

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

## Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: November 18, 2021

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)

Active cases of COVID-19 continue to decline across Alberta, however the province remains in a state of public health emergency. Despite the decrease in number of new cases, significant amounts of hospitalizations and deaths are still being reported, with October recording the most on-reserve COVID-19 deaths since the pandemic started. Public health restrictions such as mask wearing indoors, physical distancing and proper hand washing are still very important and remain in place to reduce the burden on the health care system. With the shift in weather, people are spending more time indoors; it is important to continue to follow the [mandatory restrictions in place for social gatherings](#) in order to prevent an increase in cases. For indoor social gatherings where individuals are:

- Vaccinated: Indoor private social gatherings are limited to 2 households (yours plus one other) up to a maximum of 10 vaccine-eligible, vaccinated people and no restrictions on children under 12.
- Unvaccinated: Indoor social gatherings are not permitted for vaccine-eligible people who are unvaccinated.

Alberta Health Services has begun administering Sotrovimab, a new monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19, to help prevent severe outcomes for those at the highest risk. Sotrovimab however is not a replacement for immunization against COVID 19 and all eligible individuals aged 12 and older are strongly encouraged to get the COVID 19 vaccine. A full vaccine series of two doses at the recommended interval (8 weeks between doses) is proven to be the best mechanism to significantly reduce the risk of severe health outcomes from COVID-19. First Nations individuals over 18 whose last COVID-19 vaccine dose was over 6 months ago can also be offered a third booster dose to restore protection against infection that may have decreased over time. We continue to encourage everyone aged six months of age and older to get the 'flu shot' to help prevent influenza and related complications and reduce stress on the health care system.

### Status Update

#### Number of Cases Reported\* as of November 17, 2021:

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

**Alberta:** There are **5,521 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 Cases	Active Cases	Deaths	Currently Hospitalized	Communities with Active Cases
Living on Reserve in Alberta	14,091	13,648	301	142	34	35
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	27,989	27,208	519	262	76	NA

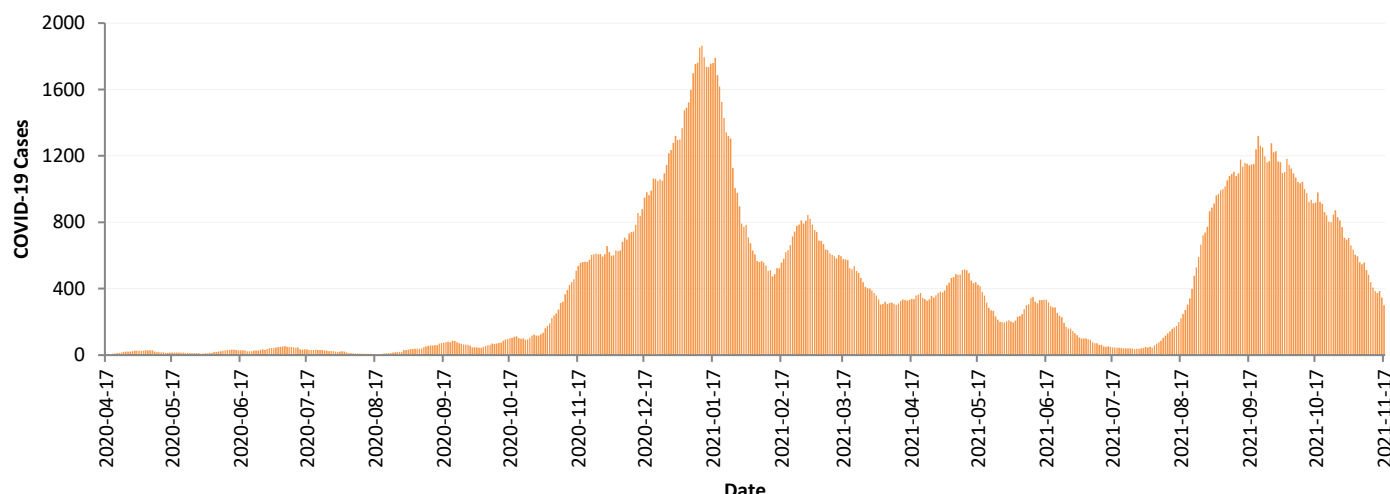


Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Active confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases by date, November 17, 2021



COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta

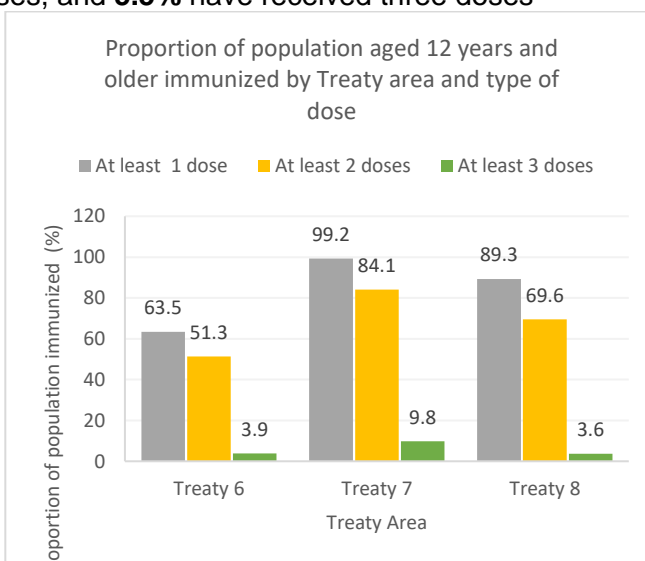
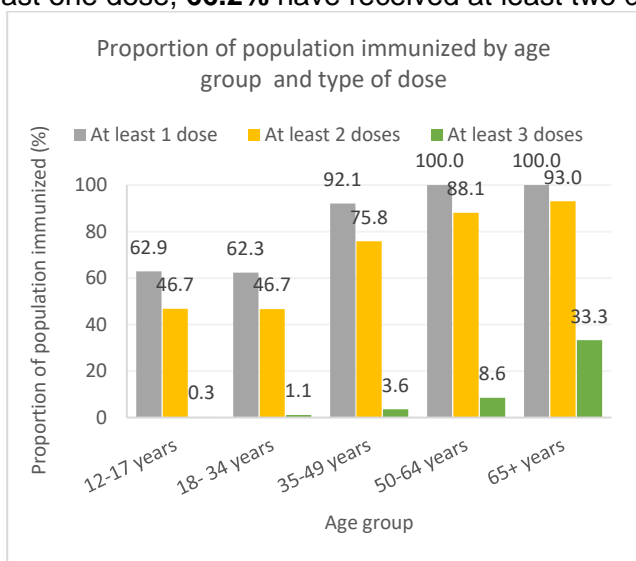
Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	6,423	142	6,229	52
Treaty 7	3,347	73	3,221	53
Treaty 8	4,321	86	4,198	37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,091</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>13,648</b>	<b>142</b>

## COVID-19 Vaccine

### COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of November 17, 2021

- **97,913** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **52,069** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **42,314** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least two doses
- **3,530** First Nations people living on reserve have received three doses

Approximately **81.5%** of the total population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose, **66.2%** have received at least two doses, and **5.5%** have received three doses



\*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

### 25 Communities

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

### 17 Communities

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

### 4 Communities

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

## COVID-19 Treatment in Alberta - New Developments

- **[New]** Alberta Health Services (AHS) has begun administering a new monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19 that was recently approved by Health Canada. Sotrovimab is a new drug that was developed specifically for treating individuals with COVID-19 who have mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms. It is the first treatment to be offered to outpatients. For maximum effectiveness, it must be administered by intravenous infusion within 5 days of symptom onset. The treatment is being rolled out across the province in a phased approach, starting with individuals with mild to moderate COVID 19 symptoms but are at the highest risk of severe outcomes. Beginning Thursday, November 18, AHS is offering Sotrovimab to individuals with COVID-19 who are:
  - Aged 55 or older and have not received any doses of a COVID-19 vaccine;
  - Solid Organ Transplant patients or Stem Cell Transplant patients, regardless of vaccination status.

AHS intends to expand access to Sotrovimab to more areas of the province as soon possible. Eligibility criteria will continue to expand based on supply and capacity capabilities. More information on Sotrovimab can be found in the [Sotrovimab Patient Information Sheet](#), [FAQs for Patients/Public](#) or the [Alberta Health Website](#).

