

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

## Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: October 21, 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)

Alberta remains in the fourth wave of the pandemic and the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant continues to be the dominant COVID-19 strain in the province, primarily impacting unvaccinated individuals. Recent data shows that there has been a slight decrease in the number of new and active cases in the province, but these numbers remain high. The most important intervention to reduce transmission and stop the spread of COVID-19 is vaccination for those eligible aged 12 and older. Younger people are lagging behind the older generations with vaccination; they may not be at higher risk for severe outcomes but their actions are critical in protecting those who are higher risk, and by becoming fully vaccinated they can help protect children and elders. A full vaccine series of two doses is proven to be the best mechanism to significantly reduce the risk of severe health outcomes from COVID-19. Additionally, we are glad to see some uptake of booster doses for those over 65 years of age in First Nation communities. The Alberta Influenza Immunization program began on October 18; all Albertans, six months of age and older, are eligible to be immunized. While influenza and COVID-19 are different illnesses caused by different viruses, several of the symptoms are the same and both can be spread easily. We encourage everyone to get the 'flu shot'. This will help prevent influenza and related complications. Preventing influenza will also help reduce stress on the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

### Status Update

#### Number of Cases Reported\* as of October 21, 2021:

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

**Alberta:** There are **10,824 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	13,128	12,293	716	119	80	42
Living on and off reserve in Alberta	26,381	24,830	1,327	224	148	NA

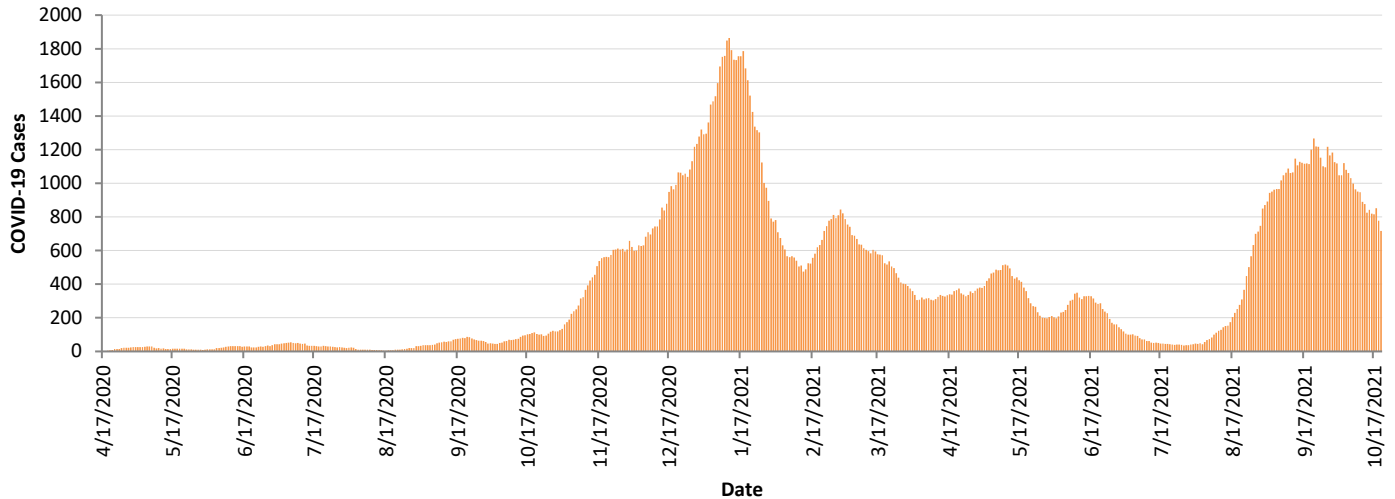


Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

Active confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases by date, October 20, 2021



COVID-19 in First Nations living on reserve in Alberta

Treaty Area	Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered Cases	Deaths
Treaty 6	5,961	311	5,607	43
Treaty 7	3,140	154	2,942	44
Treaty 8	4,027	251	3,744	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,128</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>12,293</b>	<b>119</b>

