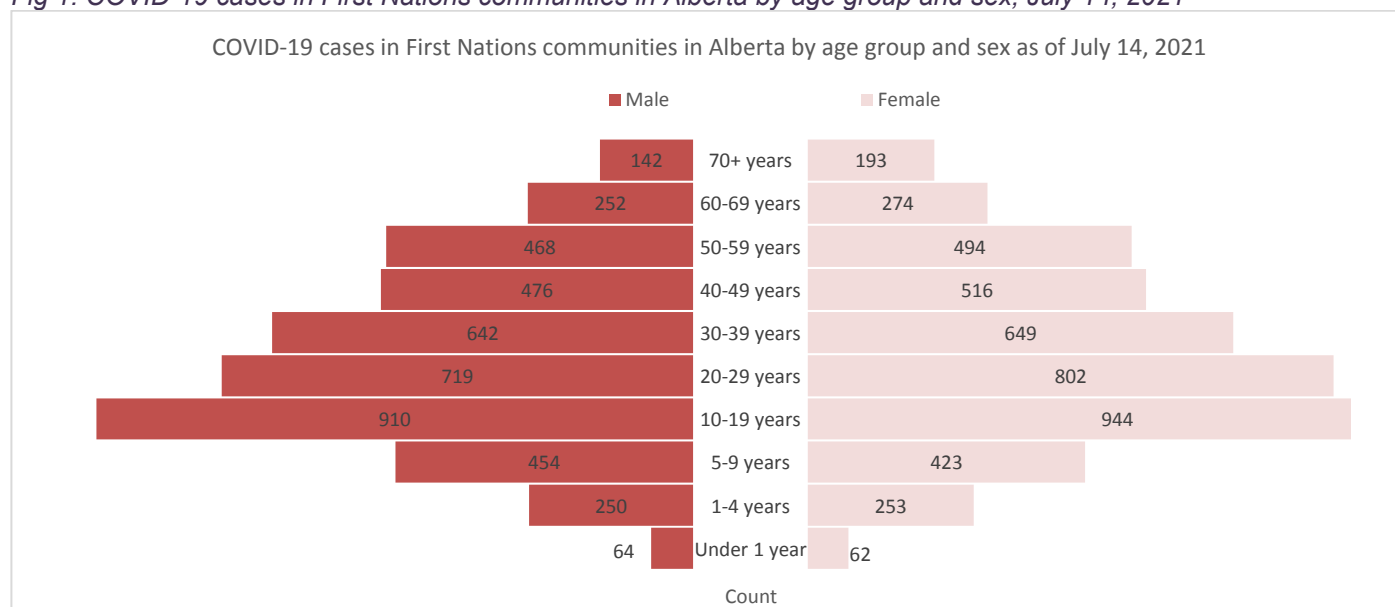
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Services aux
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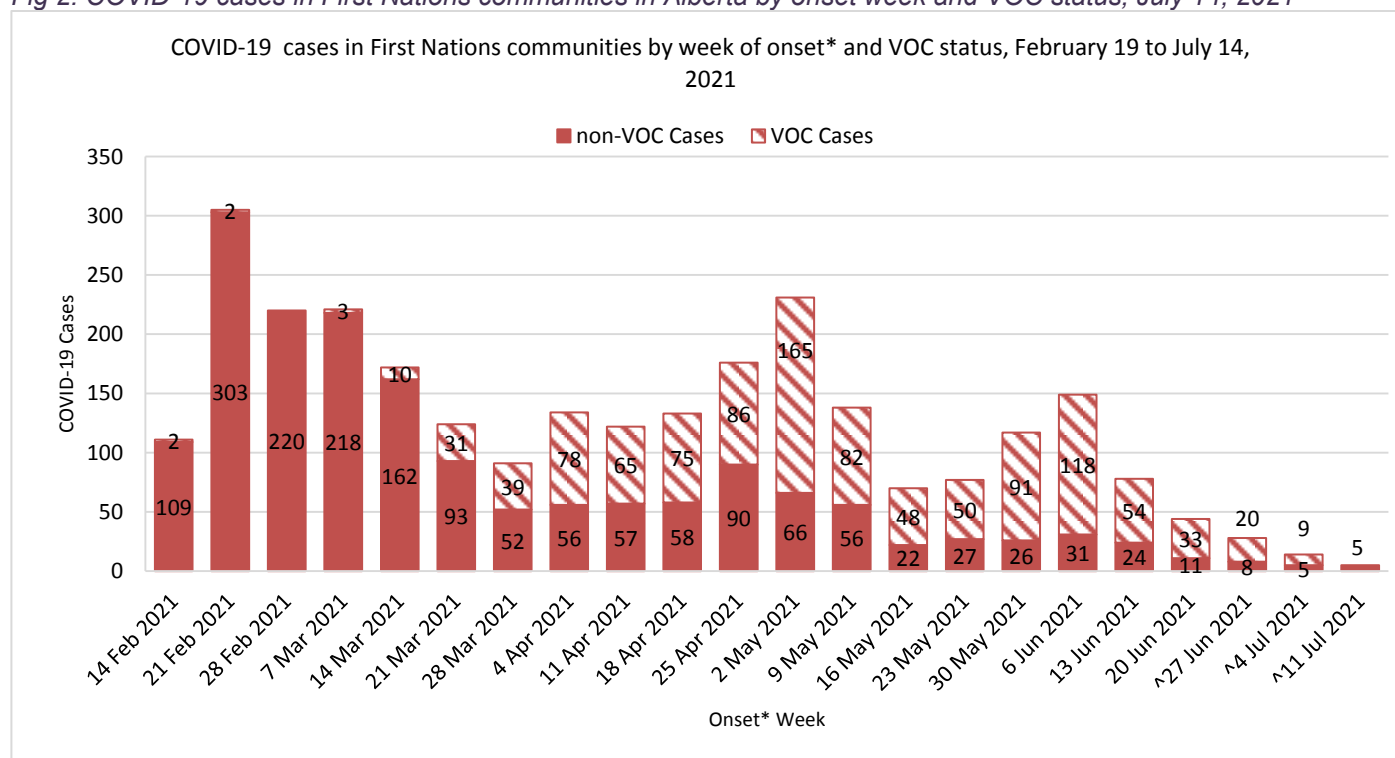
APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, July 14, 2021