## COVID-19 Vaccine - New Developments

- Effective November 15th, businesses and operators participating in the Restrictions Exemption Program will only be accepting Alberta proof of vaccination with a QR code. QR codes can be downloaded from the Alberta COVID Records webpage. Vaccine records from First Nations, military, other provinces, and international travelers will continue to be accepted as proof of vaccination.
- Alberta recently received 5,000 doses of the Janssen vaccine. Starting November 12<sup>th</sup>, Albertans 18 years and older can book appointments to receive the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson vaccine) COVID-19 vaccine by calling 811. Due to limited supply, the Janssen vaccine will only be administered at AHS clinics in select locations across the province.

## COVID-19 Vaccine Reminders

1. All First Nations, Metis and Inuit aged 18 and over, on and off reserve are eligible to receive a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as long as it has been 6 months since their last dose. Front-line health workers are also eligible for the booster dose if the interval between their first and second dose was less than 8 weeks **and** it has been at least 6 months since their last vaccine
2. Vaccines for children aged 5 to 11 are still under review. Doses have been set aside in USA and will be delivered as soon as Health Canada gives final approval.
3. The Government of Canada announced Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements for travelers. Effective October 30, 2021, travelers departing from Canadian airports, and travelers on VIA Rail and Rocky Mountaineer trains, will be required to be fully vaccinated in order to travel. To allow travelers time to become fully vaccinated, there will be a short transition period where they will be able to travel if they show a valid COVID-19 molecular test within 72 hours of travel as an alternative to providing proof of full vaccination. If travelers have not already started the vaccination process, or do not start soon, they risk not qualifying for travel as of November 30, 2021.

## Alberta's Relaunch - Update

- **Reminder:** Alberta Education's kindergarten to Grade 6 At-Home Rapid Testing Program has been extended to include all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students attending schools in First Nations. Outbreak status is not required for First Nation schools wanting to participate in the program. Rapid screening tests are another tool, along with health measures already in place at schools, to keep students and staff safe. Participation is voluntary for students and staff. If you have questions about the At-Home Rapid Testing Program, please email [EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca).

- **Reminder:** Alberta's public health measures remain in place. These measures include limiting gatherings, restricting indoor gatherings for unvaccinated individuals, work from home directives and mandatory masking in schools. More information on the public health measures and the restriction exemption program can be found [here](#).
- **Reminder:** Small and medium sized organizations in Alberta, including Indigenous organizations, employers, and service providers can apply to the [Alberta Health Rapid Testing Program](#) to receive free rapid test kits for use in their organization's COVID-19 screening program.

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

- **[New]** The Government of Canada has committed new funding to support the reopening of the arts, culture, heritage and sport sectors. The [Making Cultural Spaces Safe During COVID-19 Initiative](#), administered by Canada Cultural Spaces Fund, aims to help Canadian arts and heritage organizations prepare their spaces to reopen while following public health guidelines. The support can be used for renovating or adapting spaces, and for the purchase and installation of health and safety-related specialized equipment. There is no deadline to apply to the fund. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis for projects to be carried out before March 31, 2022. To discuss your project and request an application form, please contact [erica.potie@pch.gc.ca](mailto:erica.potie@pch.gc.ca).
- **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](mailto: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](http://www.aivcc.ca).

### ***Additional Resources***

- **[New]** Second Harvest, a food rescue organization in Canada, has received an additional \$22.7 million COVID-19 Emergency Response funding from Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada's Emergency Food Security Fund, to support non-profits and charities in communities across Canada and enable the purchase of food, grocery gift cards and food vouchers, as well as provide support for food distribution. [Second Harvest](#) will direct a minimum of 30 percent of its funding allocations to organizations led by or primarily serving Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC). Funding requests can be made for a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000. More information about this food security funding opportunity and eligibility criteria can be found [here](#). The due date to receive applications is **November 25, 2021**. Please note that applications are being reviewed on a first come, first reviewed basis and funding decisions will be sent via email beginning on December 1, 2021 and continue until all funding is disbursed. If you have questions about the funding, please email [emergencyfund@secondharvest.ca](mailto:emergencyfund@secondharvest.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](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=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6\\_wGmSxUc](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6_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.**



