

# Update: Overdose Crisis and COVID-19

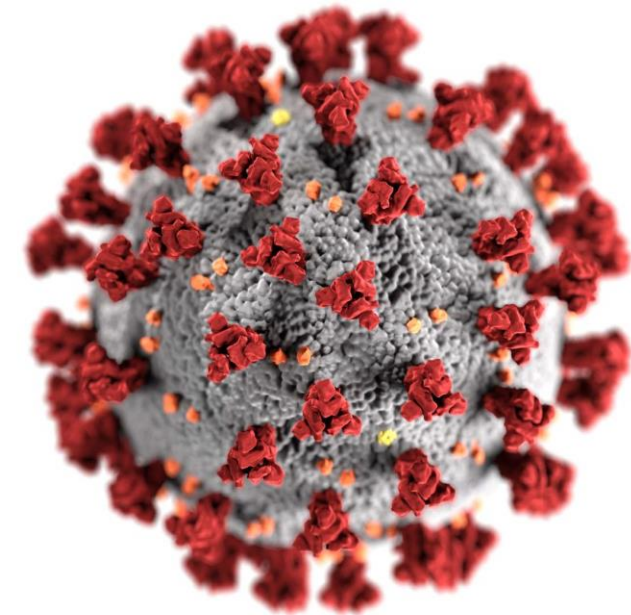
## October 21, 2021

Dr. Patricia Daly  
Chief Medical Health Officer

# Two Public Health Emergencies: 2020-2021

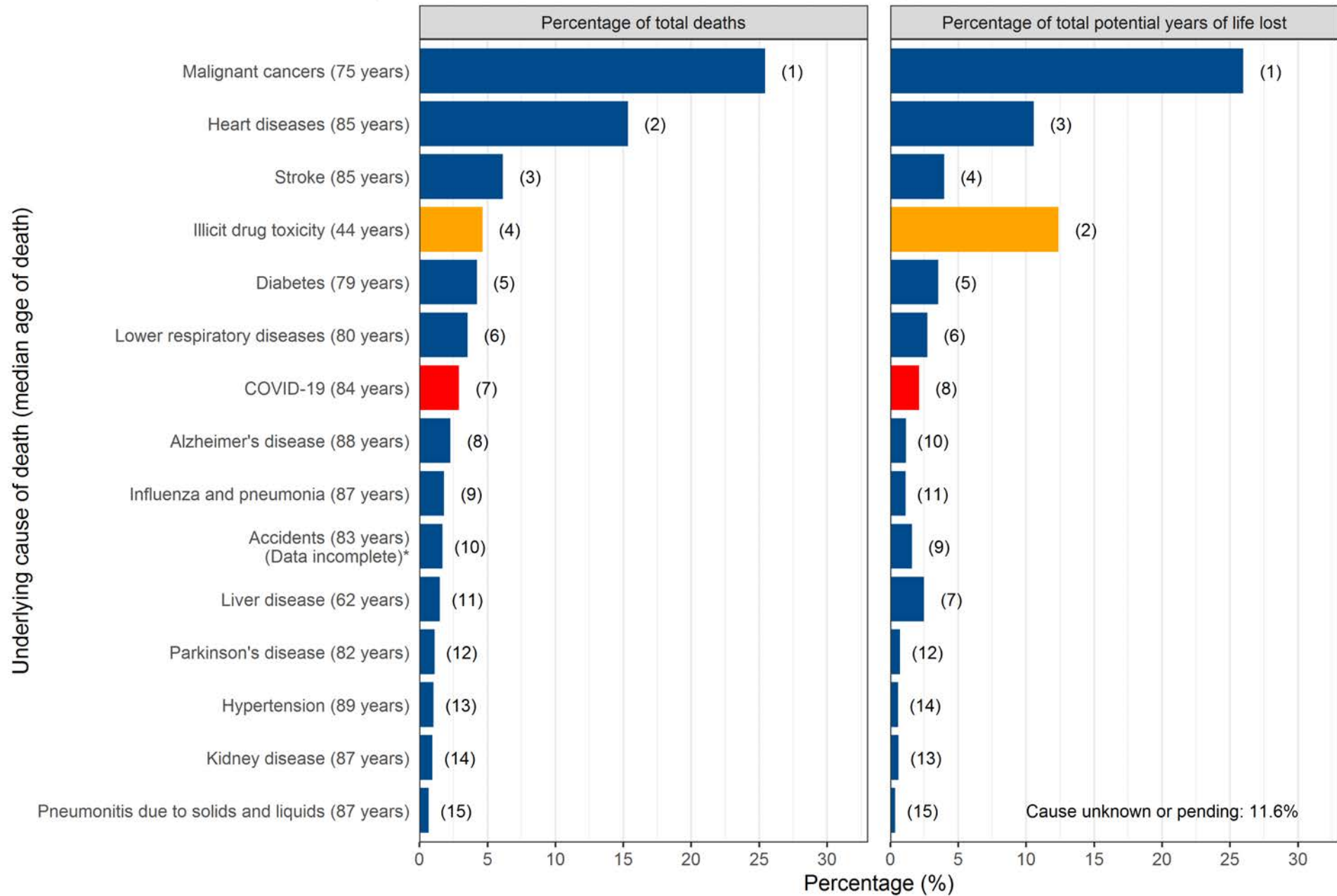


3,000 deaths in BC  
800 deaths in Vancouver Coastal



2,000 deaths in BC  
500 deaths in Vancouver Coastal

# Top 15 causes of death (ranking) in British Columbia from March 2020 to July 2021

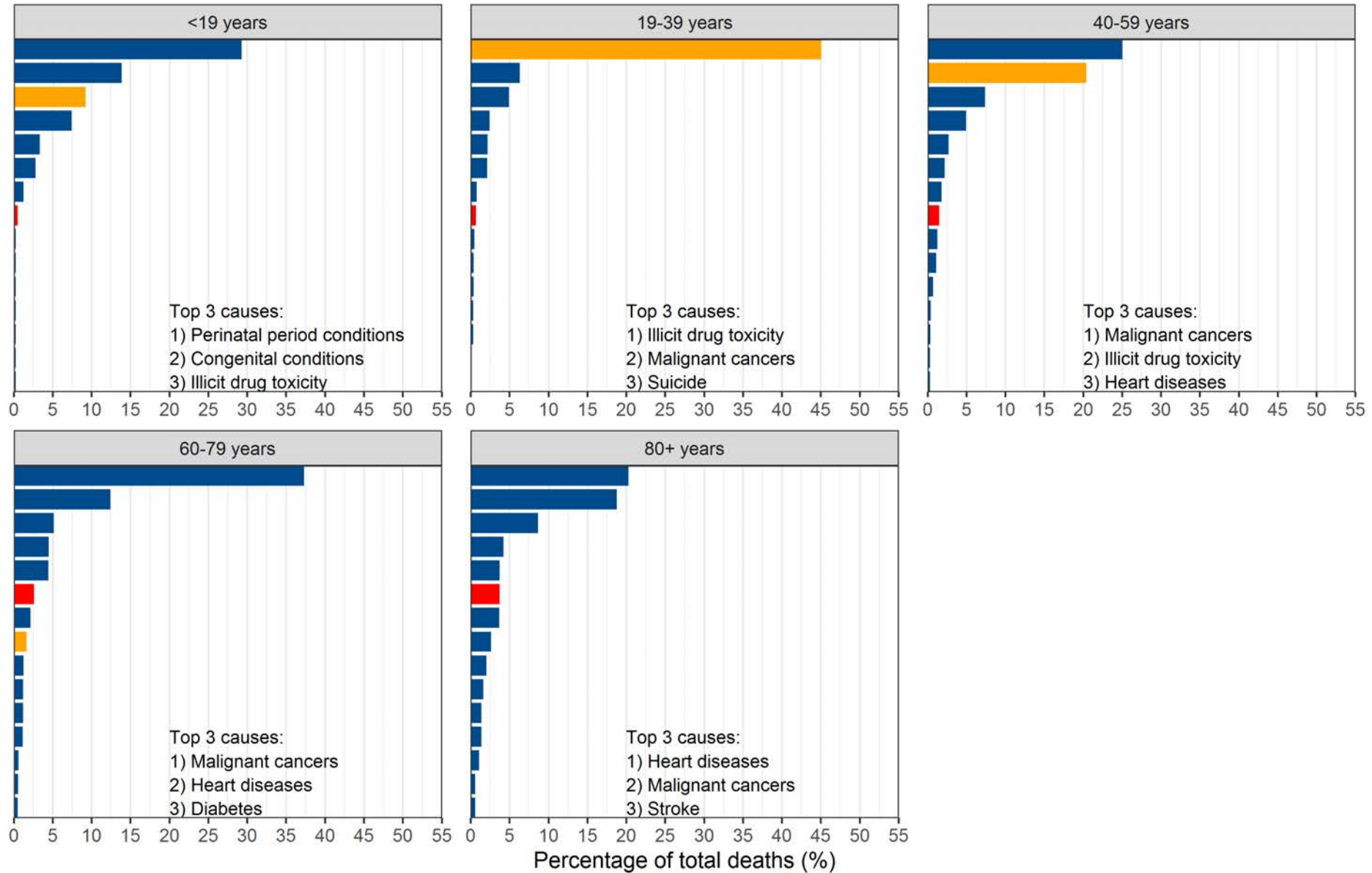


\*External causes of death (other than illicit drug toxicity) incomplete due to reporting delay and will rise in ranking as data become complete.

Data sources: 1) BC Vital Statistics; 2) Data on illicit drug toxicity deaths provided to BCCDC by BC Coroners Service; 3) Statistics Canada Table 13-10-0114-01 Life expectancy and other elements of the life table, Canada, reference period 2017-2019.

# Top 15 causes of death by age group in British Columbia from March 2020 to July 2021

■ COVID-19 
 ■ Illicit drug toxicity 
 ■ Other causes of death



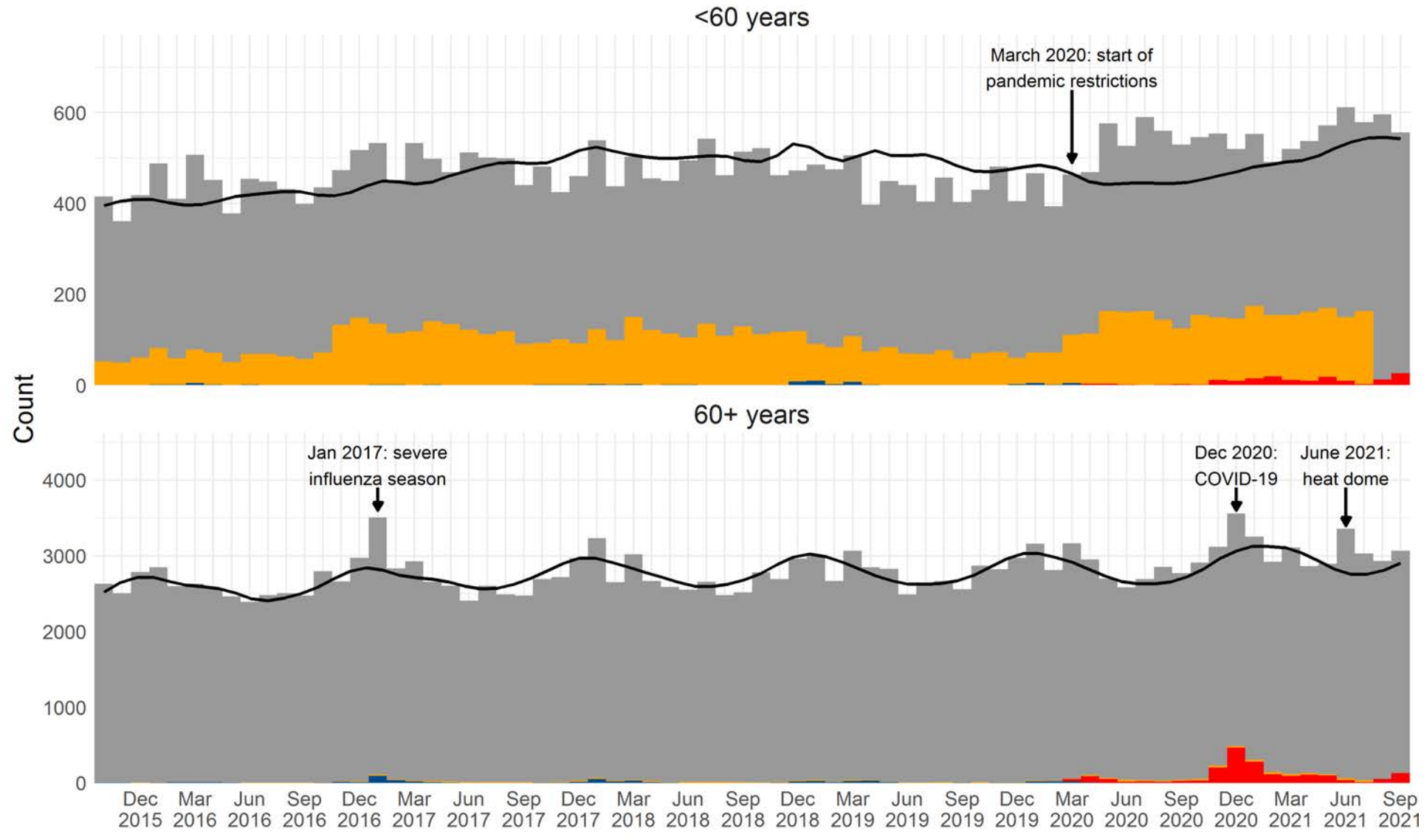
Cause unknown or pending: 11.6%. This figure may change as cause of death data become more complete.

