

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

## Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: March 10, 2022

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)

On March 1, 2022 the Government of Alberta entered [Step 2](#) of the three phase approach to easing public health restrictions in Alberta. In Step 2, isolation is still legally required for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive, but many other existing public health restrictions have been lifted, including:

- Removal of any remaining school requirements;
- Removal of all indoor and outdoor social gathering limits, including all wedding and funeral events;
- Lifting capacity limits on all large venues and entertainment venues;
- Lifting mandatory work from home requirements; and,
- Provincial mask mandate lifted except:
  - on municipal and intra-provincial public transit for Albertans 13 and older;
  - at AHS-operated and contracted facilities, and all continuing care settings.

As with AHS guidelines for masking in health facilities, it is recommended to continue to require masking in health centres on-reserve. PCR testing continues to be available for those with clinical risk factors for severe disease or those who live and work in high risk settings.

While the COVID-19 situation appears to be slowly improving, we encourage you to remain careful and take actions to limit further spread. Vaccination offers the most robust protection against serious illness due to COVID-19. First Nations, Métis and Inuit adolescents ages 12 years old and older are now eligible for a booster dose regardless of where they live. All First Nations adolescents in Alberta are urged to get their booster 5 months after their second dose.

***March 11, 2022 will mark two years since the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic. This announcement marked a major change in all of our lives and has impacted our work, our relationships and our wellbeing. Despite these impacts, First Nations health staff and front line workers have worked tirelessly to support a comprehensive and strong response to COVID-19. We want to take a moment to recognize the truly remarkable work you have all done to protect your communities during this unprecedented time. We also want to acknowledge those who have faced loss and hardship over the course of the pandemic but have continued to support their communities. We will continue to work together in partnership towards the improved health and wellbeing of all First Nations in Alberta. Thank you all again for your incredible work.***

### Number of Cases Reported\* as of March 08, 2022:

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

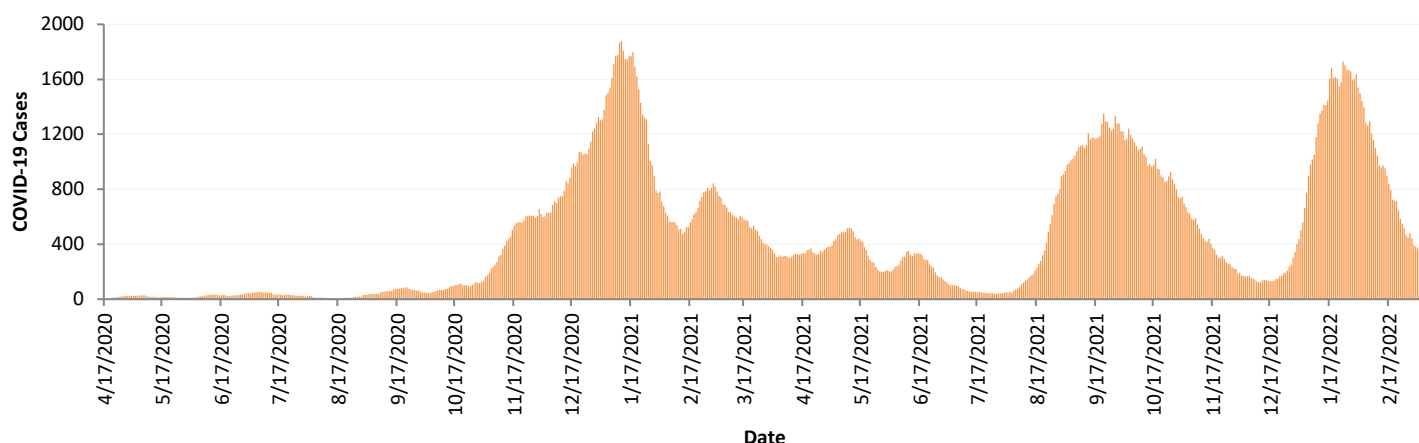
**Alberta:** There are **6,878 Active Cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

**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	19,121	18,620	333	168	20	33
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	37,262	36,442	504	316	93	NA