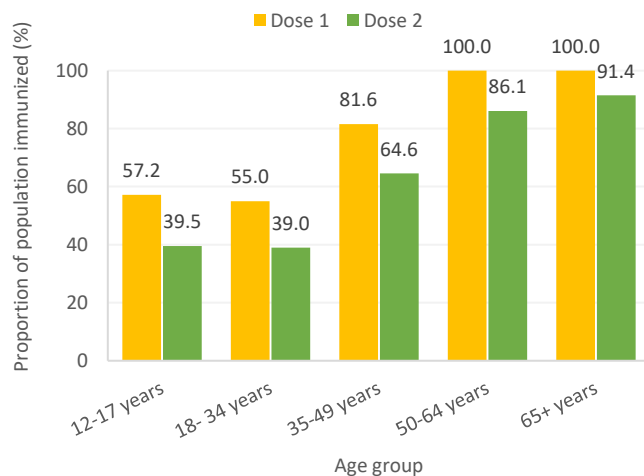
## COVID-19 Vaccine

### COVID-19 Vaccine in First Nations Communities in Alberta as of October 20, 2021

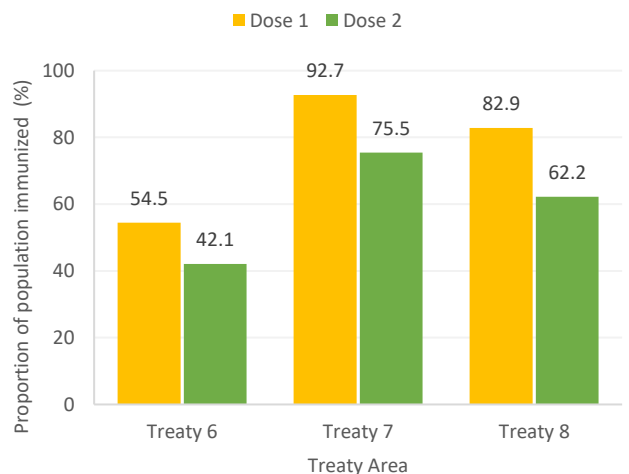
- **84,071** doses have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta
- **47,224** First Nations people living on reserve have received at least one dose
- **36,847** First Nations people living on reserve are fully immunized (2 doses)

Approximately **73.8%** of the total population aged 12 years and older living on reserve have received at least one dose and approximately **57.6%** have been fully immunized (2 doses).

Proportion of population immunized by age group and type of dose



Proportion of population aged 12 years and older immunized by Treaty area and type of dose



### 20 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

### 8 Communities

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

## COVID-19 Vaccine New Developments

1. **[New]** On October 18, Pfizer submitted an authorization for the use of its Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine in children 5 to 11 years of age to Health Canada. As with all COVID-19 vaccines, Health Canada will prioritize the review of this submission, while maintaining its high scientific standards for safety, efficacy and quality. Additional information will be shared as soon as it becomes available.
2. **[New]** Effective November 15, Alberta vaccine records with QR codes will be the only valid Alberta proof of vaccination accepted by operators participating in the [Restrictions Exemption Program](#). These can be downloaded from the [Alberta COVID Records](#) webpage.
3. **[New]** Vaccine records from First Nations, military, other provinces, and international travellers will continue to be accepted as proof of vaccination. Please see some [Proof of Vaccination samples \(alberta.ca\)](#), including a CHIP record and Saddle Lake vaccine card, for reference. FNIHB-AB continues to work with Alberta Health to ensure that all COVID-19 immunization data completed in First Nations communities is available through the provincial registry.
4. **[New]** Individuals who were partially or fully vaccinated outside of Alberta, are advised to update their health records by submitting their out-of-province/country immunization records online at [ahs.ca/vaccineregistry](#). Submitted records will be reviewed by AHS and verified information will be available on [alberta.ca/CovidRecords](#) and the individual's [MyHealth Records](#) account after about 2 weeks. Individuals who have questions or issues with their vaccine records that cannot be resolved using the tips listed on the [online helpdesk](#) should contact Alberta Covid Records Support at 1-888-527-1224 (toll free) from 7am to 7pm (Monday to Friday) and 9am to 5pm (Saturday and Sunday) or by email at [Covid19Record@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Covid19Record@gov.ab.ca).
5. **[New]** [AB COVID Records Verifier](#) is the official app to be used by businesses to scan Alberta vaccine record QR codes. The app is now available for iPhone and Android devices. The app does not store any personal information and it does not link to any other health or personal data. When a QR code is scanned, it will only show an individual's name, date of birth and vaccination status.
6. **[New]** Vaccine record QR codes may not be scan-able outside of Alberta at this time. If traveling, please check the requirements of individual countries, state/local governments, cruise lines, and events before travelling. More information on travel, testing and quarantine requirements can be found [here](#).
7. **[New]** The Government of Canada has announced a standardized [Canadian COVID-19 proof of vaccination](#) that will provide a secure way for Canadian residents to demonstrate their COVID-19 vaccination history, both in Canada and abroad. Travelers can continue to use their provincial proof of vaccination for domestic or international travel if their province is not yet issuing the standardized proof of vaccination. The Canadian COVID-19 proof of vaccination will be available to residents in Alberta soon. More information will be provided when available.
8. **[New]** 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.