Data sources: 1) BC Vital Statistics; 2) COVID-19 deaths reported by public health; 3) Data on illicit drug toxicity deaths provided to BCCDC by BC Coroners Service.

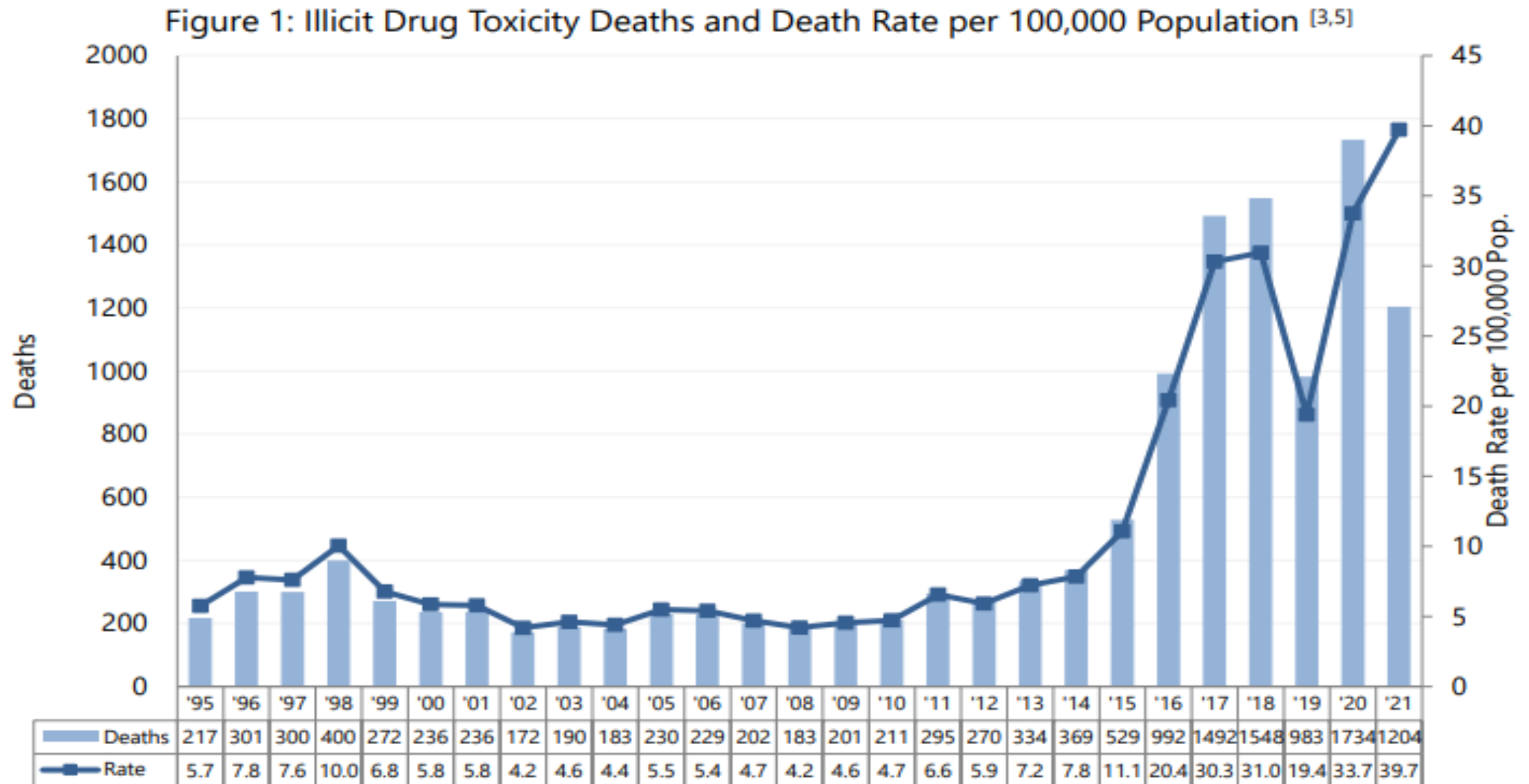


# Monthly mortality in British Columbia by cause and age group, October 2015 to September 2021

- Model of expected deaths
- Deaths attributed to other causes
- Deaths attributed to COVID-19 from public health reporting
- Deaths attributed to illicit drug toxicity from BC Coroners Service reporting (data unavailable past July 2021)
- Deaths attributed to influenza from Vital Statistics underlying cause of death

