

ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Update for Chiefs: April 14, 2022



Omicron sub-variant BA.2 is now the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Alberta

The BA.2 variant (a sub-variant of Omicron) continues to be the dominant strain in Alberta and Wastewater surveillance data shows signs of rising transmission of COVID-19 in Calgary and Edmonton. The BA.2 sub-variant is highly transmissible and hospitalizations continue to be very high. It is important to remember that the sub-variant can still result in severe outcomes, particularly for those that are not vaccinated or who are older or medically at risk. A new variant, a hybrid of BA.1 and BA.2, called the XE variant has been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as potentially the most transmissible variant of COVID-19 to date. There are no confirmed cases of this variant in the province. Alberta remains in Step 2 of the three phase approach to easing public health restrictions in Alberta. Click [here](#) for more information on Step 2.

Alberta fourth doses available starting April 12th

Based on NACI's recommendations, Alberta announced that as of April 12th, Albertans aged 70 and older; First Nations, Métis and Inuit people age 65 and older; and all seniors in congregate care regardless of age can receive a fourth dose of vaccine **as long as 5 months have passed since their third dose**. Further information is available [here](#). Also a reminder that all youth aged 12 – 17 in Alberta are eligible to book a booster dose. Booster doses are available for all First Nations aged 12 years old and older in Alberta regardless of where they live. 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 [here](#).

Changes to Eligibility Criteria for Paxlovid

Effective April 6th, in Alberta First Nations, Métis and Inuit people age 45 and older who are unvaccinated or have received only one dose of vaccine are now eligible to receive Paxlovid. This is also true for individuals living in long-term care and designated supportive living settings, regardless of vaccination status. Paxlovid is available for patients who have a lab-confirmed COVID-19 infection if they can receive the treatment within five days of symptom onset. For more information, please visit ahs.ca/covidopt.

Funding Update

Addressing Racism and Discrimination in Canada's Health Systems Program – 2022 Call for proposals

Health Canada's *Addressing Racism and Discrimination in Canada's Health System Program* was announced as part of the [Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People](#). The Program also supports broader federal efforts including [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy](#) and [Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence](#).

Making meaningful progress towards eliminating anti-Indigenous racism in Canada's health systems will require action at all levels. The Government of Canada is committed to working with Indigenous communities and organizations, provincial/territorial governments, health systems partners, and educational institutions, to develop long-term solutions.

More information [here](#).

ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Update for Chiefs: April 14, 2022



Question of the Day

Sotrovimab paused as treatment for COVID-19

On April 13th, Dr. Deena Hinshaw announced that the use of Sotrovimab as a treatment for COVID-19 will be suspended in Alberta as it is unclear whether this treatment is effective against the BA.2 variant, which is now the dominant strain of COVID-19 in the province. Remdesivir will be used instead and it is administered through IV infusions, given on a daily basis for three days. Presently, it appears that Remdesivir will not be offered on reserve, however, efforts are being made to ensure that it is accessible across the province. Those individuals who have taken Sotrovimab can be assured that Sotrovimab is a safe medication and may still provide some benefit. Click [here](#) to learn more about Remdesivir.

National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) – Recommendations on COVID-19 booster doses

On April 12th NACI released a statement strongly recommending that all adults and immunocompromised children aged 12 to 17 get a first COVID-19 booster if they have not already done so. On April 5th NACI recommended that jurisdictions prepare to deploy a second COVID-19 vaccine booster prioritizing adults 80 years of age and over, as well as residents of long-term care or other congregate living settings for seniors. Doses for adults 70-79 years of age could also be considered. Click [here](#) to learn more.

National Immunization Awareness Week

[Immunization Canada](#) invites you to participate in National Immunization Awareness Week (NIAW) 2022, which runs from April 23 -30th. It is an annual event held in the last week of April in Canada. It highlights and recognizes the importance of immunization and the success and impact it has had in both protecting and saving lives. If your community would like to host an event or a vaccine clinic, please contact the ISC Nursing Surge Team by emailing the CD Emergencies inbox at cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab@sac-isc.gc.ca or by contacting Michelle Liboiron directly at 587-337-9624 / michelle.liboiron@sac-isc.gc.ca.

Q: What is a breakthrough infection of COVID-19?

