

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: June 11, 2021

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

COVID-19 cases continue to decline across the province, as more individuals become vaccinated. The province has moved into the second stage of the [Alberta's Open for Summer Plan](#). This staged plan is dependent on individuals becoming vaccinated and while second doses have started to be administered to individuals in a staged process, there are still individuals who are experiencing vaccine hesitancy and have not received their first dose. Over 67% of eligible individuals have received their first dose across Alberta; while, 48.3% of eligible First Nations on-reserve have received their first dose (for Treaty area breakdown, please see Appendix A, figure 7). Of the 46 First Nation communities in Alberta, 8 communities have vaccinated over 70% of eligible members; 14 communities have vaccinated 50-70% of eligible members; and 24 communities have vaccinated less than 50% of eligible members. Vaccines are our best path forward to easing public health measures. ISC-AB's MOH's are here to support discussions around vaccine hesitancy, provide resources and work with Nations to address any barriers to vaccine uptake. Please reach out to your community liaison team member if you would like to arrange a meeting with a MOH to discuss vaccine hesitancy, so that we can all work together to reducing COVID-19 cases.

Status Update

Number of Cases Reported* as of June 11, 2021:

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

Alberta: There are **3,810 Active Cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	First Nations On Reserve in Canada (Indigenous Services Canada)	Alberta (Alberta Health)
Confirmed Cases	1,398,274	30,701	229,949
Deaths	25,837	349	2,262
Recovered	1,353,148	29,501	223,877

First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta): There are **17,360** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **158** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta. Confirmed cases are: **2,944** in Calgary Zone; **3,943** in Edmonton Zone; **1,424** in South Zone; **5,803** in North Zone; **3,242** in Central zone and **4** unknown. 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>.

Additional First Nations on-reserve data (Alberta) is provided at the end of this document (*Appendix A*).

First Nations living on reserve in Alberta:

255 Active Cases	7,710 Recovered	84 Deaths	24 Currently Hospitalized	27 Communities with Active Cases
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Location (By Zone)	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	Recovered
North	3760	87	3645
Central	2236	87	2131
Calgary	1424	67	1341
South	817	4	800
Edmonton	442	10	423
TOTAL	8679	255	8340



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Testing in Alberta – Update

- As of June 11, 2021, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nations communities in Alberta is **127,889**.
- **Reminder:** Alberta has launched a [rapid testing screening program](#). Employers, service providers, and interested schools, including those in First Nations communities can [apply](#) to the Government of Alberta to receive free rapid test kits for use in their organization.
- **Reminder: Testing remains a powerful tool to help limit the spread.** If you have symptoms, please stay home and book a testing appointment. Testing outside of the provincial testing criteria must be reviewed and supported by the ISC-AB MOHs. Please send testing enquiries to sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of June 10, 2021

- **51,770** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **31,002** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **20,768** First Nations people living on reserve are fully immunized (2 doses)
- **3,925** First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on reserve have received their first dose.
- **3,471** First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on reserve are fully immunized (2 doses)

New Developments

1. First Nations health centres have been able to offer second doses to any community member over 12 years of age who has already received a first dose, providing the minimum interval between doses is met. Off-reserve, Alberta is speeding up second-dose appointments and many individuals are now eligible to receive their second dose. Individuals will be able to schedule second-dose appointments for mRNA vaccine (Pfizer/Moderna) in the order they received their first doses. Individuals vaccinated in March and April can currently book their second dose; individuals vaccinated in May can book their second dose on June 28.
2. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has updated its recommendation on the [interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines](#) for second doses following international studies. If an individual received the AstraZeneca vaccine, NACI recommends to receive either the same vaccine or an mRNA vaccine for the second dose. If the first dose was an mRNA vaccine, NACI recommends that the same product be offered for the second dose, and if the same mRNA vaccine is not readily available, then another mRNA vaccine can be considered interchangeable and should be offered as a second dose.
3. PHAC is hosting a webinar on June 16, 2021, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm for Health Care Providers on the NACI Recommendations on COVID-19 Vaccine Interchangeability. This webinar will provide evidence on the interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as outline the NACI recommendations for interchangeability. To register please click [here](#).
4. Individuals that received an AstraZeneca vaccine will have a choice of booking a second appointment for AstraZeneca by going to the [online AHS booking site](#) or calling 811, or they may book a second appointment for a mRNA vaccine through participating pharmacies or AHS. Alberta will have sufficient supply of both types of vaccine to provide second doses. Getting the first vaccine for the first and second dose or a mixed schedule are both considered valid options.
5. PHAC has released the following videos on vaccine safety: [How do we know vaccines are safe](#) and [How are the COVID-19 vaccines being monitored for safety?](#)