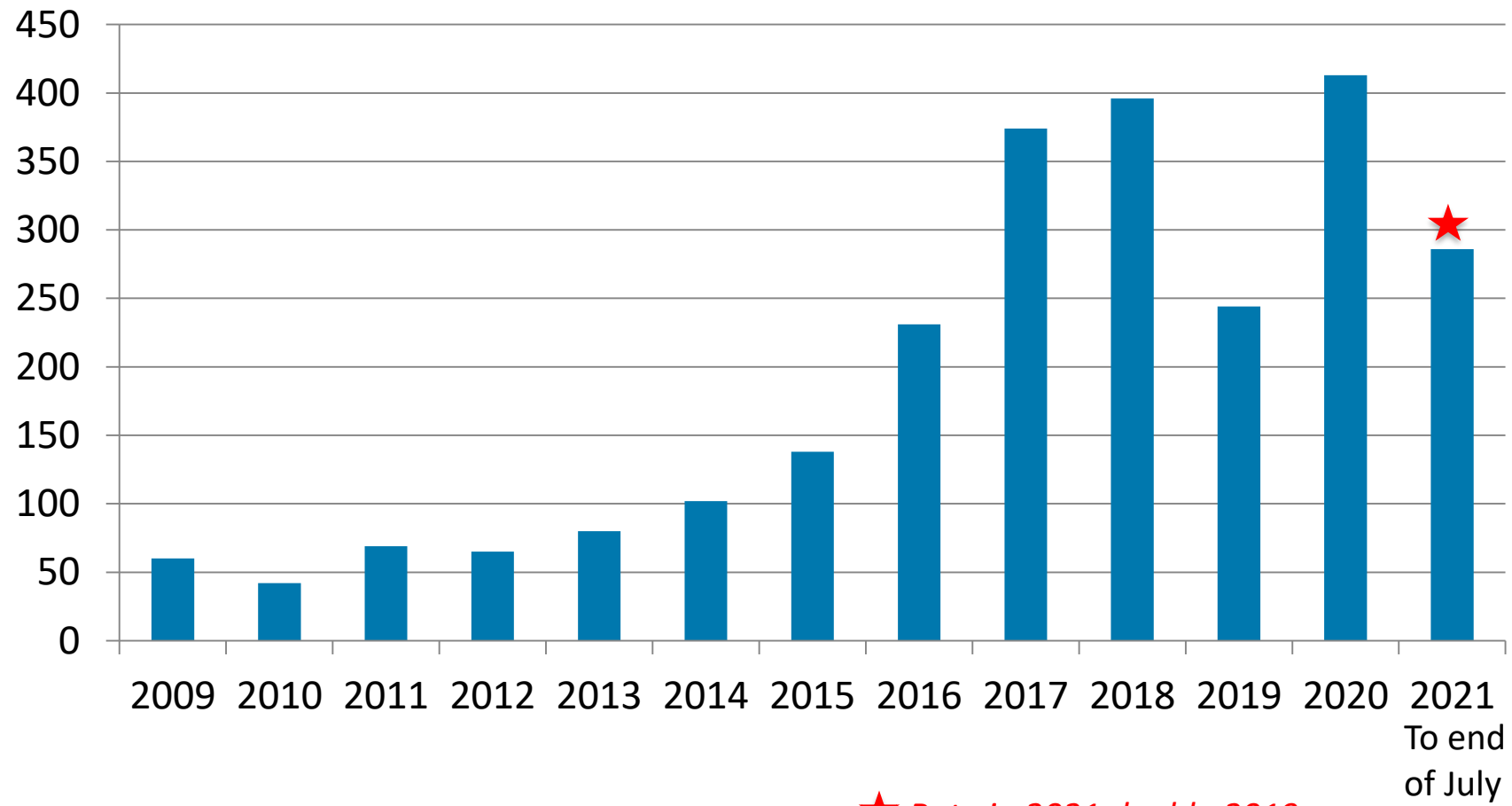


# BC Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths (to end of July 2021)



Source: BC Coroners Service

# Vancouver Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths 2009 – July 31, 2021



★ Rate in 2021 double 2019,  
17% higher than 2020

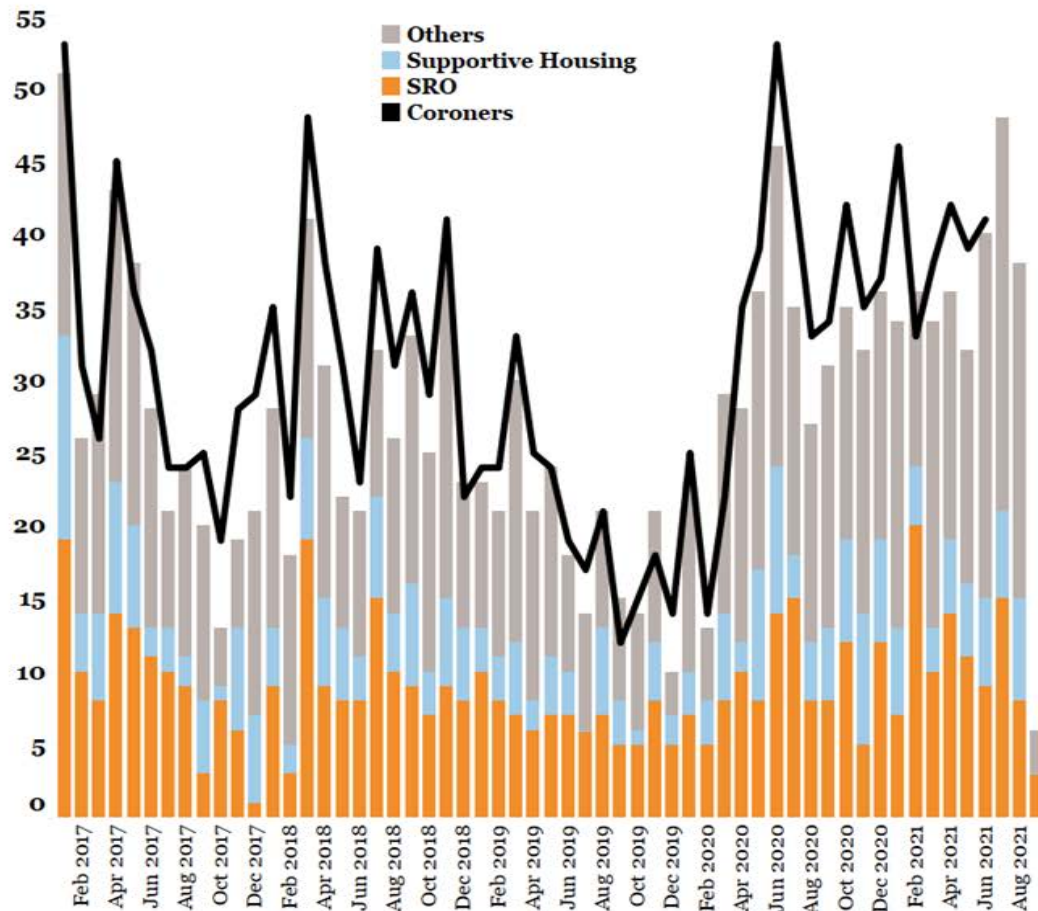
Source: BC Coroners Service

# Illicit Drug Toxicity Deaths in Vancouver

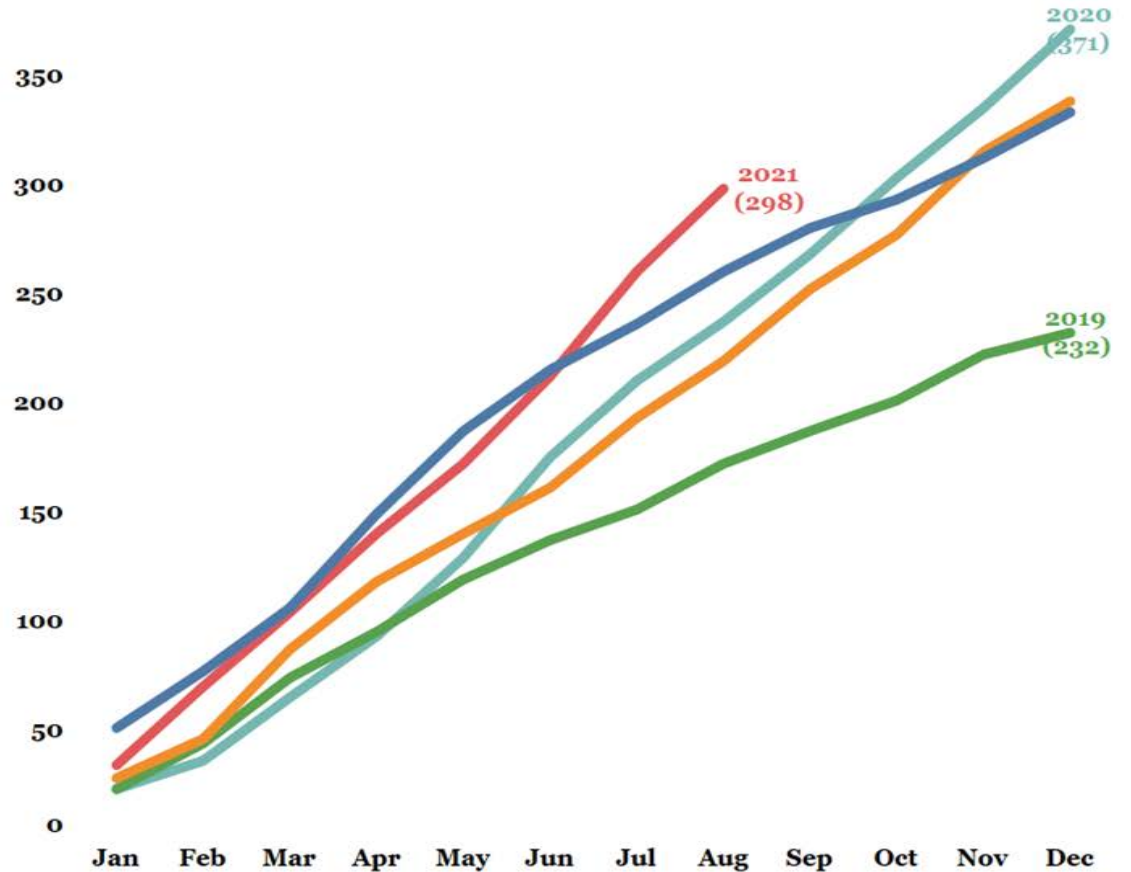
## Vancouver Police Department data

Overdose Related Sudden Death Reporting from VPD Starting from 2017

As Of	Total	SRO (%)	Supportive Housing (%)
Sep 5, 2021	1,578	33	17



Cumulative Overdose Related Sudden Deaths Reporting from VPD (As of September 5)







# Scale-up of Harm Reduction & Overdose Prevention Activities

## Peers

Heart Study



Peer Operations Coordinator



Community of Practice



(online & regular call)

Street Degree



## Drug Checking

Number of drug samples Tested by FTIR or Fentanyl Dip Stick



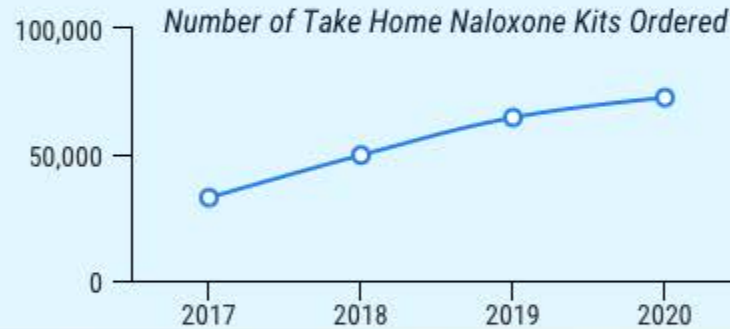
## Naloxone Distribution

Expand Nasal Naloxone for people with Alcohol Use Disorder

in partnership with Drinkers Lounge



Naloxone Boxes distributed at shelters, housing sites to prevent multiple overdoses



## Education

Stigma Project



Indigenizing Harm Reduction Reboot



in partnership with:



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

## Overdose Prevention Sites

Number of Overdoses Reversed



Started with **6** OPS SITES in Vancouver  
2019 Expanded to:



Van-based mobile service in Vancouver

Powell River OPS

2020 Expanded to:



2021 Expanding to:

- Downtown Vancouver
- Richmond
- North Shore

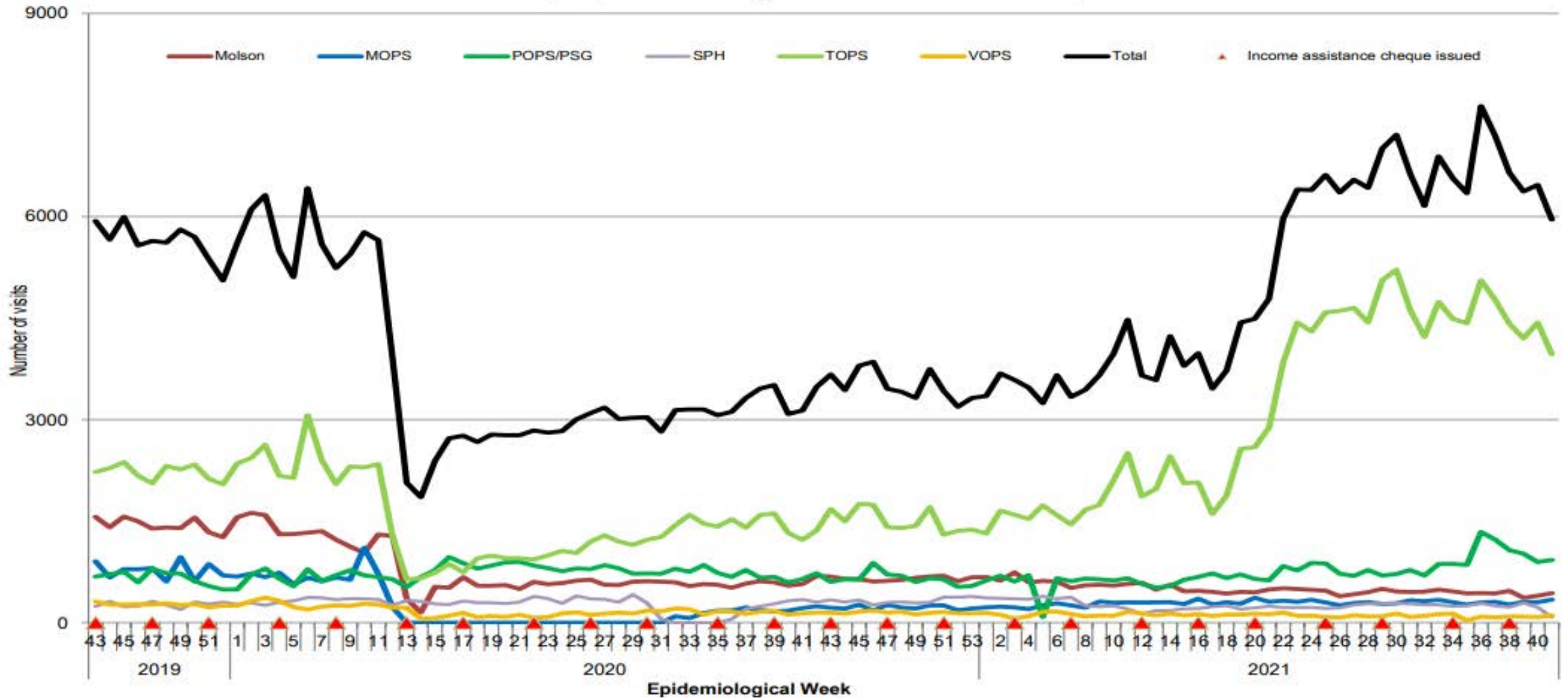


Episodic OPS: In progress

- Acute Care:
  - VGH
  - BC Women's
- Community:
  - UPCC (5 Sites) Live
  - Sheway

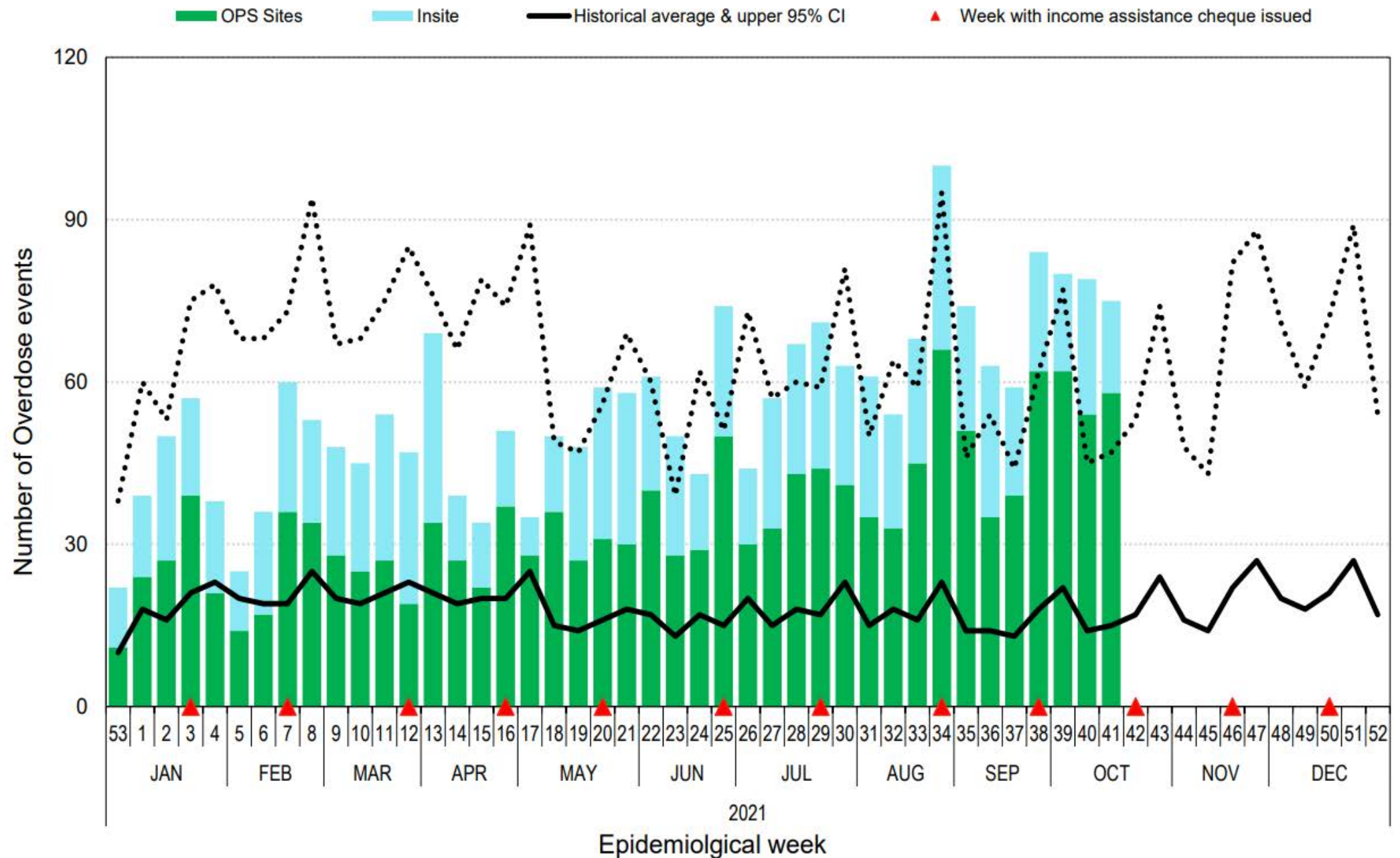
# VCH Overdose Prevention Sites

## Visit Volume by Epidemiological Week and Sites, 2019/2021\*





**Figure 2. Number of overdose events at Insite and overdose prevention sites\* by epidemiological week. Vancouver Coastal Health, 2021 compared to historical average and 95% confidence limits†**