Active confirmed COVID-19 cases by date, March 08, 2022



COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta

Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	8,745	105	8,573	67
Treaty 7	5,169	153	4,953	63
Treaty 8	5,207	75	5,094	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,121</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>18,620</b>	<b>168</b>

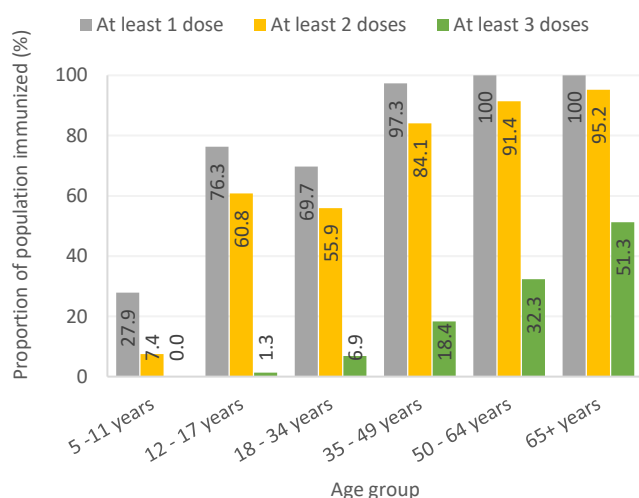
## COVID-19 Vaccine

### COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations people living on reserve in Alberta as of March 08, 2022.

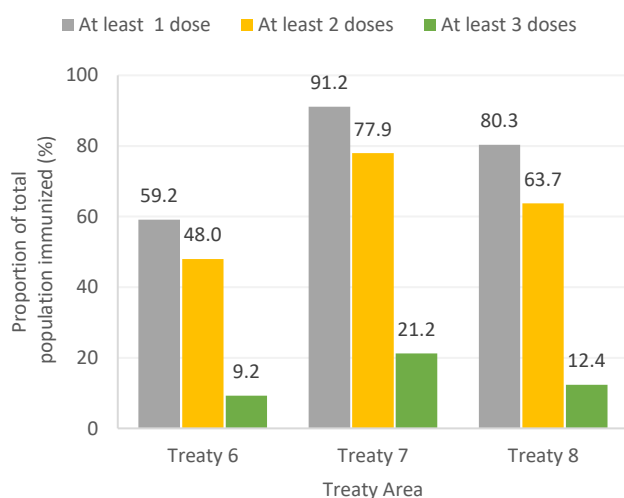
- **119,542** doses have been administered to First Nations living on-reserve in Alberta.
- **59,679** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **48,982** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least two doses
- **10,881** First Nations people living on reserve have received three doses

Approximately 88.5% of the population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose (74.6% of the total population), 75.4% have received at least two doses (61.2% of the total population), and 17.1% have received three doses (13.6% of the total population).

Proportion\* of population immunized by age group and type of dose



Proportion\* of total population immunized by Treaty area and type of dose



\*Percentages are calculated using unadjusted ISC-IRS on-reserve and Crown land population as of December 31, 2020. If the proportion of population immunized in any age group exceeds 100% because of population data limitation, we keep the proportion at 100% by adjusting the population to be equal to the number of first doses administered in that age group

## COVID-19 Vaccine

- **[New]** COVID-19 vaccines, as well as influenza and pneumonia vaccines for adults, youth and children, will be available March 12 at the Genesis Centre and March 19 at the Village Square Leisure centre in Calgary. These vaccine clinics are open to all families and are a partnership between the Government of Alberta, Alberta Health Services, the City of Calgary, Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, Siksika Health Services, OKAKI Health Intelligence and the Calgary Homeless Foundation.
- **[New]** All youth aged 12 – 17 in Alberta will be eligible to book a booster dose beginning on March 14. Booster doses are still available for First Nations, Métis and Inuit adolescents 12 to 17 years of age regardless of where they live.
- On February 17, 2022, Health Canada approved the use of Novavax's Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine in Canadians age 18 and older. Nuvaxovid is a protein-based vaccine that is administered as a two-dose regimen, 21 days apart. Based on clinical trials, Nuvaxovid is 90% effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 and 100% effective at preventing severe disease. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) is advising the Novavax vaccine can be used for a primary series or a third dose for people who have been unable, due to contraindications, or not willing to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is currently not available in Canada. More information will be shared when it is received.
- Children 5 to 11 years of age with certain [immunocompromising conditions](#) are also eligible for an additional dose.
- A fact sheet on vaccinations for children aged 5 – 11 is available at [covid-19-get-facts-vaccinating-children-eng.pdf \(canada.ca\)](#)