Reminders

1. The Pfizer vaccine can now be stored at regular refrigerated temperatures (2-8°C) at the point of use for up to 31 days. This change will support additional flexibility in vaccine distribution.
2. The Government of Alberta has updated the [isolation and quarantine requirements](#) for individuals who have been vaccinated.
3. All Albertans aged 12 and over are eligible to receive their first vaccine dose. Please contact your local Health Centre for further information on how to receive a vaccine in your community. First Nations individuals living off-reserve can [book online](#), or at a [participating pharmacy](#) or call 811.
4. Information on vaccinating those aged 12-17 is the same as vaccinating any other age group, with the exception being parental consent is needed. This consent can be written or verbal, but it is important to ensure parents and the child are fully informed on the vaccine and provide one of these forms of consent.

5. 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]** As of June 10, we are now in Stage 2 of [Alberta's Open for Summer Plan](#). Under this stage, outdoor social gatherings have increased to 20 people with distancing in place, and indoor recreation, entertainment settings and places of worship are open at 1/3 of fire code occupancy. Up to 20 people can attend funeral services or wedding ceremonies (indoors and outdoors) and receptions are permitted outdoors only. For further details on the easing of public health restrictions under this stage, please click [here](#). COVID-19 transmission will continue to be monitored during each stage and if required, a stage may be paused to respond to trends at regional or provincial levels. These restriction changes apply provincewide and additional details will be released before each stage.
- **Reminder:** Businesses and non-profits can apply for funding to reduce the cost of hiring and training Albertans for new jobs. Employers can apply for a grant that covers 25 per cent of a new employee's salary for a 52-week period up to a maximum of \$25,000 per employee. Employers have until Aug. 31 to apply. A second intake will open on Sept. 15 and close on Dec. 31. More information can be found at [Albert a Jobs Now Program](#)

COVID-19 Variants of Concern

- **[New]** Alberta has resumed screening all positive cases for variant strains of COVID-19.
- As of June 10th, **854** VOCs have been detected in **35** First Nations communities in Alberta. Currently there are **167** active VOCs in **21** First Nations Communities on-reserve in Alberta.
- **[New]** There is a current COVID-19 outbreak at the Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary that is linked to the more-contagious Delta (India's strain) variant. Out of the 33 individuals linked to this outbreak 10 were fully vaccinated; however, the majority of the cases linked to this outbreak are mild. This variant is being closely monitored to assess if those who are fully vaccinated experience a milder course of the illness as expected. Everyone is strongly encouraged to continue to adhere to public health guidelines.

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

- **[New]** On April 19, Budget 2021 proposed an additional \$760.8 million for the [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#) (ICSF). Of this amount, approximately \$200 million will be sent to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation communities in the coming days and weeks as direct allocations. A further \$200 million will be sent to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation communities in Fall 2021. These funds will be transferred directly to Indigenous communities to provide the flexibility needed to address the specific needs identified by leadership and community members.
- **Reminder:** [Infrastructure Canada](#) is accepting applications for retrofits and new building projects for community buildings. [Applications](#) for projects under \$3 million are being accepted on an ongoing basis and applications for projects that are between \$3 million and \$25 million are being accepted until July 6.
- **Reminder:** Nations that require additional surge supports for COVID-19 response or vaccine clinics including contact tracing, testing, vaccine administration support should submit a [request form](#) to ISC-AB at: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca.

Mental Health and Wellness

- **Reminder:** Mark Amy Treatment Centre is launching a Virtual Addiction Treatment Program from June 14 – July 30. This program is open to all First Nations persons in Alberta, and applications will be accepted until June 7, 2021. Applications can be found [online](#) and all applications can be emailed to MATCintake@woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com

Virtual Care Clinic

- 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 Resources

- **[New]** On June 17, 2021, from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm there be a Telehealth update, which will include an update on vaccines. Please register for the session at <https://fntn.ca/>.