# VCH Overdose Outreach Team

## Overdose Outreach Team

Vision: *To influence a sustainable system of care in which people who use drugs can freely access substance use care, supports and resources without judgement or prejudice in a timely and equitable manner.*



### WHO we are:



#### Our Team includes...

- Peers
- Outreach workers
- Social workers
- Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Admin staff

### WHO we serve:



- People who are disconnected from care or not in regular contact with care and recently overdosed
- People who are at high-risk of overdose and not connected to care
- People who are connected to care but have overdosed multiple times

### How to reach us:

We are a regional team located across Vancouver, Richmond and Coastal communities (North Shore, Sea-to-Sky, Powell River and Lower Sunshine Coast).

The best way to reach us is to call:



(604) 360-2874



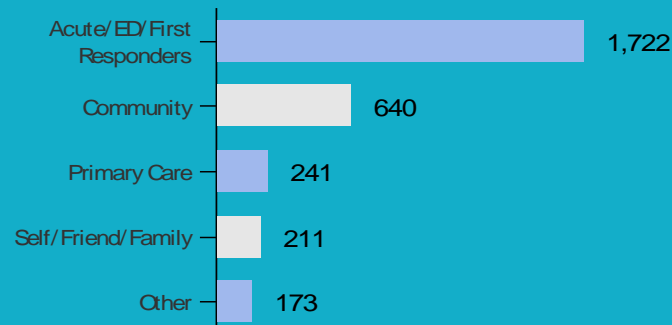
Days a week



8 AM to 8 PM

### We Serve Across-Sectors

Referrals 2020 (N = 2987)



### We Are Responsive



### We Facilitate Connections



86% of clients successfully connected or re-connected to health and/or social services.

# New Programs and Investments (Federal and Provincial)

## Pharmaceutical Alternatives to the Toxic Drug Supply:

- “SAFER” – Prescription of fentanyl and other opioid alternatives (\$5 million in federal funding over 4 years, additional funding for two other Vancouver clinics)
- Provincial “Risk Mitigation/Pharmaceutical Alternatives Guidelines”
- Expansion of Opioid Agonist Therapy (injectable and tablet)

## Expansion of Treatment and Recovery

- \$132 million in provincial funding for new and enhanced treatment and recovery services across BC – announced by Minister Malcolmson last week



# Chief Medical Health Officer Report 2018 – Key Recommendation

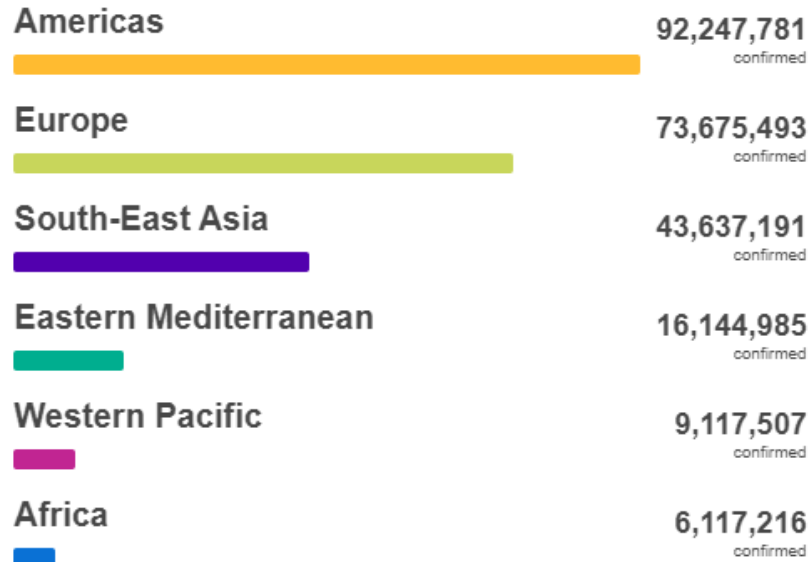
- City of Vancouver: Application to Health Canada to decriminalize simple possession of illicit drugs: “Vancouver Model”
- Medical Health Officer and City of Vancouver support for a Health Canada exemption for a “compassion club” model

## RECOMMENDATION

Establish a Regulated Supply of Drugs as an Alternative to the Illegal Supply

# COVID-19 New Cases Worldwide

## Situation by WHO Region



Source: World Health Organization  
Data may be incomplete for the current day or week.

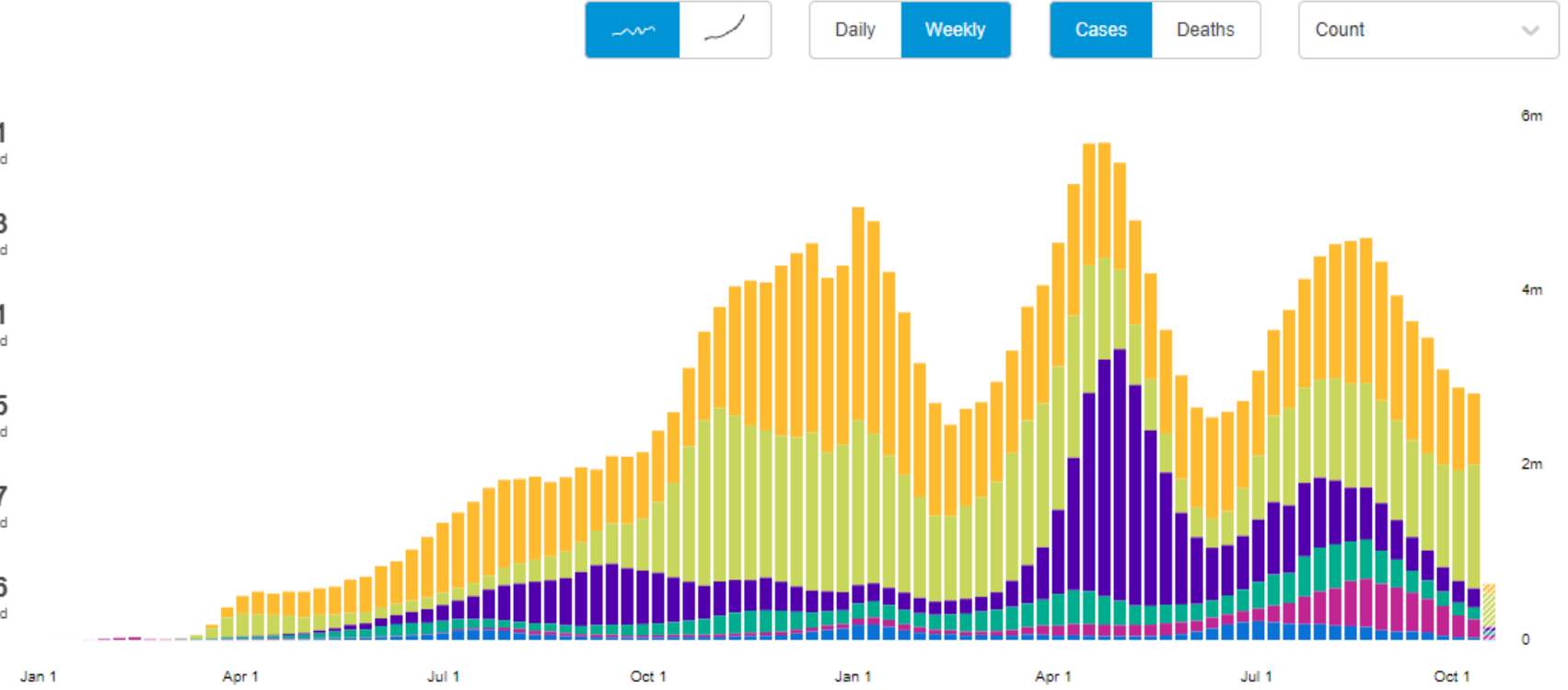
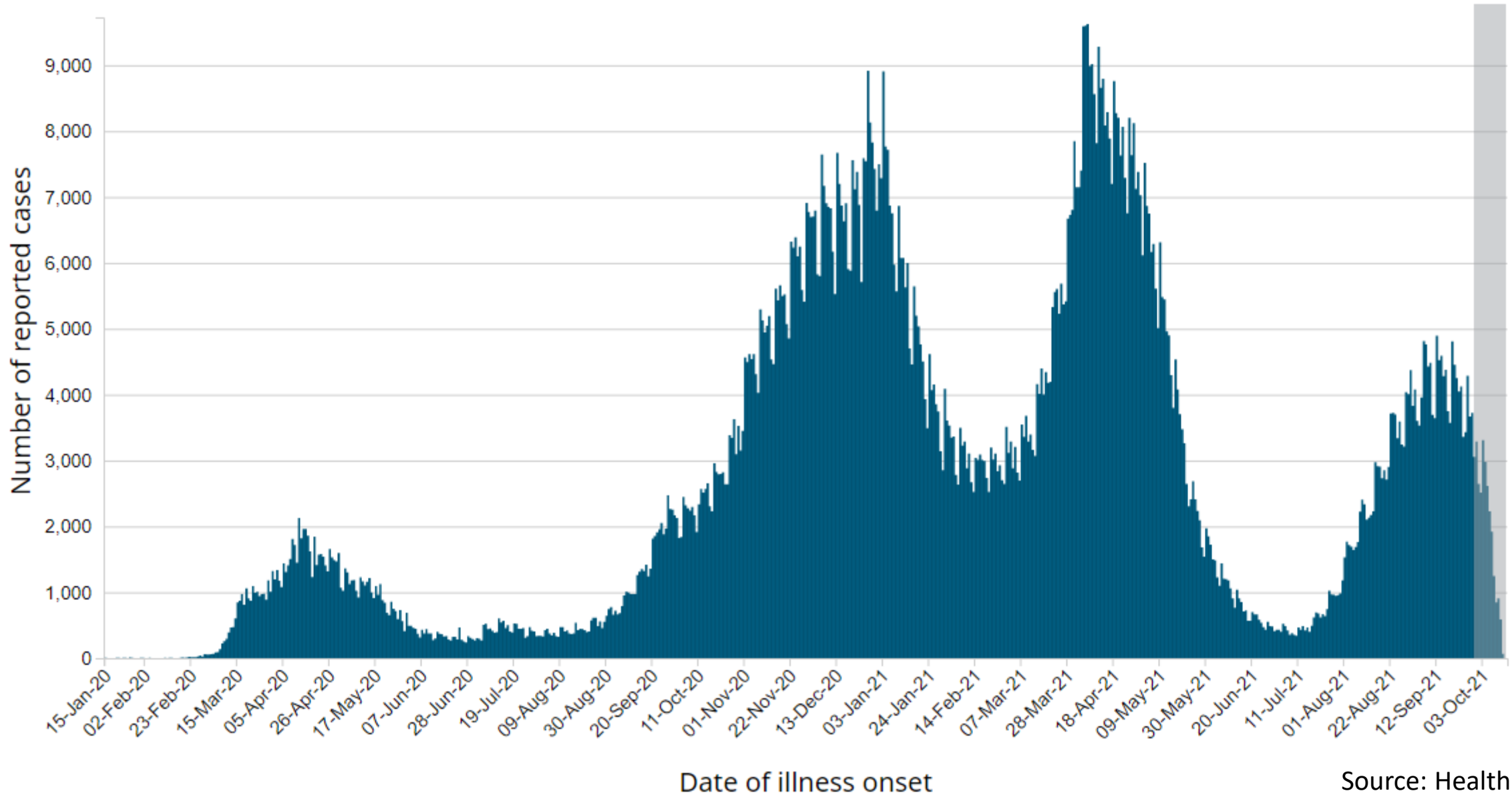


