

## ISC-AB Weekly Vaccine Update March 23, 2021

### General Updates:

- As of March 22, 2021 there are 7042 total on reserve cases of COVID-19 in Alberta. Of these 7042 total cases – 6548 have recovered, 422 are active in 31 First Nation communities. There are 37 hospitalizations (16 in ICU), and 72 individuals have sadly passed away to date.
- There are a number of communities still managing over 10 active cases. Approximately 15% of cases are now the B.1.1.7 variant strain, and it is present in several First Nations communities across all Treaty areas.

### Vaccine General Update:

- One of the best ways to control variant spread is ensuring as many members as possible are vaccinated quickly. In age groups that have received the vaccine, there is already evidence that cases of COVID-19, and severe outcomes, have been significantly reduced amongst those age groups already immunized.
- As of March 23, 2021, over 15,200 doses have been delivered to Alberta First Nations, and over 14,500 of these doses have been administered. 65% of the over 65 on-reserve population have received at least one dose, and 45% have received a second dose. 13.2% of the 18 – 64 population on-reserve have received their first dose and just over 4.5% have received a second dose.
- Vaccines for Phase 2A will be arriving in communities this week and clinics will be ready to open the week of March 29, 2021.
- ISC-AB is still waiting for further information on Phase 2B and 2C, but in April and May we expect to see vaccination increase quickly with all of Phase 2 completed by the end of May 2021. The eligibility criteria for phase 2B and 2C have been released and are available in at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid19-vaccine.aspx> and a more detailed list for Phase 2B eligibility is available here <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid19-vaccine-phase-2B-eligibility-fact-sheet.pdf>
- Efforts continue to ensure all vaccine side effects are reported and tracked in CHIP. Data on adverse events is important with this new vaccine, and we are continuing to learn more about any side effects being reported in communities.
- Canada's Chief Scientific Officer recently noted that going to a 4 month interval for second doses may not have been recommended for older individuals or those who are immunocompromised. If you are getting questions on the changing guidelines and procedures, it is important to remind people that this is an unprecedented and evolving situation, so guidance is often changing and fluid.
- Studies are now underway to determine if different vaccines can be mixed, and looking at if vaccines can be given to children.

### Vaccine Clinic Updates

- Thank you for keeping data up to date, and tracking adverse reactions.
- Please continue to track the expiry dates of the vaccines arriving in the community. With the delivery of vaccine doses overlapping, please remember to label each vaccine box with the date that the vaccine expires. The document provided with the vaccine should show what day it was removed from the freezer. The day it is removed from the freezer counts as day one, and then 30 days would be added

- When completing the COVID-19 Immunization Record, please start at the top of to reason code list, and choose the first one that the individual falls under.
- We have access to a report in CHIP that indicates if individuals have received their second dose without adequate spacing.
  - Records show that the vaccine was given early in 31 cases.
  - A number of second doses were given on day 20, instead of day 21. As a reminder, when a vaccine is given, that should be counted as day 0. Day one is the following day.
  - 6 individuals have received the second dose within less than 10 days, which could be a charting error or could be due to not reviewing the immunization chart prior to administering the second dose. ISC-AB is following up with communities where this error was made and will provide guidance on next steps.

### Questions:

- ***Why are the variant strains of COVID-19 more contagious? What is the incubation period for variant strains of COVID-19?***
  - Recent research has shown that the variant strains of COVID-19 attach to the cell quickly, colonize the cell and spread rapidly in the body. This shortens the incubation period for the disease. The previous strain of COVID-19 has an incubation period of 5 – 8 days, while variants now have an incubation period of only 3 – 5 days.
- ***How can FNIHB support Urban Indigenous Vaccine Clinics and will mRNA vaccines be available in these clinics?***
  - We know there have been major concerns with ensuring members living off-reserve receive vaccines. FNIHB-AB can participate in discussions with AHS and facilitate the connection to help organize clinics. While our priority is the on-reserve rollout, if resources are available there may be opportunity to support surge capacity in urban clinics.
  - The province is ensuring Moderna continues to be provided on-reserve, and mRNA vaccines will be used in Phase 2A of vaccine rollout for all Indigenous people on and off reserve over age 50. We can work with AHS to ensure Indigenous urban clinics have a choice in what vaccine is used. Pfizer is anticipated to become the most available vaccine in the province in April.
- ***Once Phase 2B is complete, can we move on to vaccinate those in Phase 2C and 2D?***
  - Allocations for each phase of the vaccine rollout on-reserve are based on population numbers provided. For Phase 2B, Nations provided us with exact numbers for this group but there may be extra doses extracted from vials and those who do not choose to get the vaccine. You can move through each phase if there are extra doses, but it is important to ensure those who may have refused the vaccine previously have not changed their minds and can get a dose if they are interested.

We will meet next week, **March 30, 2021 at 1:00pm.**