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.9% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 50.6% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 51.3% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.2% among all Albertans.

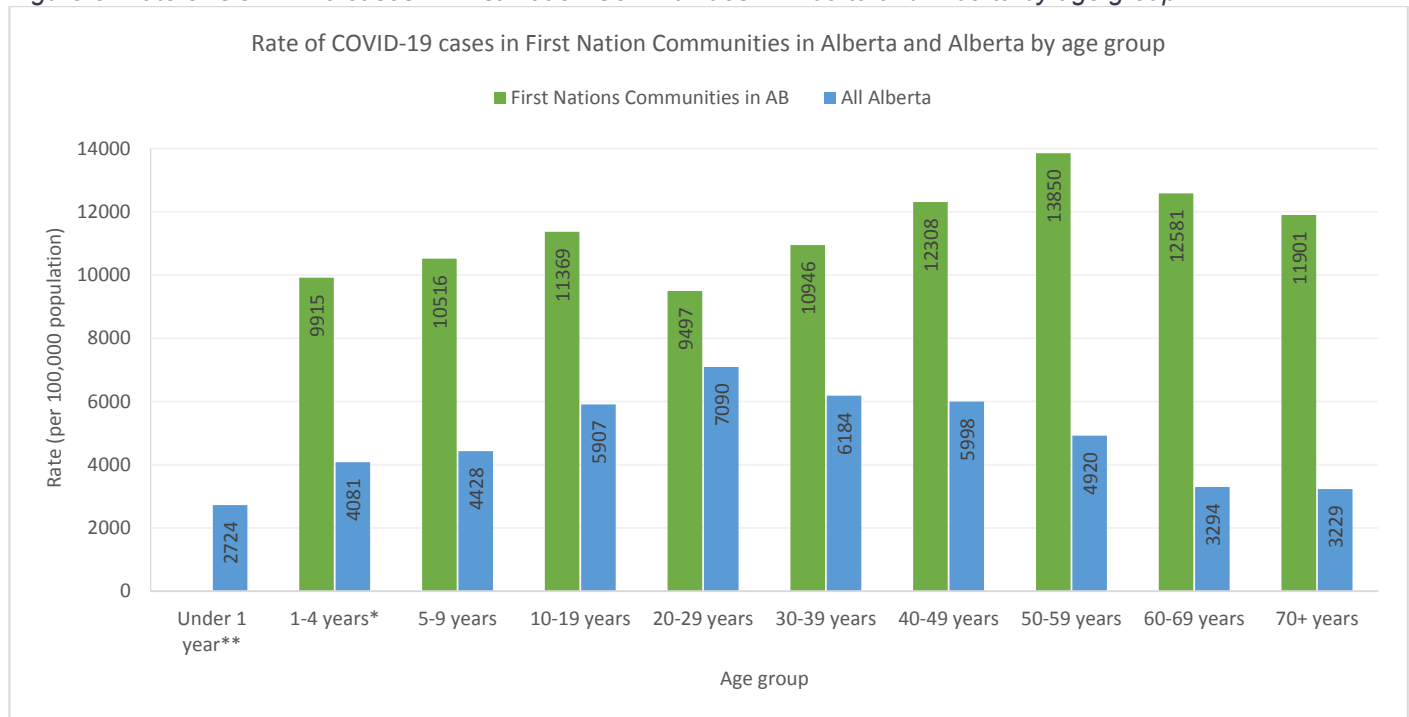
Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week and VOC status, July 14, 2021