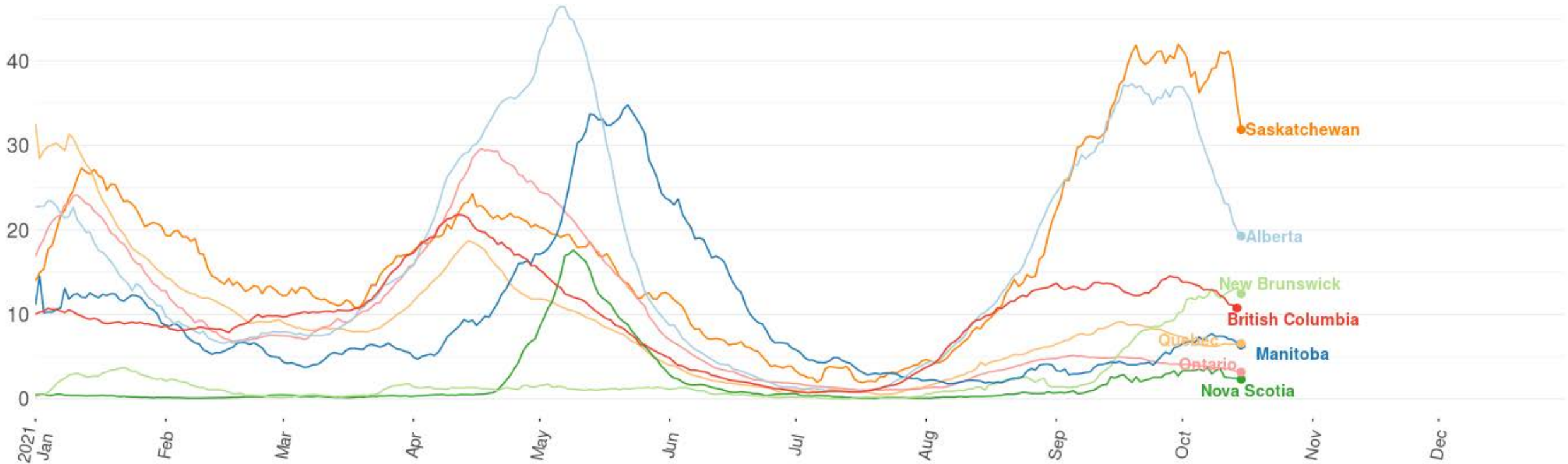
Figure 3. COVID-19 cases (n=1,665,583 <sup>1</sup>) in Canada by date of illness onset <sup>2</sup> as of October 15, 2021, 7 pm EDT (total cases  <sup>3</sup>)



Source: Health Canada

# Canada – Provincial COVID-19 Rates

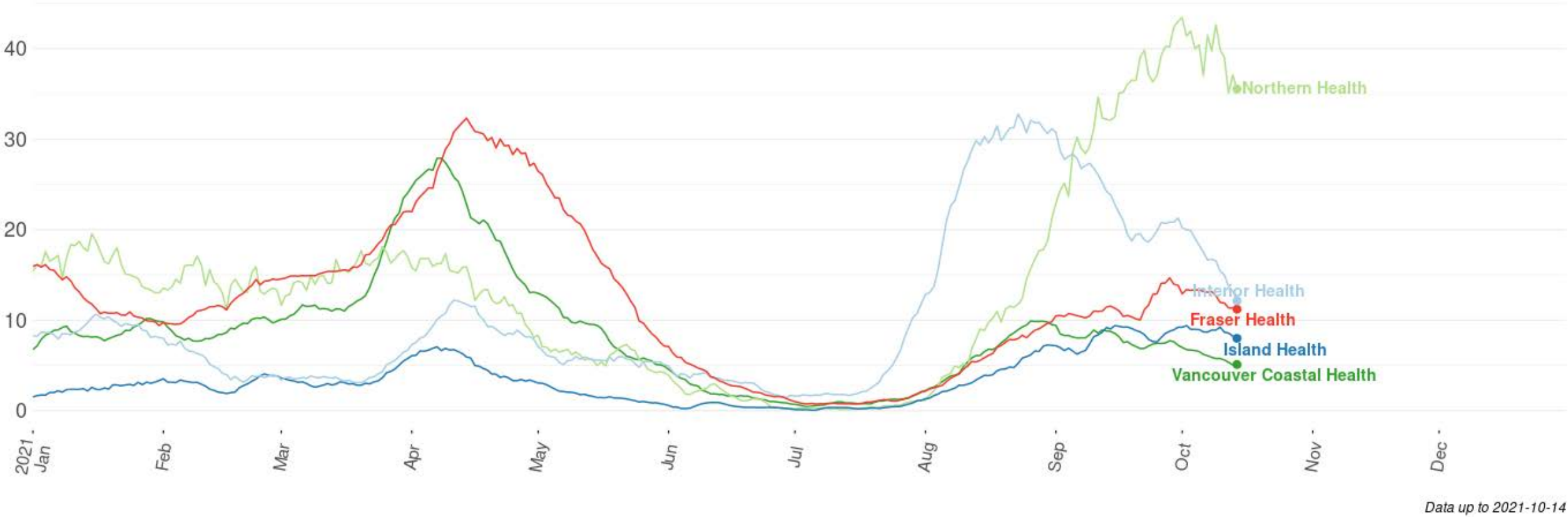
New daily **cases** per 100K population (7-day moving average)



Data up to 2021-10-15

# BC – Health Authority COVID-19 Rates

New daily **cases** per 100K population (7-day moving average)

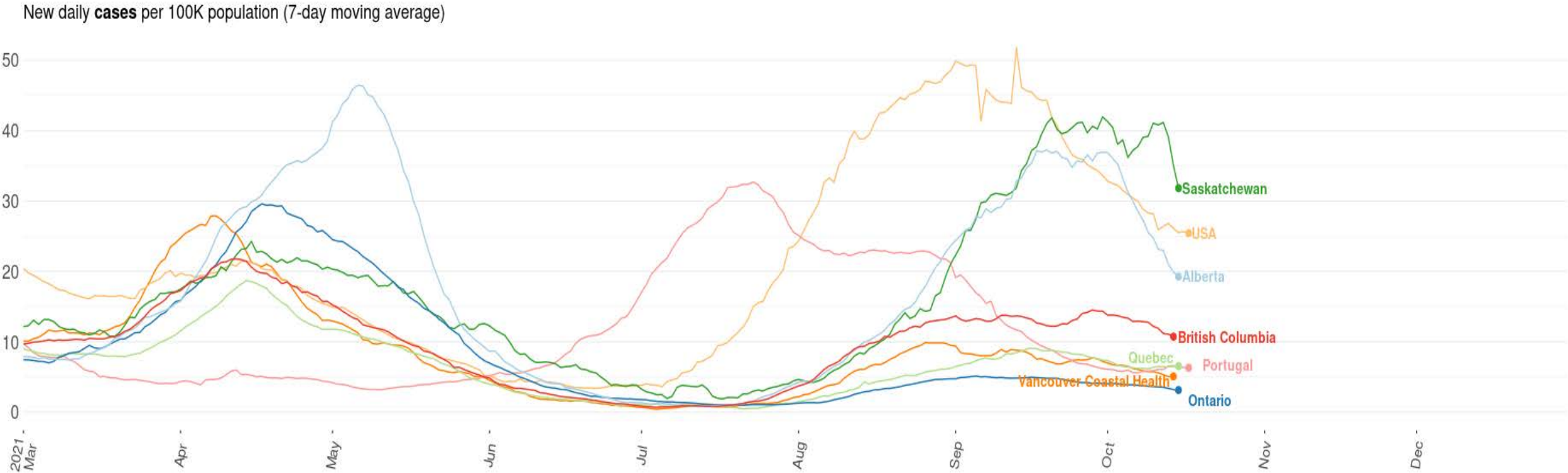


Data up to 2021-10-14

Source: BCCDC

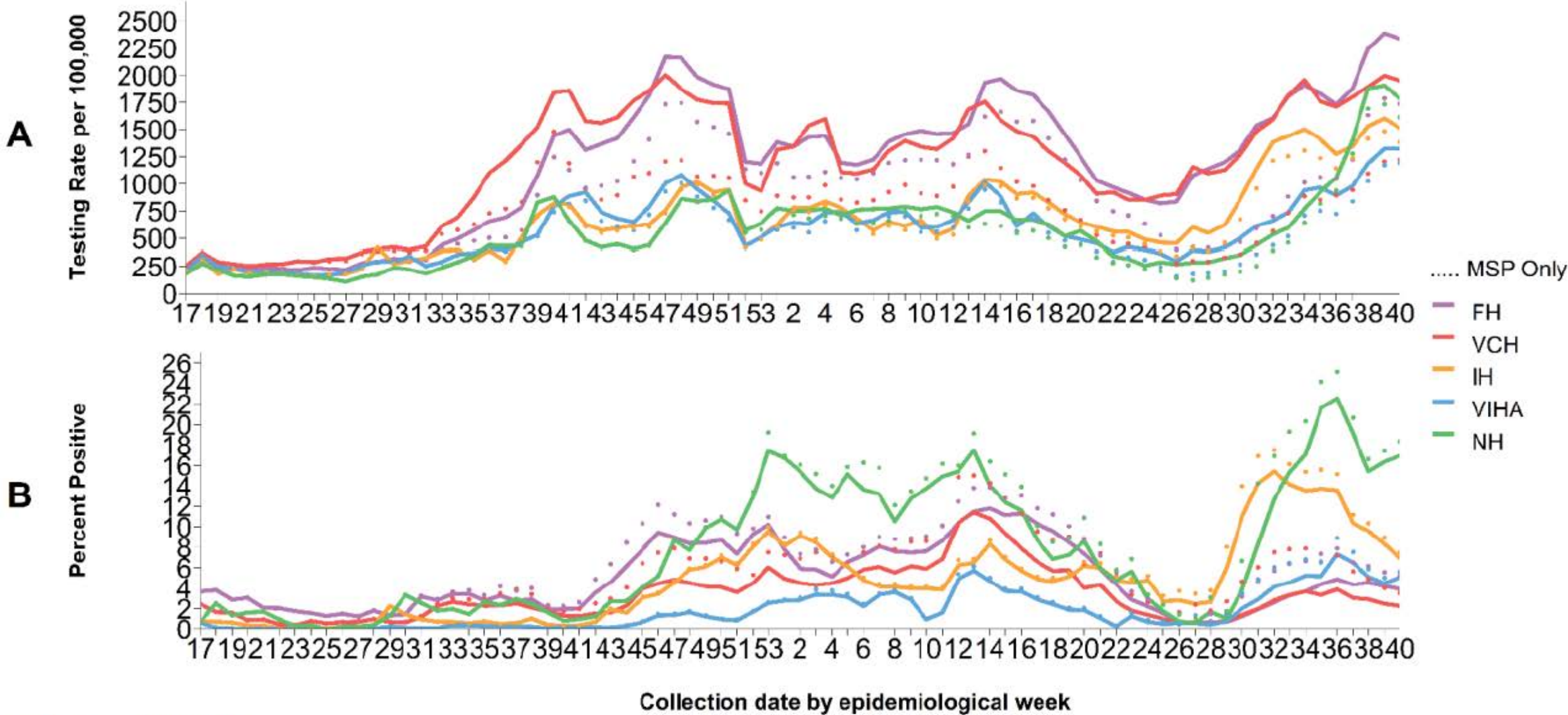


# Vancouver Coastal Health – How do we compare?



Data up to 2021-10-17

**Figure 5. Testing rates and percent SARS-CoV-2 positive by health authority and collection week, BC  
March 15, 2020 (week 12) – October 09, 2021 (week 40)**