## Reminders

1. Booster shots are administered after the protection provided by the original vaccine series starts to decrease over time. Booster shots are available to Albertans aged 75 and older and First Nations, Métis and Inuit people aged 65 and older. The province continues to recommend a booster dose for residents of long term care sites and eligible severely immunocompromised individuals. An additional dose can also be administered to individuals travelling to jurisdictions that do not recognize mixed series doses.

## ***Alberta's Relaunch - Update***

- **[New]** The provincial government has developed a guidance document, [Guidance for Schools \(K-12\) and School Buses](#), to support school and school authority leaders in reducing opportunities for transmission of COVID-19 in schools under the 2021-22 School Year Plan. This includes practices to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among attendees; procedures for rapid response if an attendee develops symptoms of illness; and maintenance of high levels of sanitation and personal hygiene.
- **Reminder:** It is difficult to lose a loved one under normal circumstances, and more difficult given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. Our deepest sympathies are with families and loved ones who have lost someone they cared about. We encourage anyone planning or attending a funeral, to review the [COVID-19 Practical Guidance for Funerals or Wakes October.pdf \(onehealth.ca\)](#) and follow public health measures to decrease the risk of spread at the gathering, like masking and distancing, where possible, or using a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces. For further information and guidance, contact your local Environmental Public Health Officer.
- **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***

- **Reminder:** The next period to apply for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy will open on November 1, 2021. More information is available [here](#).
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada has extended eligibility to apply for the [Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative](#) (OSRICI) until November 30, 2021. This initiative supports communities that have experienced a reduction in own-source revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 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](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 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=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.**