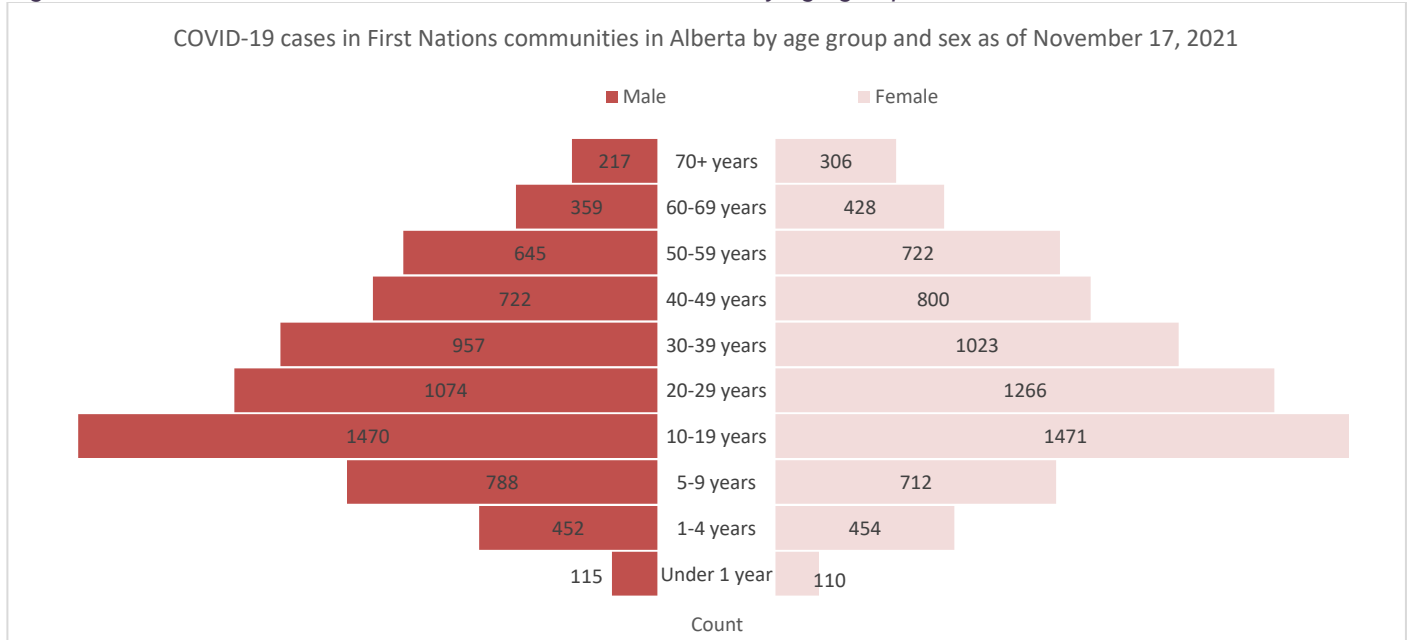
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Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

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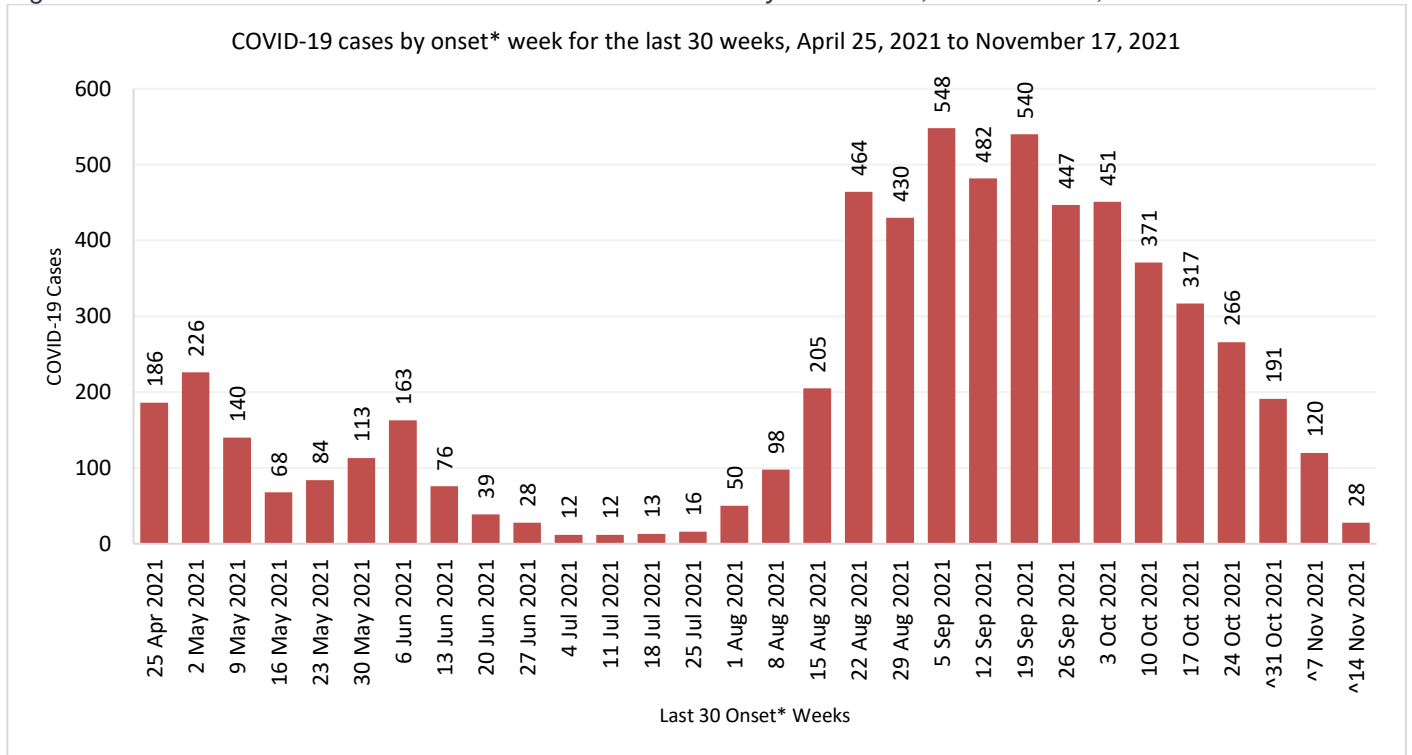
## APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, November 17, 2021



Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.5% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 50.7% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 51.7 % of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.7% among all Albertans.

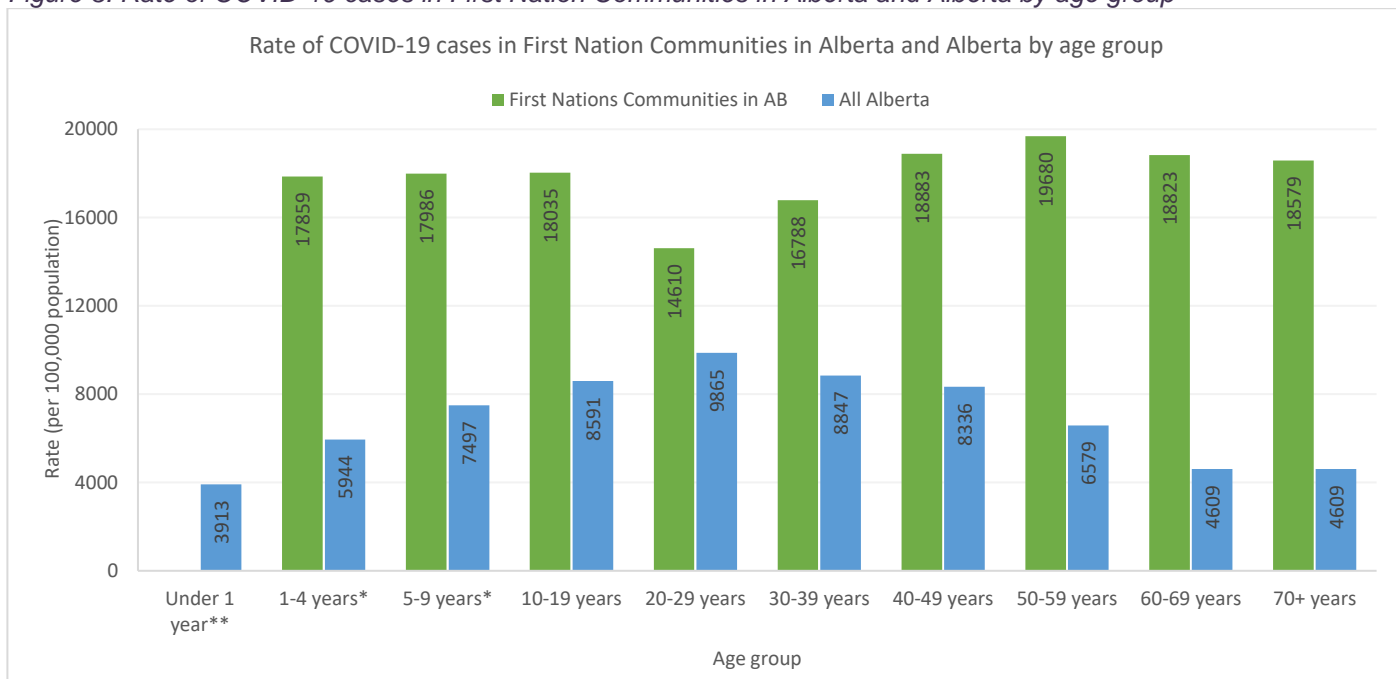
Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week, November 03, 2021