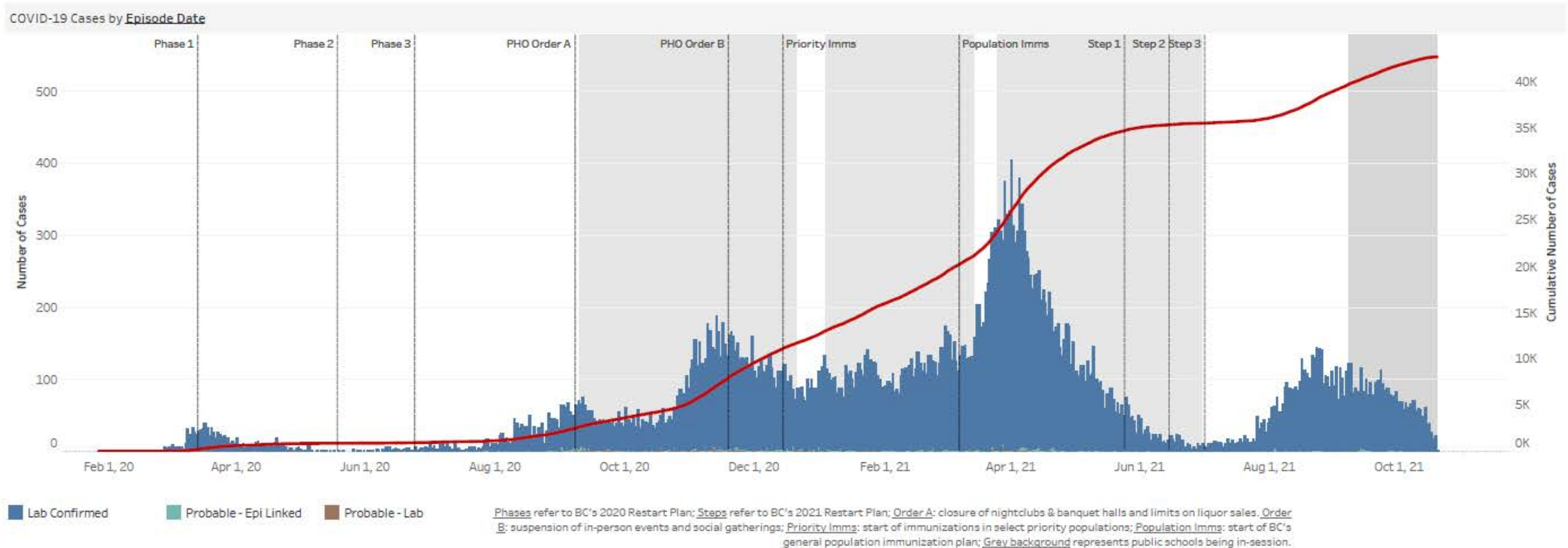


Data source: laboratory PLOVER data

# Vancouver Coastal Health COVID-19 Cases

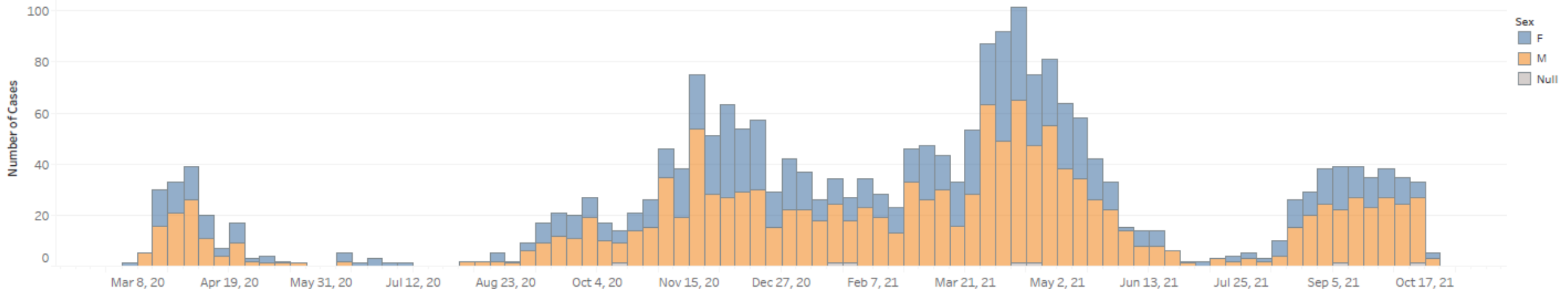
## October 19, 2021

Cumulative cases: 42,614  
Cumulative deaths: 533

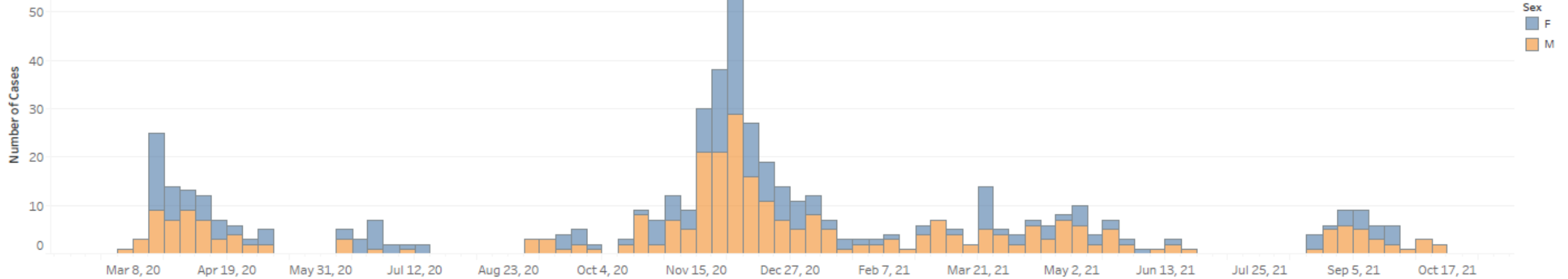


# VCH – Hospitalized Cases and Deaths

COVID-19 Ever Hospitalized cases by report week and sex

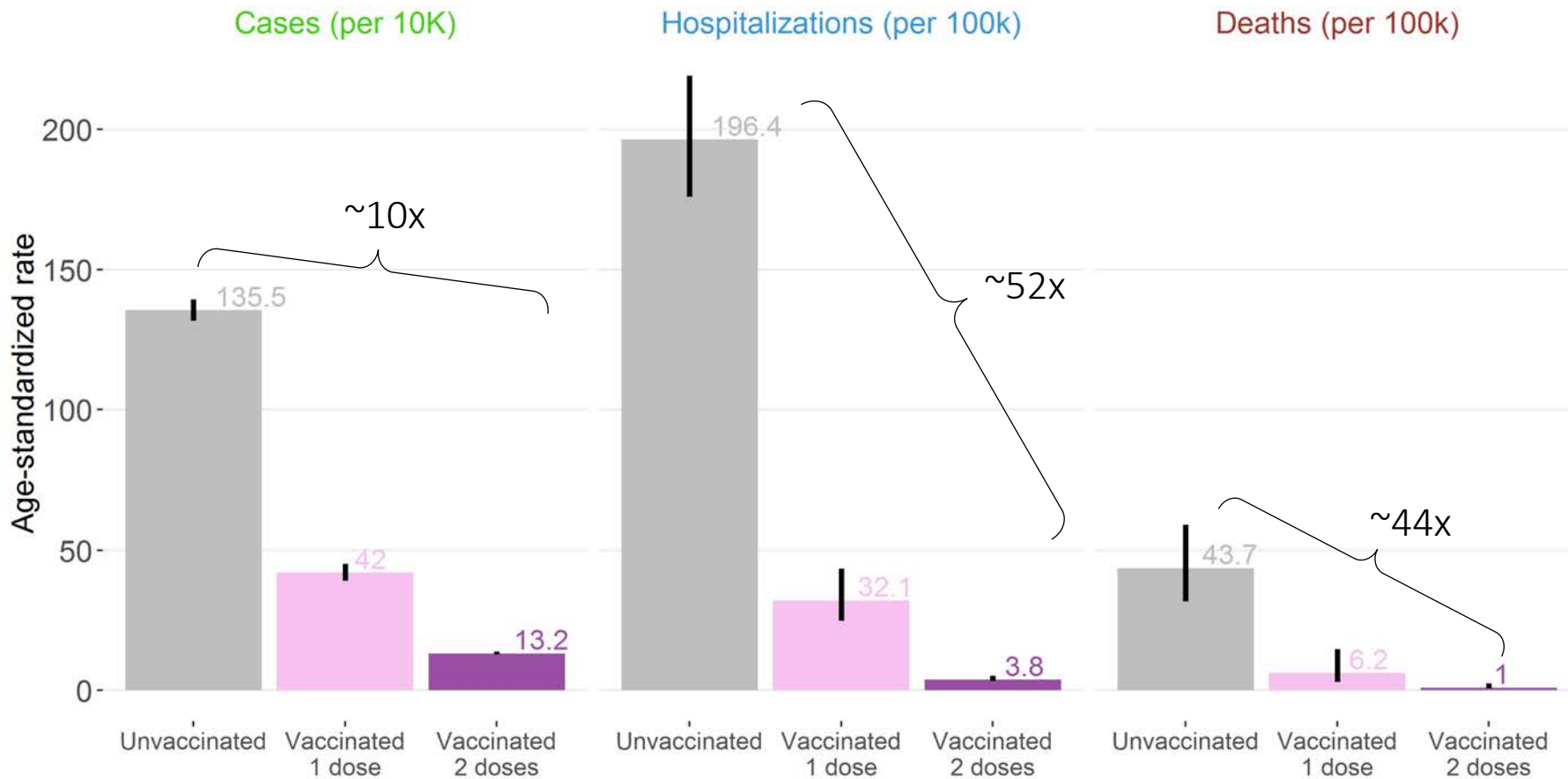


COVID-19 Deceased cases by report week and sex

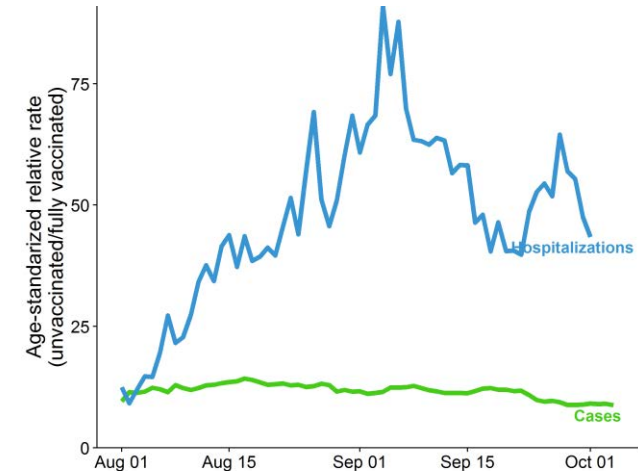


# After adjusting for age, unvaccinated individuals continue to be at a significantly higher risk of infection, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 compared with fully vaccinated

Relative rate fluctuates over time (see graph to the right). These figures do not represent vaccine effectiveness.