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>

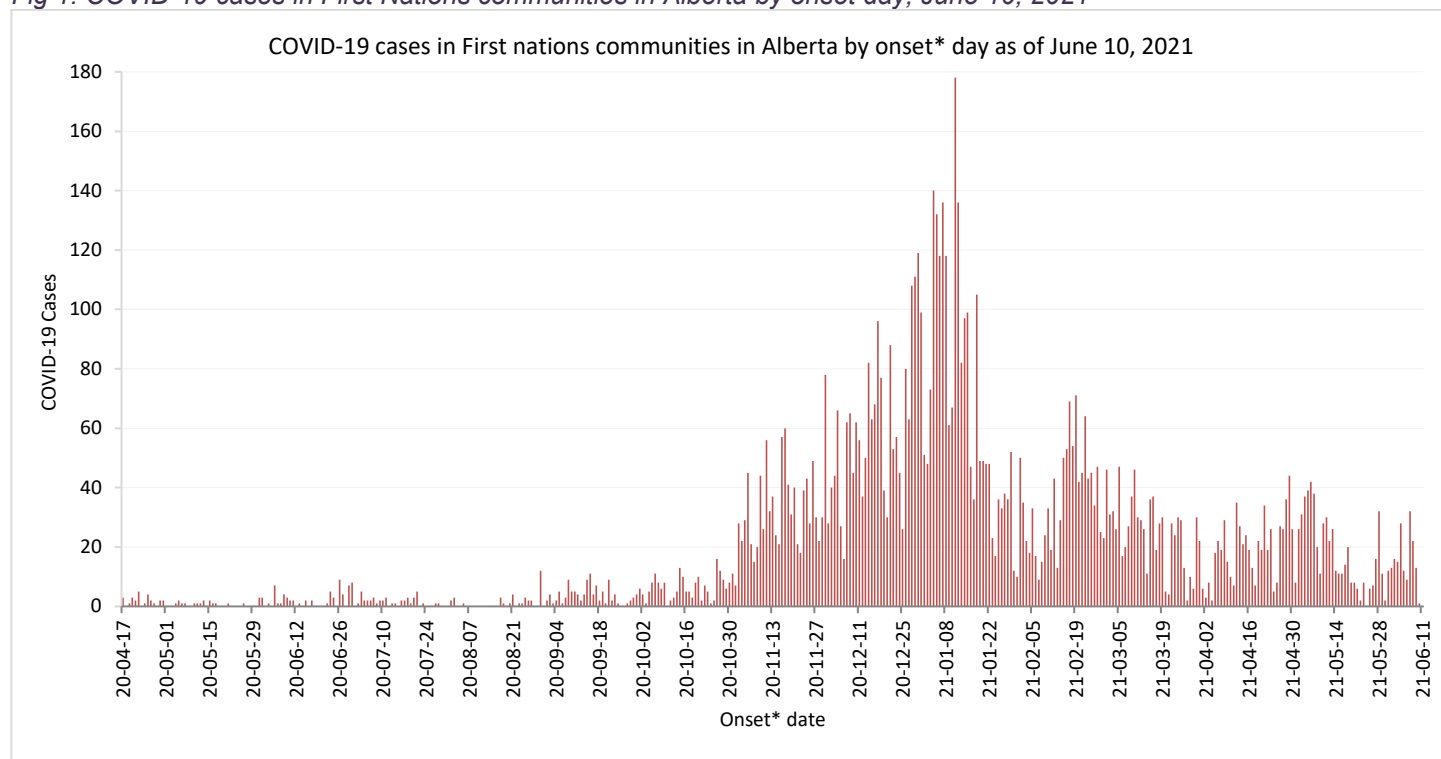
Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

- 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 onset day, June 10, 2021



Note: *Onset date is the earliest of the “date of onset of symptoms” and “specimen collection date”.

In general, the number of daily confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta has been increasing since the end of May 2021 (Fig 1).

Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by day and case status, June 10, 2021

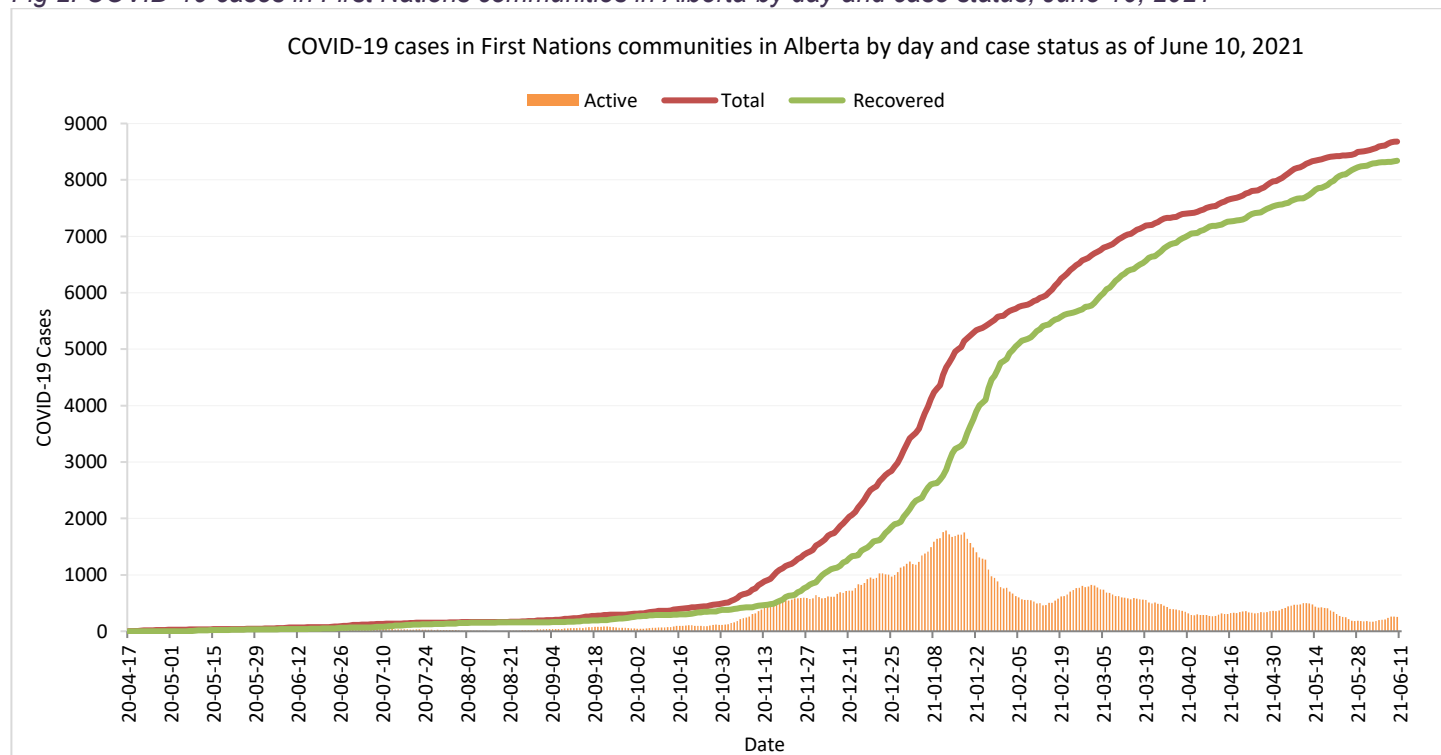
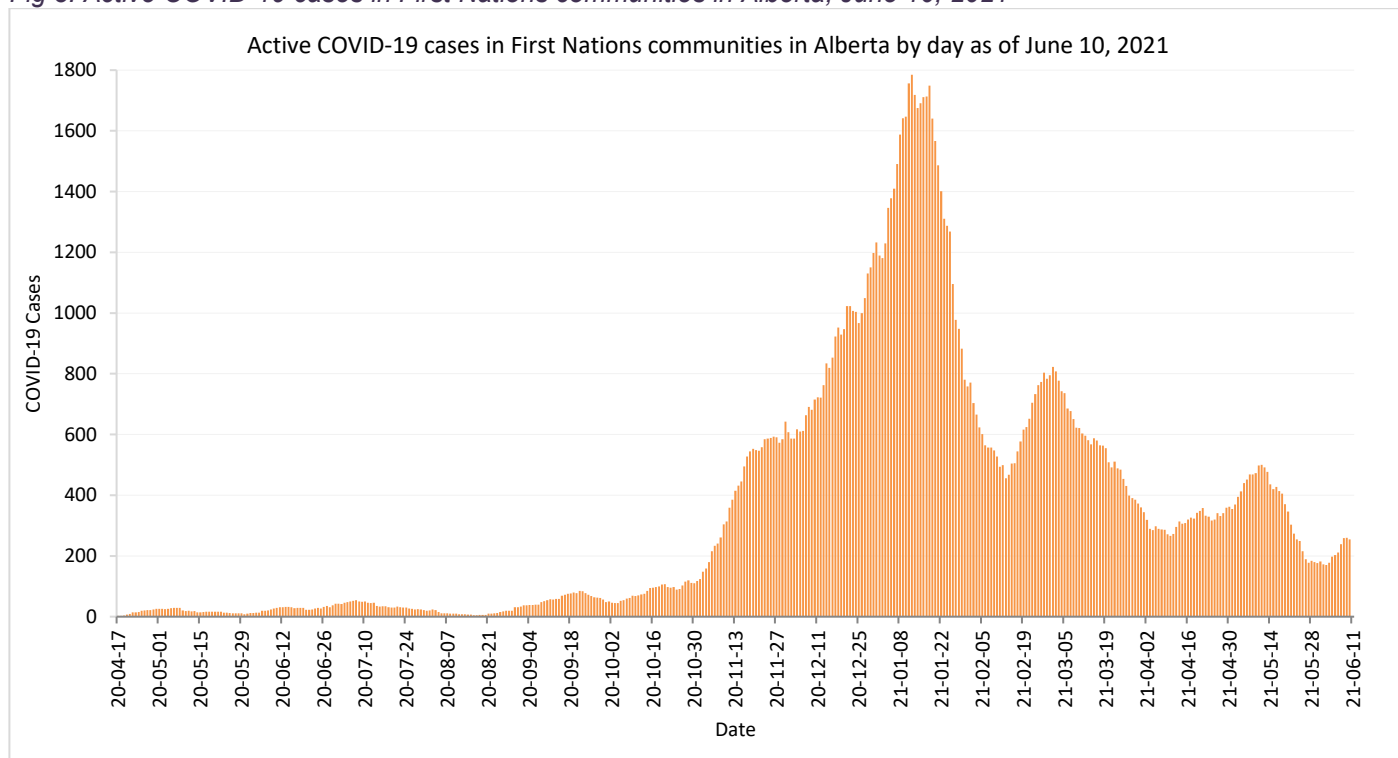
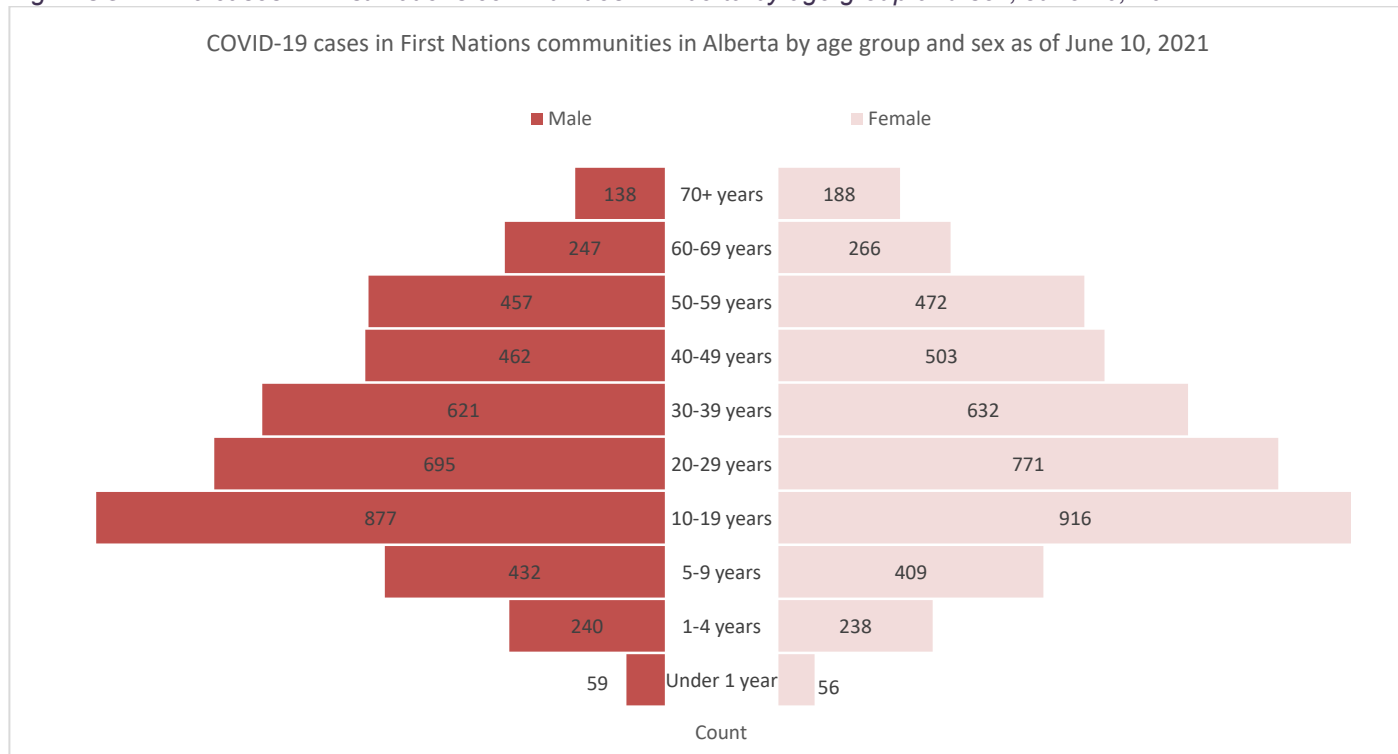