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.



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

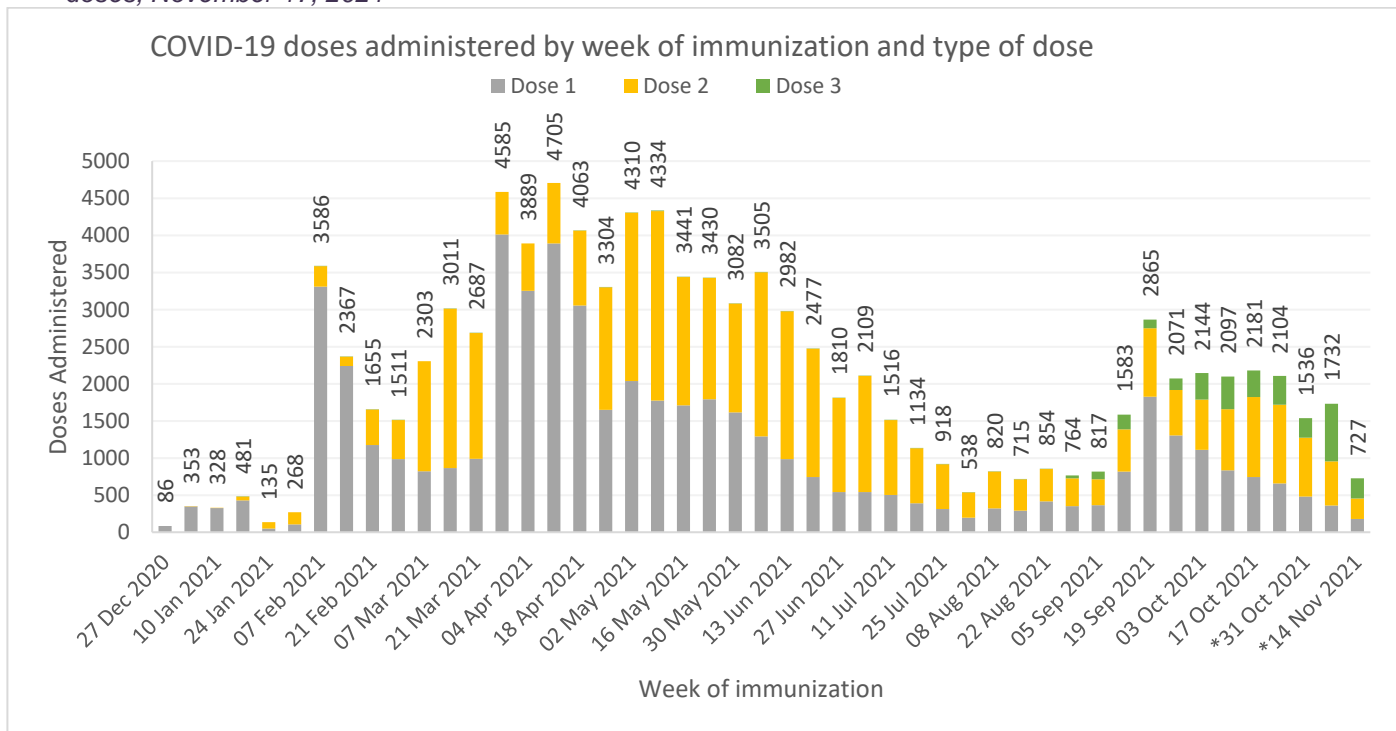


Note: \*\*Due to late reporting and registration of birth, the rate in this age group is not calculated for First Nations communities.

\*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.

COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered in First Nations communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, November 17, 2021



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

A total of 97,913 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 52,069 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 42,314 have received at least two doses and 3,530 have received 3 doses.