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 and sixty one (1,061) VOCs have been detected. Currently there are 23 active VOCs in 7 First Nations Communities making up 52.3% 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

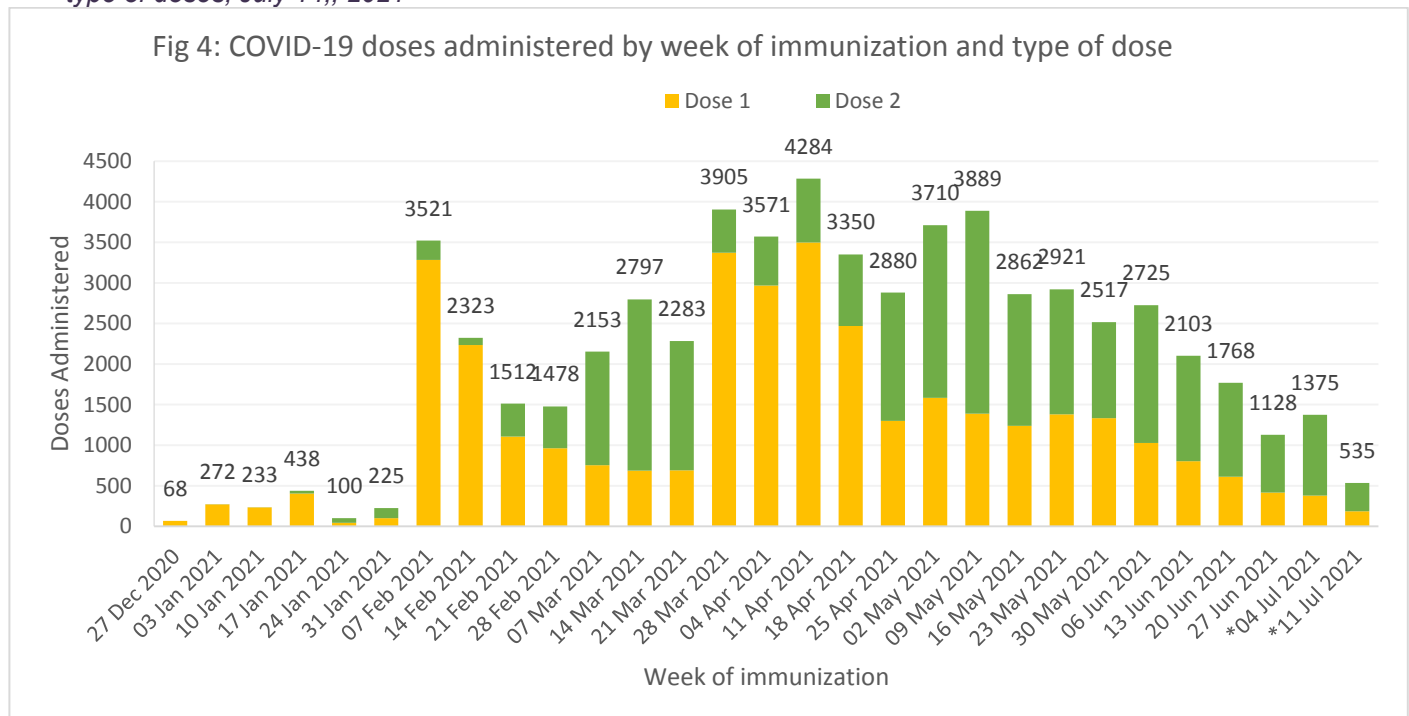


Note: **Due to late reporting and registration of birth, the rate in this age group is not calculated for First Nations communities.

*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, July 14,, 2021



*May be incomplete due to late reporting and data entry

A total 60,926 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 34,791 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 26,135 are fully immunized with two doses.