## COVID-19 Treatment in Alberta

- On February 15, 2022, Alberta Health Services (AHS) updated the [eligibility for early COVID treatment](#) for those at risk of severe outcomes. AHS is offering Paxlovid or Sotrovimab to individuals tested positive for COVID-19 with mild to moderate symptoms:
  - aged 55 or older, who are not fully vaccinated (received no or only a single dose of vaccine).
  - aged 18 or older, who are not fully vaccinated and living with a health condition (e.g. diabetes).
  - aged 18 or older, who have a significant immunocompromising condition (e.g. received a transplant or being on active cancer treatment), even if they have received all doses of vaccine.

## COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs)

- COVID-19 rapid antigen testing kits for at-home use can help identify infections early and help stop the spread of COVID-19. These tests are intended for at-home personal use for screening in symptomatic and asymptomatic people. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about how to perform a rapid test at home. Only certain people need to confirm RAT results with PCR testing. To find out what to do if you get a positive, negative, or invalid rapid antigen test result, refer to [Rapid testing at home](#). First Nations communities requiring at-home test kits should email [rapidtesting@gov.ab.ca](mailto:rapidtesting@gov.ab.ca).
- **Reminder:** Employers and service providers can apply to receive free rapid test kits for use in their organization's COVID-19 screening program. More information on the rapid testing program for employers and service providers can be found [here](#).

## Steps Individuals Can Take

- Most people recover from COVID-19 without special treatment and can manage mild symptoms at home. Resources are available to help you manage mild symptoms at home and take care of someone who has COVID-19. AHS has developed a [COVID-19 Self-Care Guide](#) if you need further information on how to manage COVID-19 at home. In addition, the Alberta Medical Association has [Patient Resources for COVID-19](#) available on their website that can help determine when you may need to talk to your doctor. It is not always necessary to get in touch with your doctor, as most people with mild symptoms can manage at home with no problems.

## Mental Health and Wellness

- **[New]** A mental wellness town hall, with a focus on substance misuse, was held on March 9, 2022 as part of the Windspeaker town hall series. This can be accessed through their facebook page.

- **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](http://www.aivcc.ca).

### **Additional Information**

- **[New]** ISC-AB presented an MOH telehealth session on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) with a focus on waste water monitoring Thursday **March 10** from 1.30-3 pm. A recording of this, and previous sessions, can be found at <https://fntn.ca/>.
- 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](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>