A: A breakthrough infection occurs when a vaccinated individual or an individual who has previously been ill with COVID-19 becomes ill with COVID-19 or is re-infected.

Individuals with pre-existing conditions or that are immune-compromised are more likely to experience a breakthrough infection, but it can happen across the broader population as well. The effectiveness of vaccines and also natural immunity resulting from a previous COVID-19 infection both wane over time. This is why it's important to stay up-to-date with vaccines and boosters.

As more variants of COVID-19 and/or sub-variants of Omicron emerge we are likely to continue to see breakthrough infections occurring. However, current data still shows that the best protection against serious outcomes, including hospitalization comes from vaccines. To learn more, please read the April 5th Statement from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health, [here](#).

Alberta Cases: as of April 13th , 3:30 p.m. MST

| | |
|---|----------------|
| AB Total Confirmed (March 28 - 578 new cases) | 552,403 |
| AB Deaths due to COVID-19 | 4,141 |
| Confirmed First Nations On-reserve Cases | 19,791 |
| On-reserve Recovered Cases | 19,379 |
| On-Reserve Active Cases | 233 |
| On-reserve deaths due to COVID-19 | 175 |
| Calgary Zone Total Confirmed Cases | 221,912 |
| Central Zone Total Confirmed Cases | 56,311 |
| Edmonton Zone Total Confirmed Cases | 176,759 |
| North Zone Total Confirmed Cases | 60,927 |
| South Zone Total Confirmed Cases | 35,924 |
| Unknown Confirmed | 375 |
| Omicron Variants of Concern Confirmed in Alberta | 90,474 |

Funding Opportunity

COVID Community Roots Program – Alberta Blue Cross Grassroots Funding

\$3000 in recreation funding to help address impacts of COVID-19 on physical, emotional and mental health. Click [here](#) for details.

Alberta Snapshot



More Alberta case data can be found [here](#)

Useful Links

Medical Officer of Health COVID-19 Bulletin

- April 7th MOH Bulletin – click [here](#).

Rewind! Windspeaker Mental Wellness Town Hall programs can be found at the following links:

- [Mental Wellness from an Indigenous Perspective](#)
- [Coping with Grief and Loss](#)
- [Checking in with Indigenous Youth](#)
- [Let's Talk Self-Care](#)
- [Racism in Healthcare](#)

First Nations Health Managers Association Town

Hall - Episode 12 focuses on Life Promotion as Harm Reduction with Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. Link [here](#).

Vaccinations for children aged 5-11 – [Fact Sheet](#)

Local Food Infrastructure Fund – Next phase announced. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Additional Updates



Vaccine Snapshot

*as of April 11, 2022

Investments under Federal Pathway help healing efforts for MMIWG families and survivors

The Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (Federal Pathway), outlines the Government of Canada's work with partners to advance solutions that will support families and survivors, and address the root-causes of violence, which is part of the broader 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People National Action Plan. On April 6th, it was announced that the first year of program funding, over \$2.5 million, has been invested in 20 Indigenous organizations for healing projects to help families and survivors of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Pathways to Safe Indigenous Communities Initiative open to applicants for 2022-2023

The Pathways to Safe Indigenous Communities Initiative provides funding for the implementation of Indigenous-designed projects that support and improve community safety and well-being. First Nations communities and organizations on and off reserves, modern treaty agreement holders, self-government agreement holders, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations, and organizations that serve urban Indigenous individuals and Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are all eligible for funding. Projects may include after-school programs for youth, safe streets and transportation initiatives, land-based activities, and culture and language programming, as well as initiatives to support the safety and well-being of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Improving and expanding culturally-informed data collection on missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+

On April 6th, CIRNAC announced that approximately \$1 million has been allocated to 19 Indigenous organizations this year for Indigenous-led data projects that will develop methodologies to better understand the issue of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and address the root causes of violence. Click [here](#) to learn more.



121,905 doses of vaccine have been administered in **46 Nations (bands)** in Alberta.



At least **89.2%** of First Nations people 12+ living on-reserve or crown land have received their **first dose** of the vaccine.



At least **95.3%** of First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on-reserve or crown land have received **two doses** of the vaccine.



At least **18.3%** of First Nations people 12+ living on-reserve or crown land have received **three doses** of the vaccine.