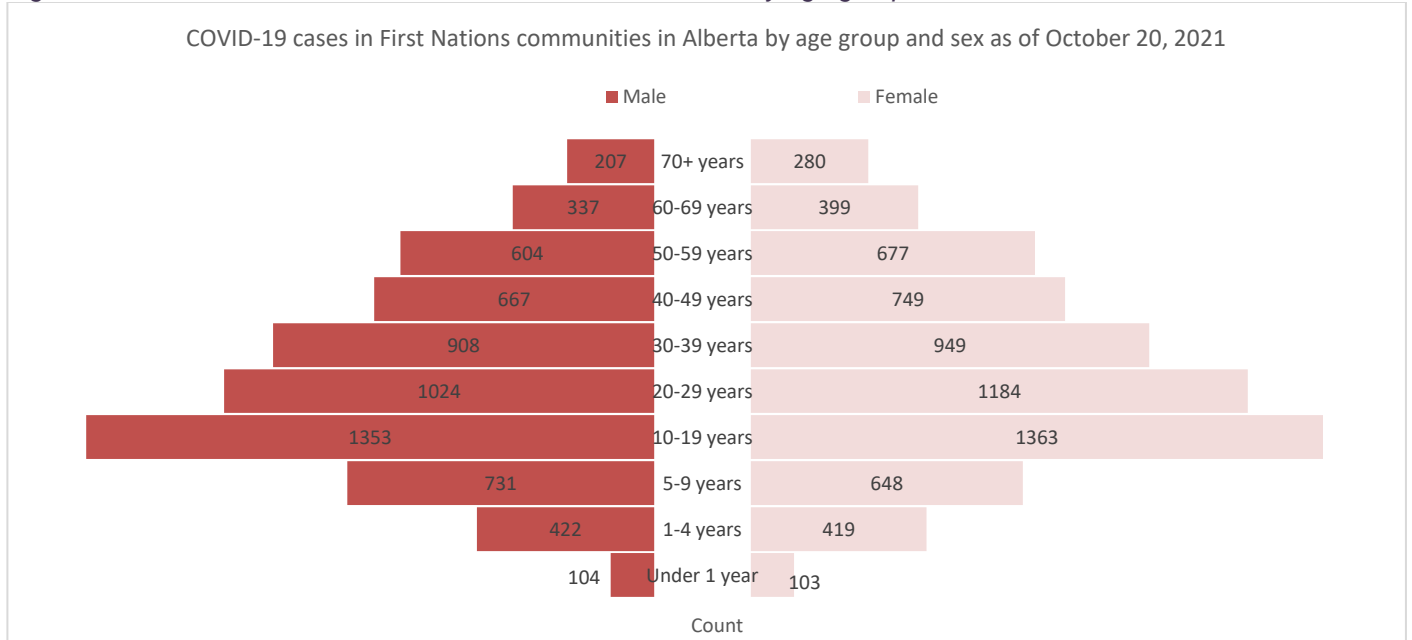
Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

Canada

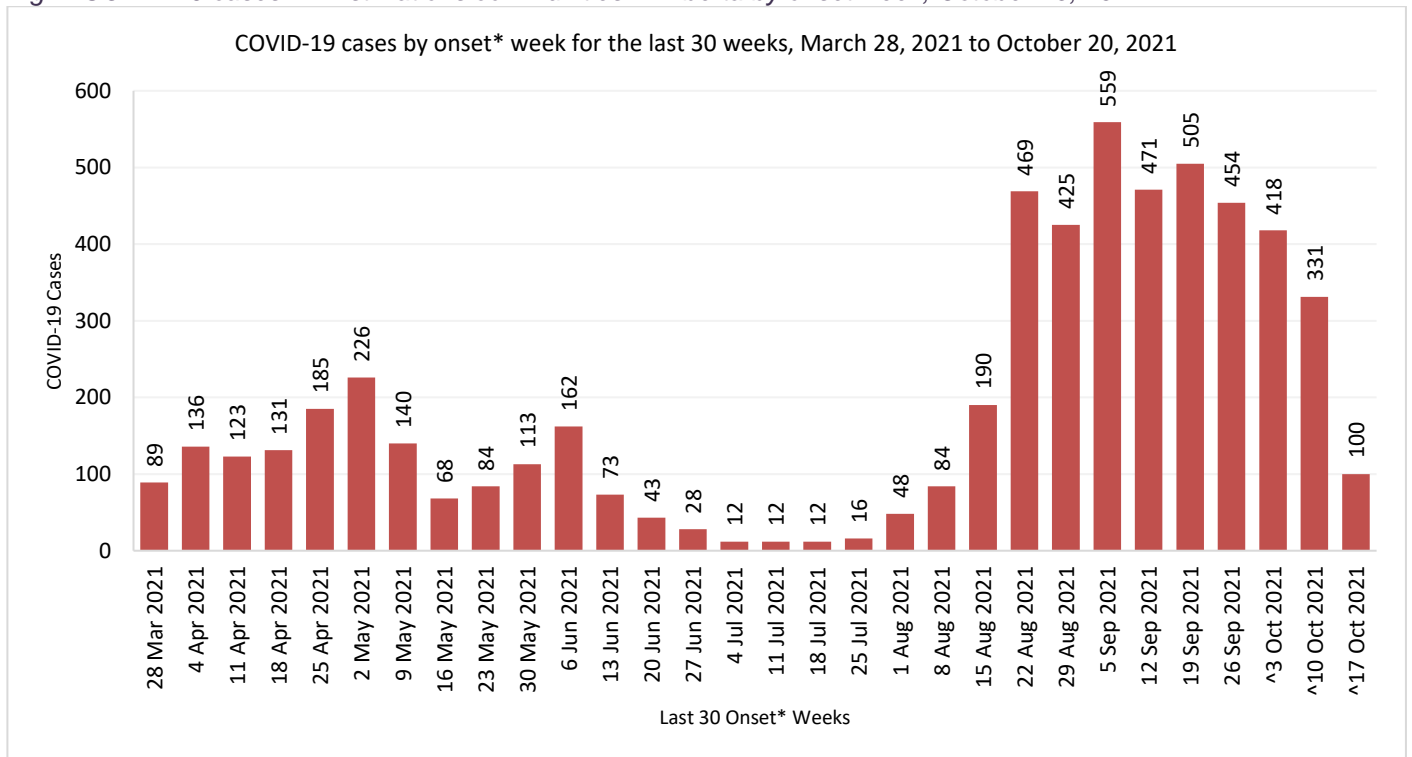
## APPENDIX A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta

Fig 1. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by age group and sex, October 20, 2021



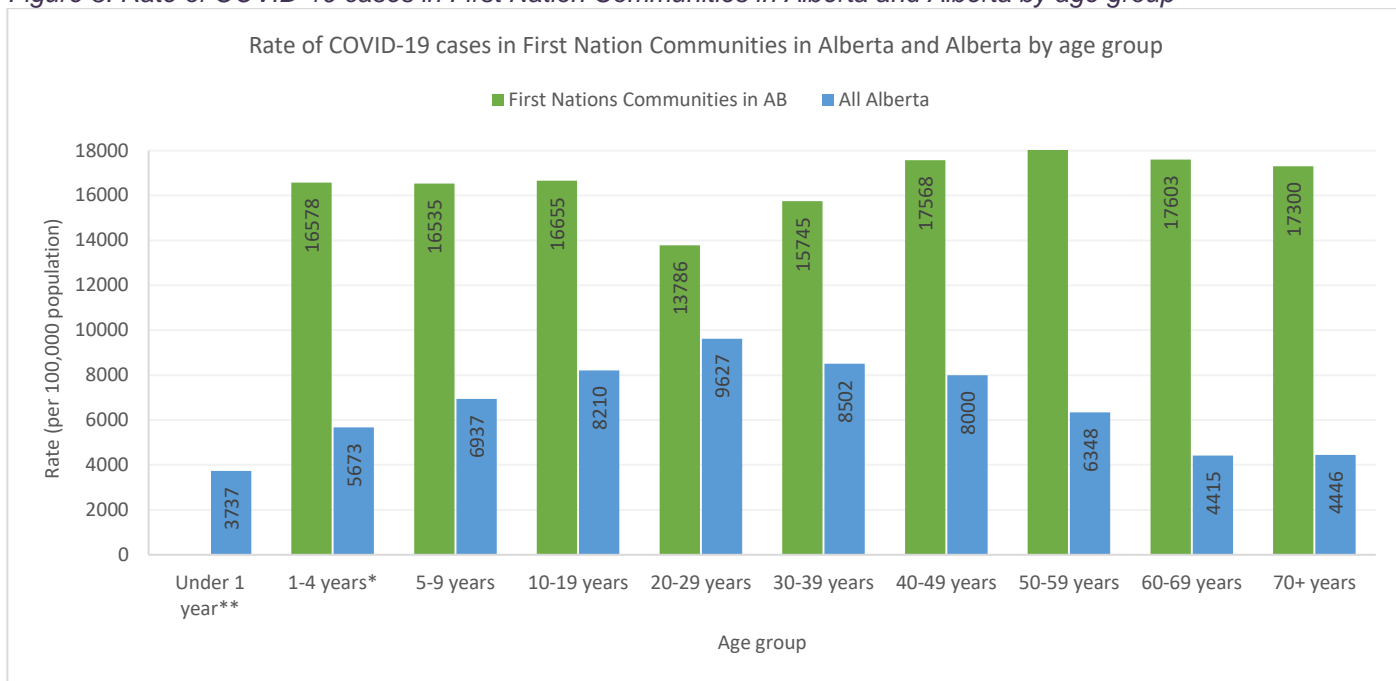
Individuals between the ages of 10 and 39 years accounted for 51.7% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 50.9% of all cases in Alberta. Females accounted for 51.6% of all cases in First Nations communities in Alberta and 49.7% among all Albertans.