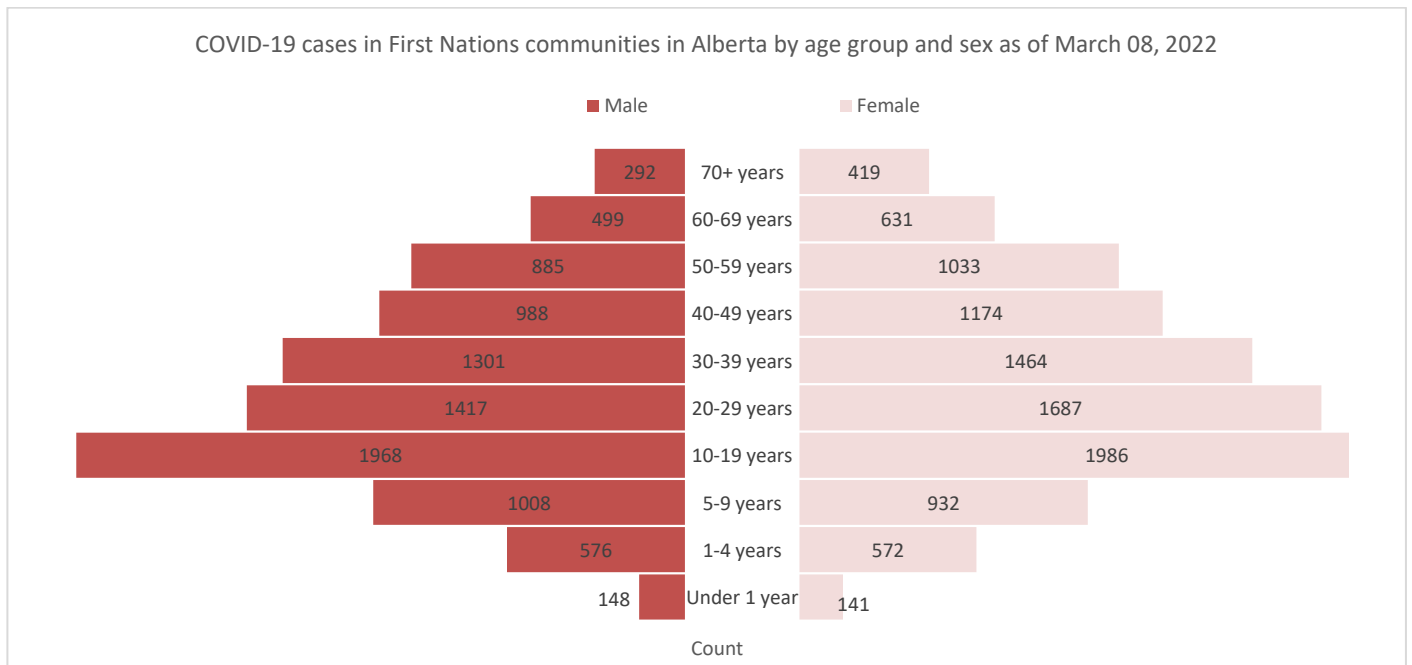
### **Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.**

- 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.**

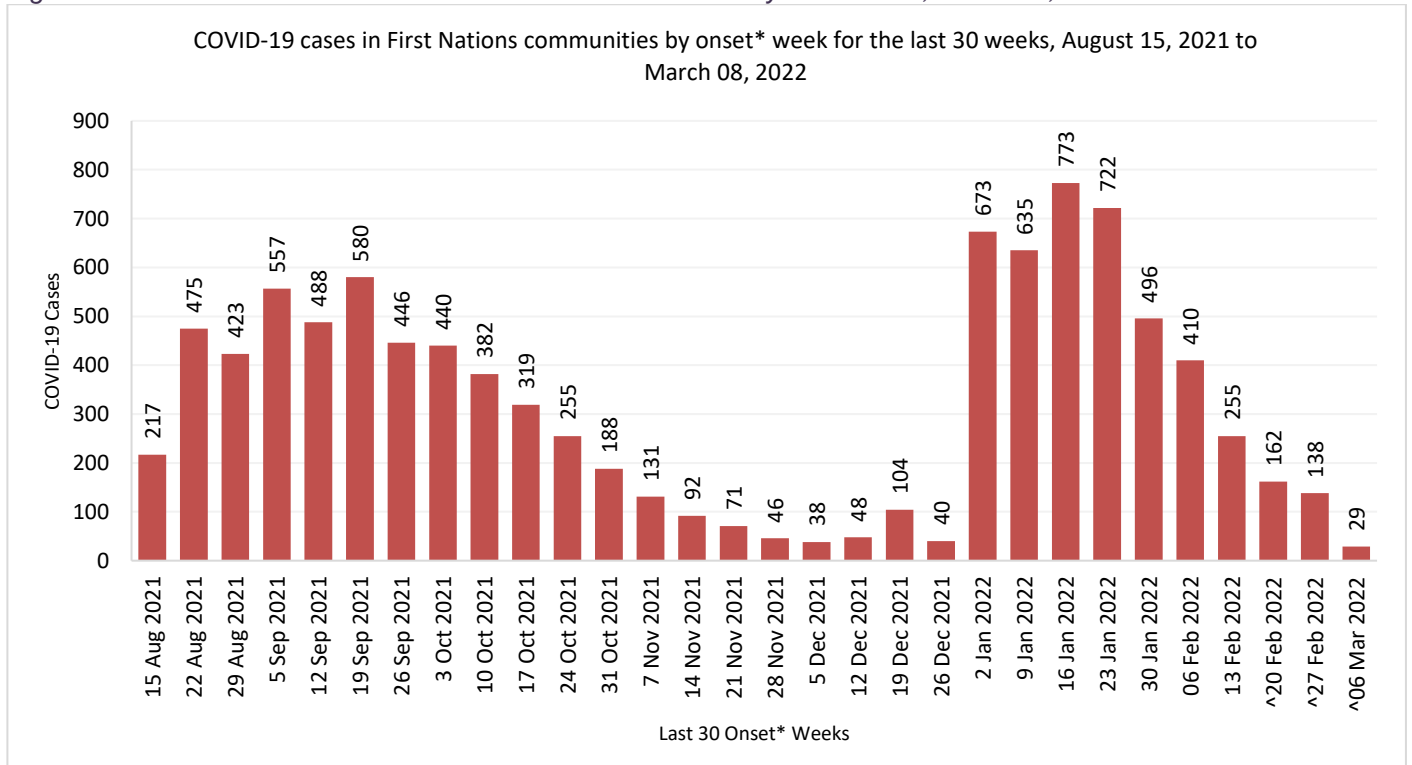
## APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, March 08, 2022