Fig 3. Active COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta, June 10, 2021



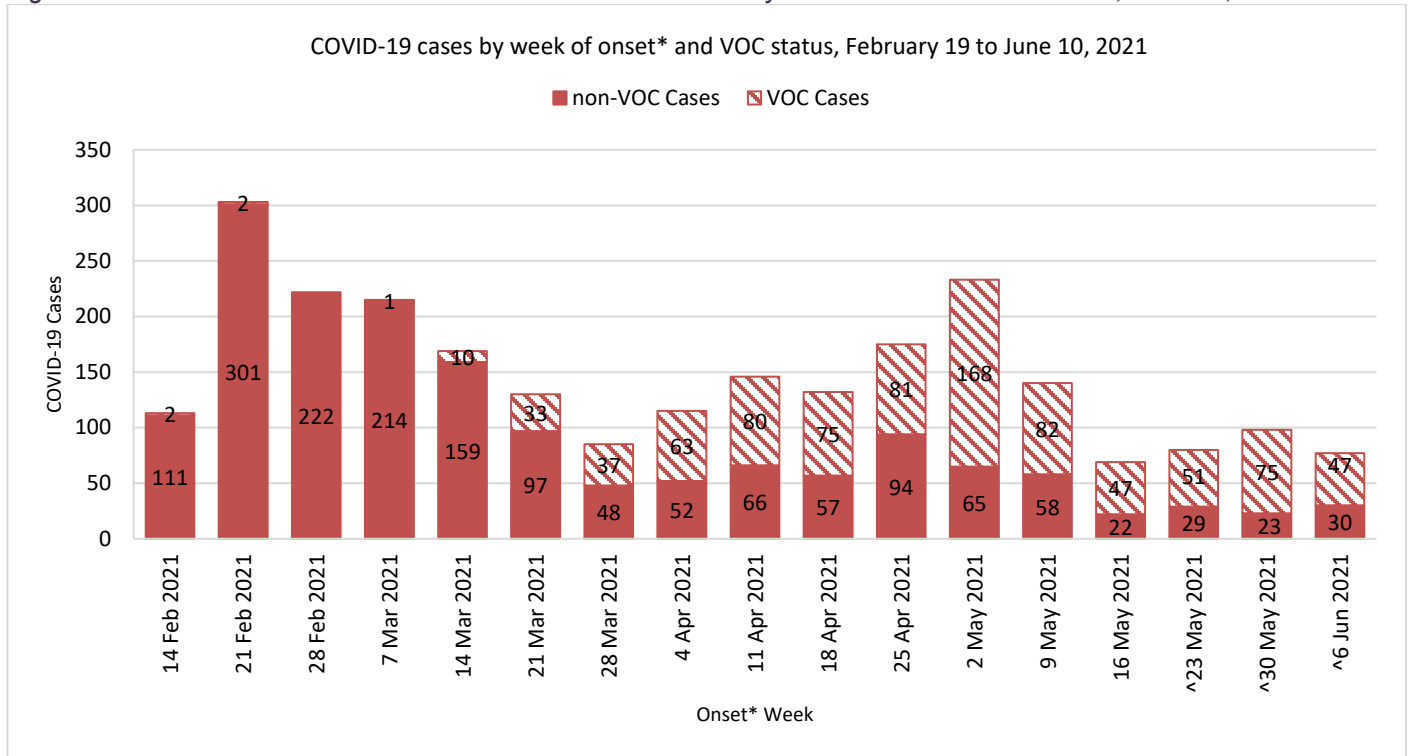
In general, the number of daily active confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta have been increasing since the beginning of June 2021 (Fig 3).