Fig 2. COVID-19 cases in First Nations communities in Alberta by onset week, October 20, 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

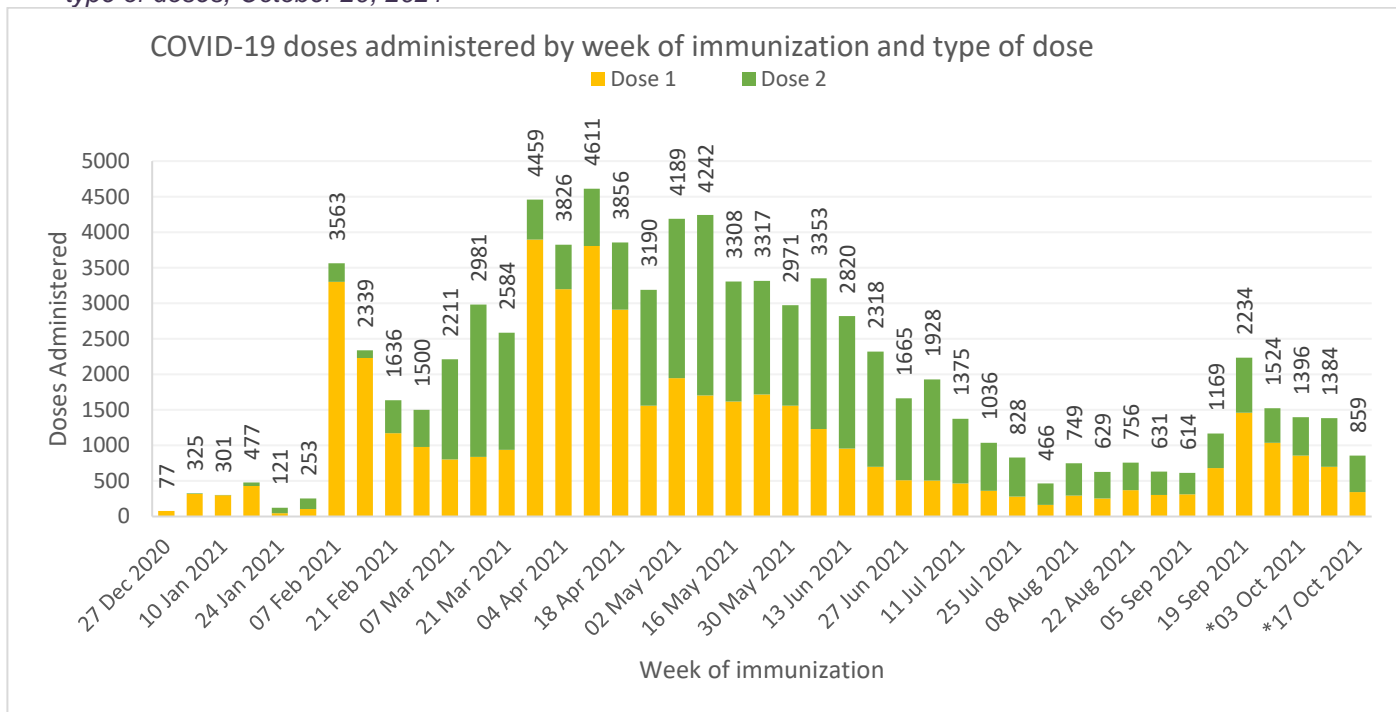


Note: \*\*Due to late reporting and registration of birth, the rate in this age group is not calculated for First Nations communities.

\*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.

Fig 4. COVID-19 Vaccine doses administered in First Nations communities in Alberta by week of immunization and type of doses, October 20, 2021



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

A total of 84,071 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to 47,224 people in First Nations communities in Alberta, of whom 36,847 are fully immunized with two doses.