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.4% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 50.0% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 52.5% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 51.5% among all Albertans.

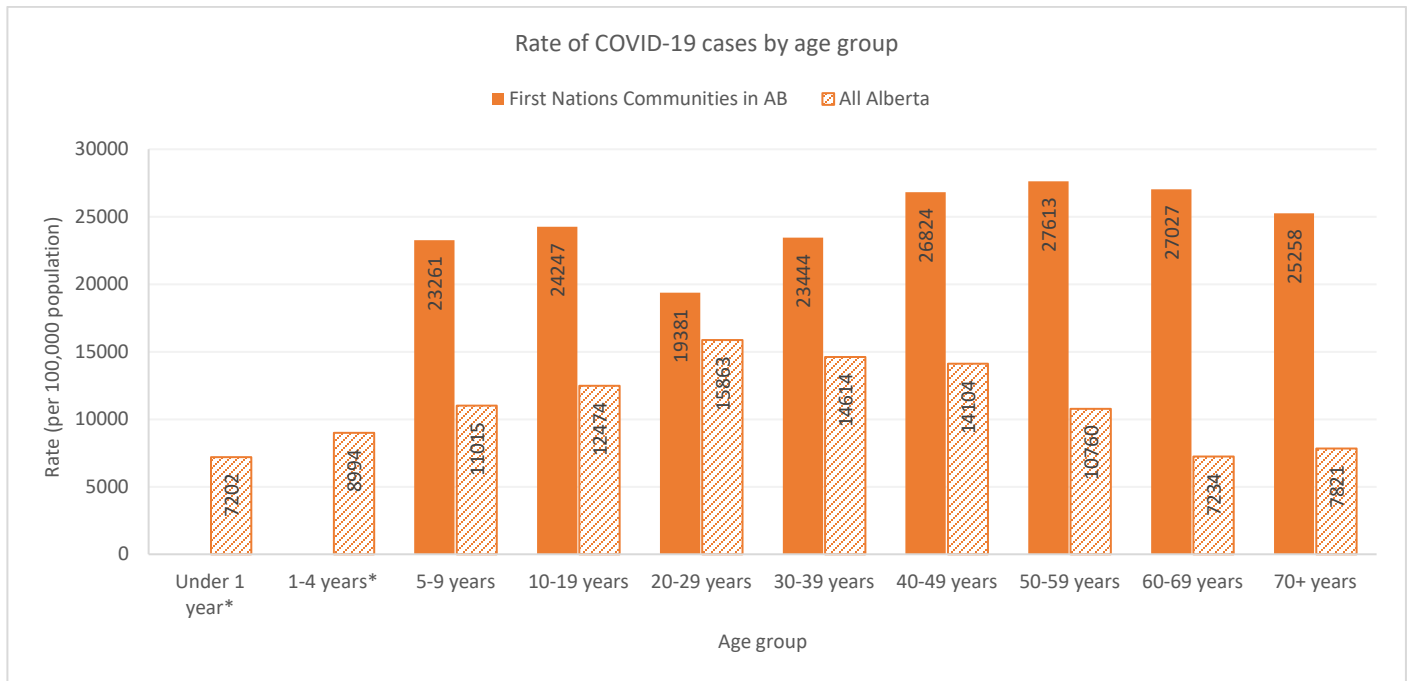
Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week, March 08, 2022



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.