Fig 4. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, June 10, 2021



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 52.0% 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.

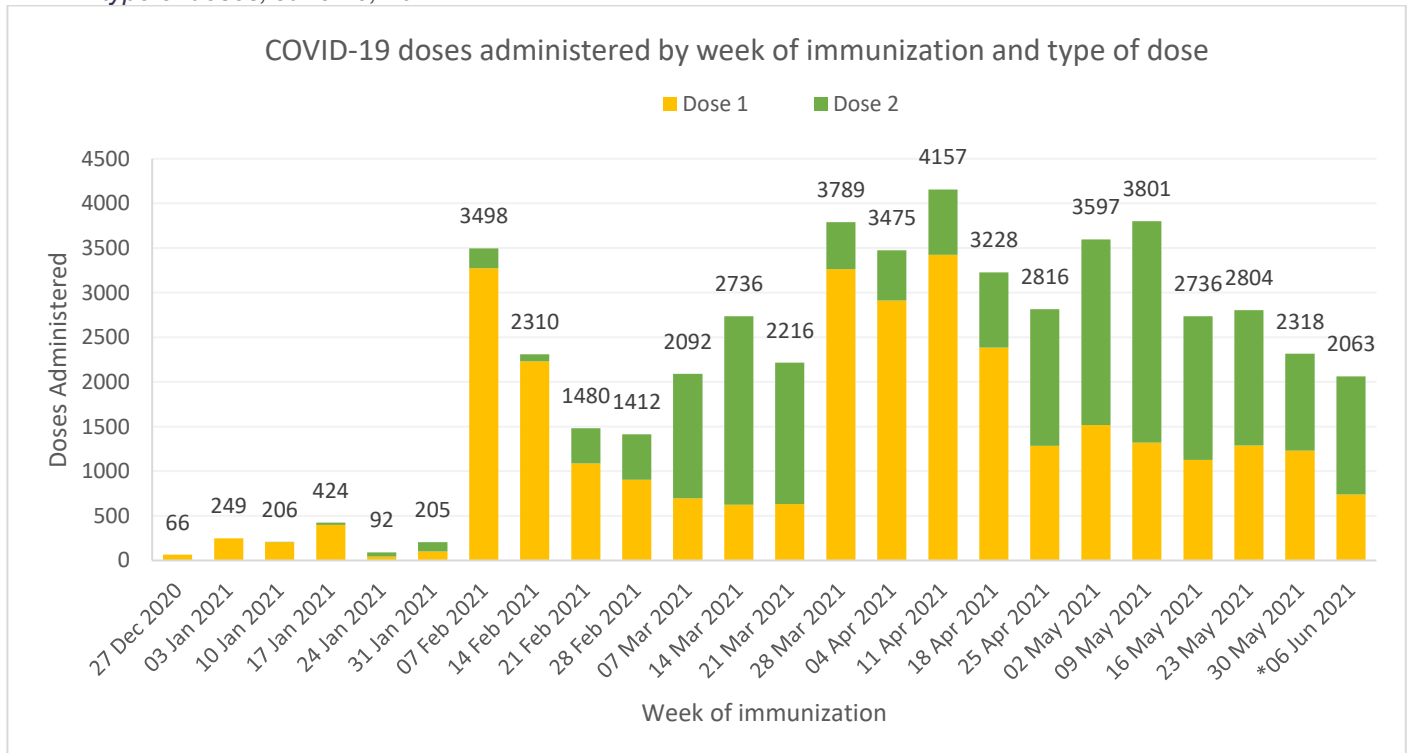
Fig 5. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week and VOC status, June 10, 2021



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.