Data include cases from Sep 07-Oct 04, and hospitalizations and deaths from Sep 04-Oct 01, 2021

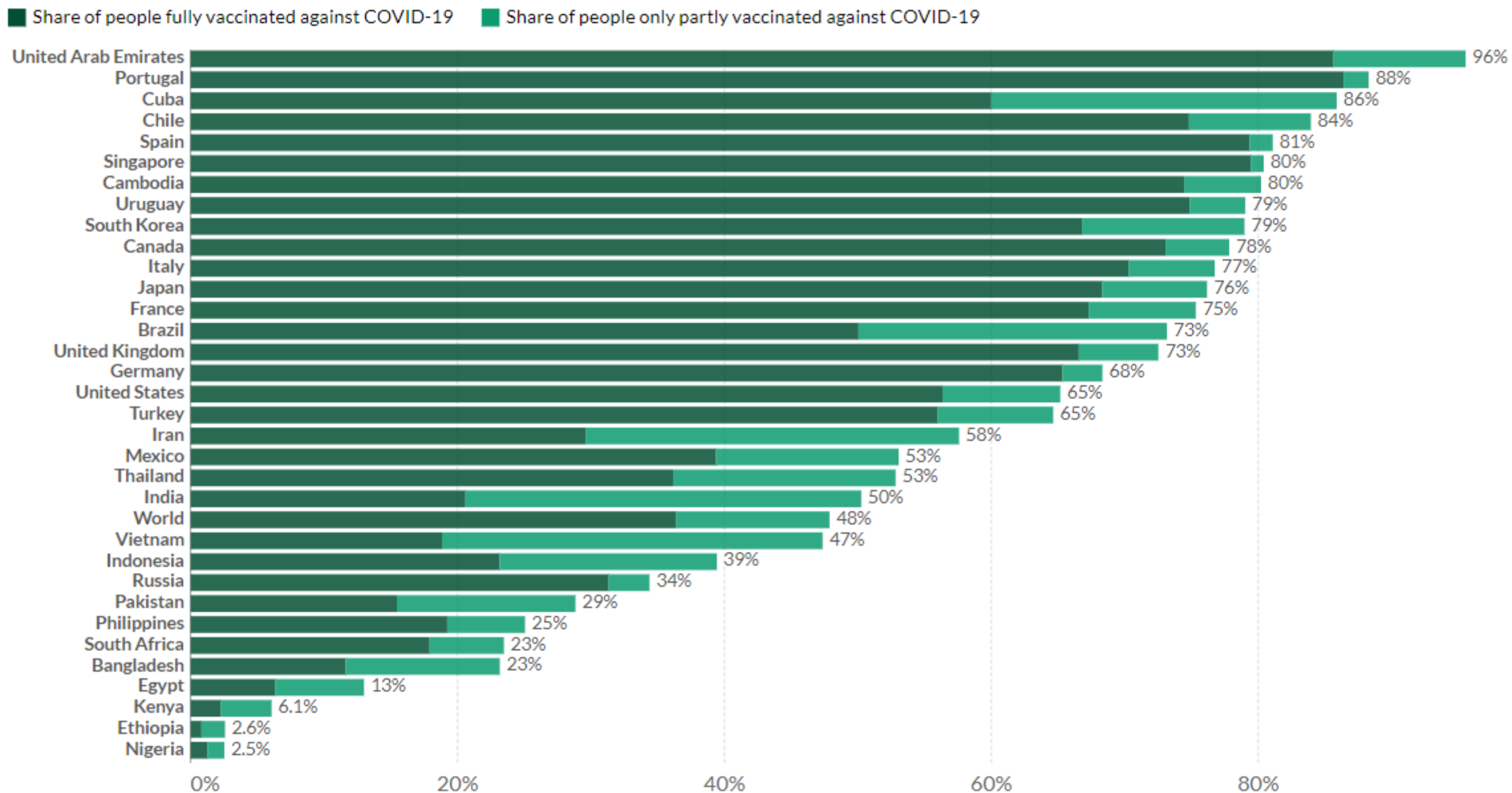


Note the bar graph was switched to monthly time frame and now includes confidence intervals



# Share of people vaccinated against COVID-19, Oct 19, 2021

Alternative definitions of a full vaccination, e.g. having been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and having 1 dose of a 2-dose protocol, are ignored to maximize comparability between countries.



# COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage – October 18, 2021

## BC

**83.3%** of those 12 years and age and older fully vaccinated

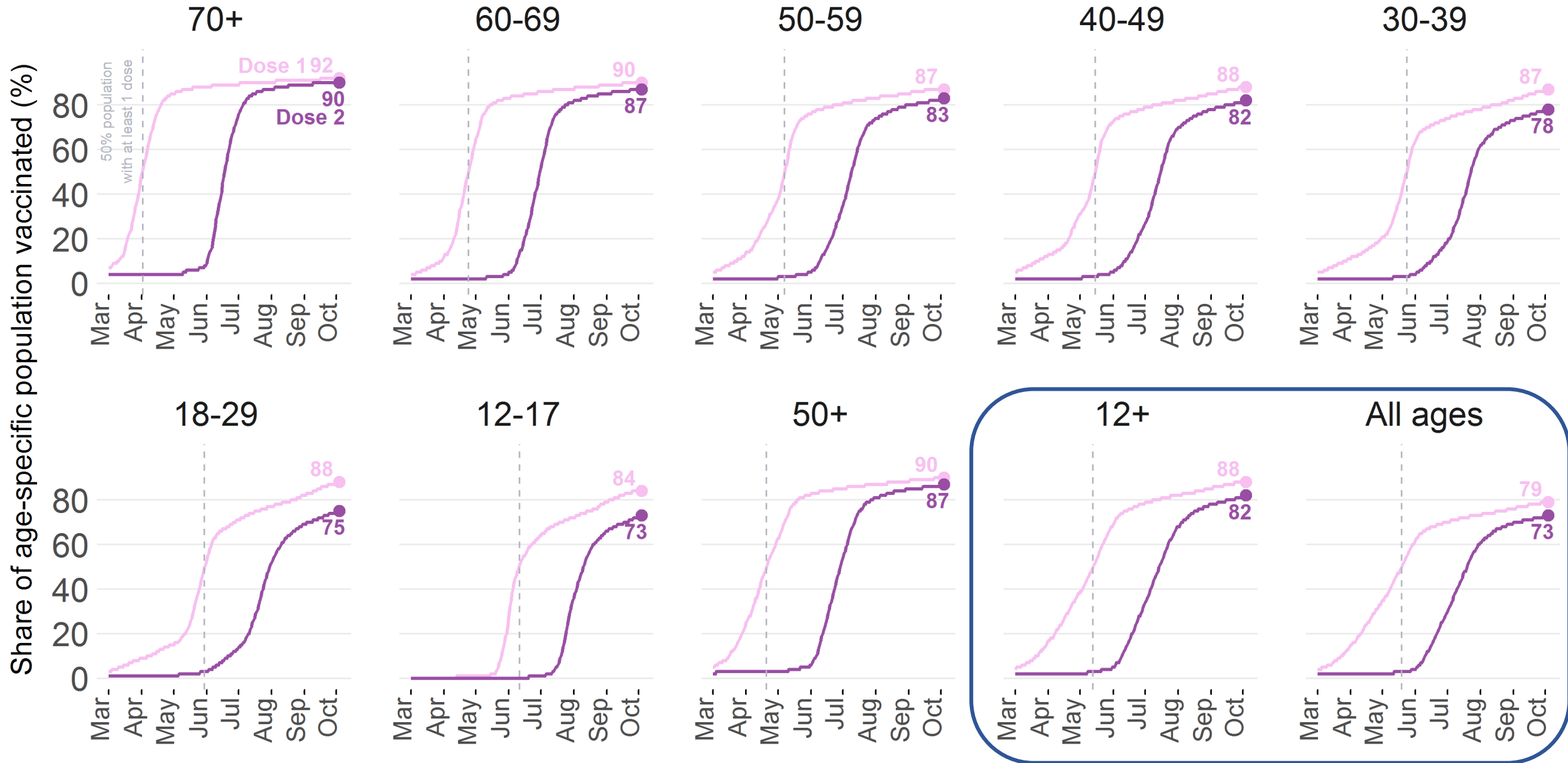
(3.86 million people)

## Vancouver Coastal Health

**88.7%** of those 12 years and older fully vaccinated

(993,140 people)

# Vaccination progress in BC as of Oct 5, by age group and dose number



NB: Above estimates for 12-17 are 2% higher than MOH's estimates— attributable to the difference in denominators used (this graph uses PEOPLE, MOH uses Client Roster)

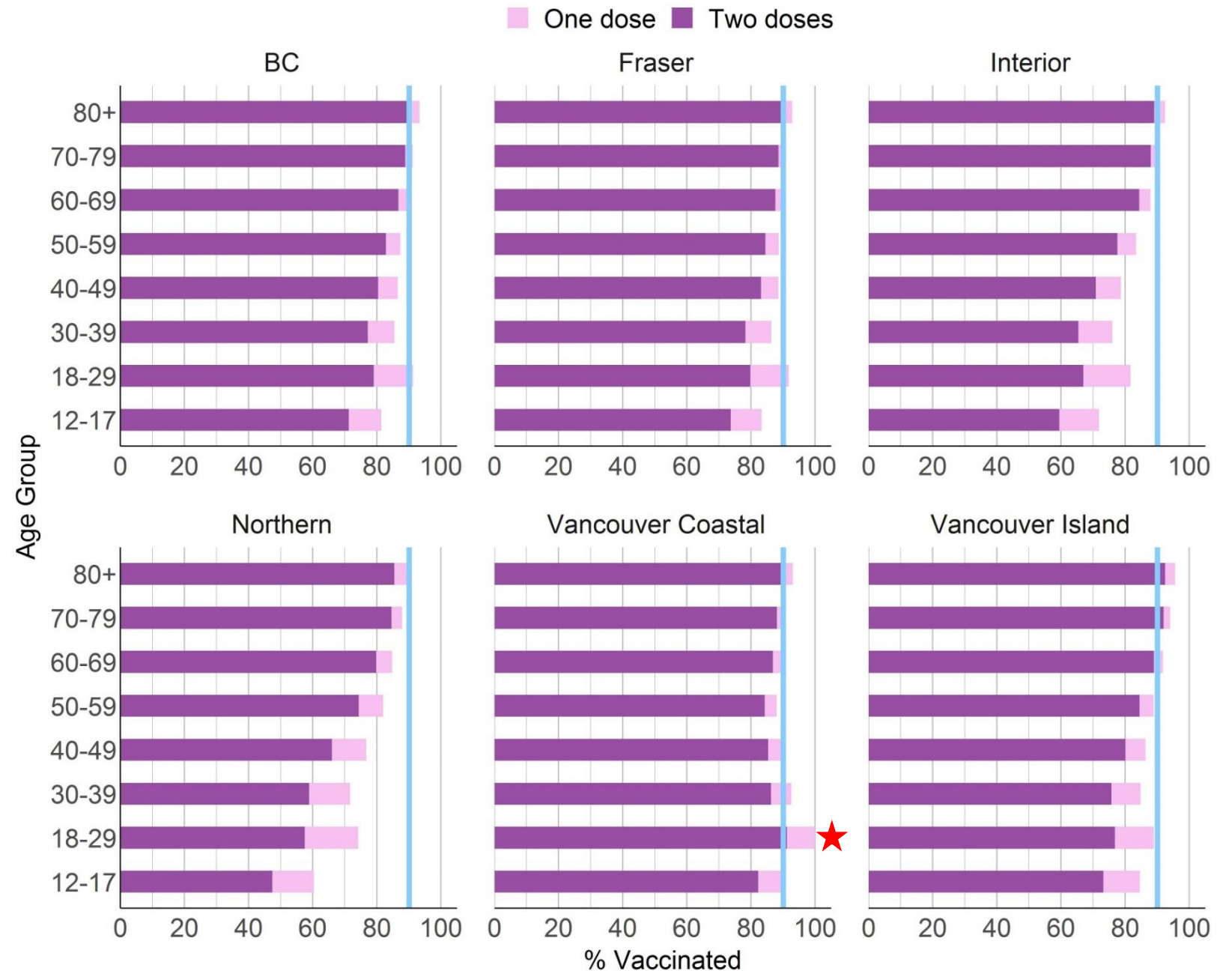
DRAFT

Data updated 2021-10-05  
Data Source: Provincial Immunization Registry, PHSA

# Vaccination progress in BC and by Health Authority as of Oct 5, by age group and dose number (%)

Client Roster population data are sourced from a list of all residents registered with Medical Services Plan as of March 12, 2021. Since this date, people may have moved, permanently or temporarily, and have been vaccinated or reported their vaccination status. As a result, there are areas in BC where there will be more people vaccinated than there were living in that area in March 2021. The Client Roster likely underrepresents new arrivals into a region such as young adults relocating to attend post-secondary institutes and workers at major construction project areas. An alternative denominator would be based on projections derived from Census 2016, which is also not representative of the current BC population – see slide 21 for comparison between the two.