A significant decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases are seen in the last six weeks in First Nation communities in Alberta.

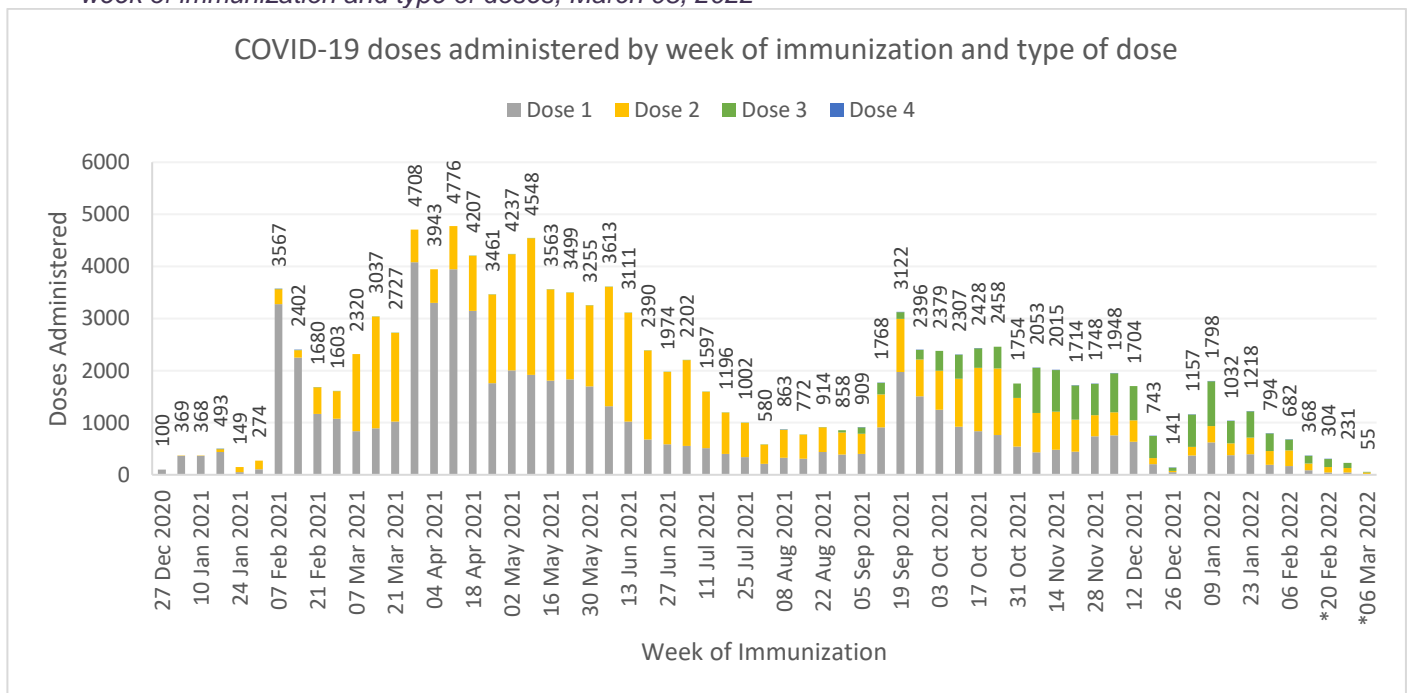
Fig 3: Rate of COVID-19 cases in First Nation Communities in Alberta and Alberta by age group, March 08, 2022



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

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 to First Nations people living in First Nation communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, March 08, 2022



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

A total of 119,542 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 59,679 people living in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 48,982 have received at least two doses, 10,881 have received at least three doses, and 42 have received 4 doses.