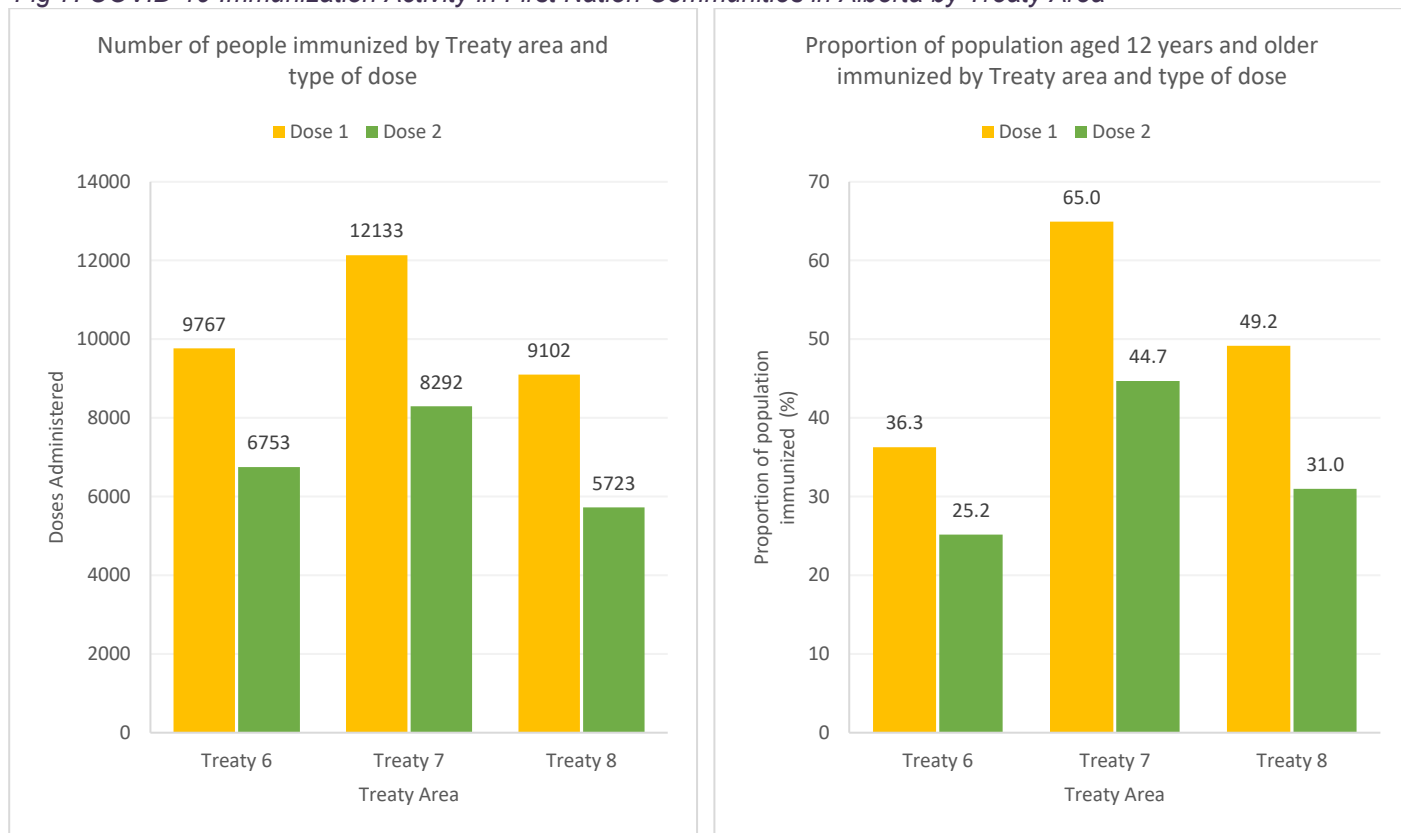
Eight hundred and fifty-four (854) VOCs have been detected and currently there are 167 active VOCs in 21 First Nations Communities making up 65.5% of all active COVID-19 cases in communities.

Fig 6. COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered in First Nations communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, June 10, 2021



A total 51,770 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 31,002 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 20,768 are fully immunized with two doses.

Fig 7. COVID-19 Immunization Activity in First Nation Communities in Alberta by Treaty Area



The graphs above shows the number and proportion of eligible First Nations individuals in First Nations communities in Alberta by Treaty area who partially (received one dose) or fully (received two doses) immunized.