This graph mirrors MOH data extract, with Client Roster as denominator



# BC – Return to School and University







Research

## Ⓐ SARS-CoV-2 transmission in kindergarten to grade 12 schools in the Vancouver Coastal Health region: a descriptive epidemiologic study

Diana Bark, Nalin Dhillon, Martin St-Jean, Brooke Kinniburgh, Geoff McKee and Alexandra Choi

August 24, 2021 9 (3) E810-E817; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9778/cmajo.20210106>

[Article](#)[Figures & Tables](#)[Related Content](#)[Metrics](#)[Responses](#)[PDF](#)

### Abstract

**Background:** There is an urgent need to assess the role of schools in the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in Canada to inform public health measures. We describe the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 infection among students and staff in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region in the first 3 months of the 2020/2021 academic year, and examine the extent of transmission in schools.

**Methods:** This descriptive epidemiologic study using contact tracing data included individuals aged 5 years and older with SARS-CoV-2 infection, reported between Sept. 10 and Dec. 18, 2020, who worked in or attended kindergarten to grade 12 (K–12) schools in person in the VCH region. We

### In This Issue



Vol. 9, Issue 3

1 Jul 2021

[Table of Contents](#)

[Index by author](#)

# Findings from the VCH Study (Sept 10 – Dec 18, 2020)

124,000



699

(< 1% of students and staff)



55

(8% of student and staff cases)

Staff and Students and teachers in VCH Region\*

COVID-19 Cases among students (77%) and staff (23%)

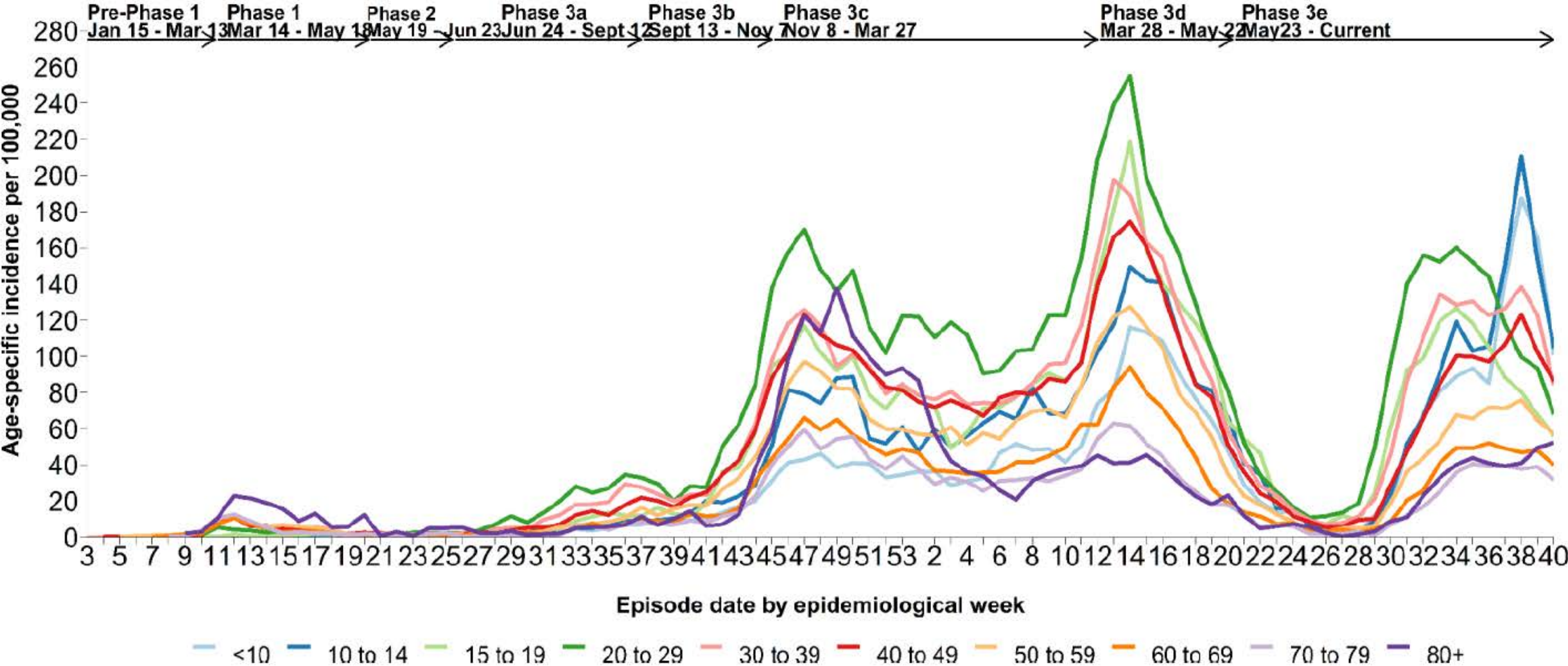
Cases likely acquired **in school**

When transmission did occur within a school setting, a case would **typically lead to 1 or 2 other cases in the school**

*During this time period there were a **total of 8,746 cases** reported in the VCH Region*

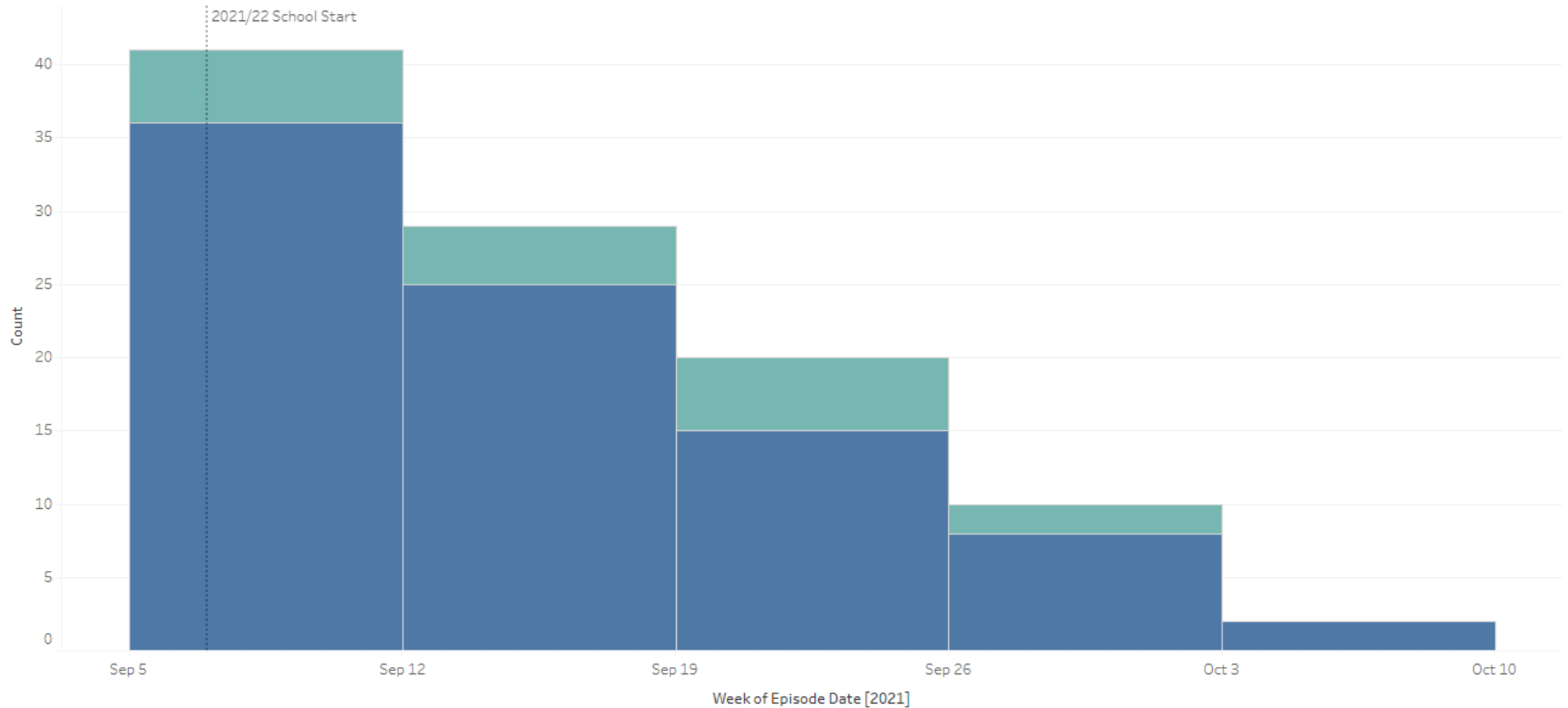
*\*Approximate estimate based on those attending schools in person during this time period*

**Figure 8. Weekly age-specific COVID-19 incidence per 100K population by epidemiological week, BC  
 Jan 15, 2020 (week 3) – Oct 09, 2021 (week 40) (N= 195,173)**



# COVID-19 Among Post-Secondary Students and Staff Vancouver Coastal Health

Staff & Student COVID-19 Cases by Episode Date



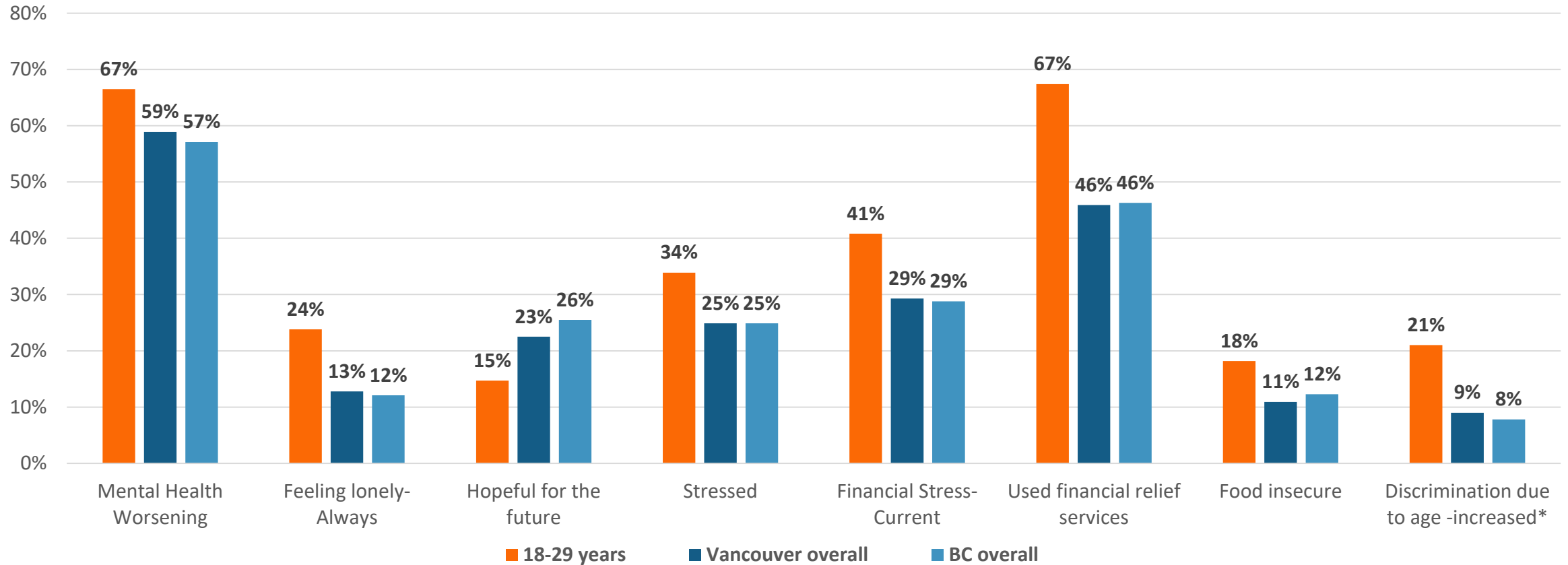


# BC COVID-19 SPEAK Survey

- A province-wide, cross-sectional, web-based population health survey conducted in two rounds:
  - Round 1: May 8-31, 2020
  - Round 2: One year into the pandemic from April 8 – May 9, 2021
- Target population - residents of BC 18 years & older. Caregivers were asked about the wellbeing of children in their care as well
- **1 in 25 British Columbians (n= 188,561) completed Round 2 including 52,957 residents of Vancouver Coastal Health**



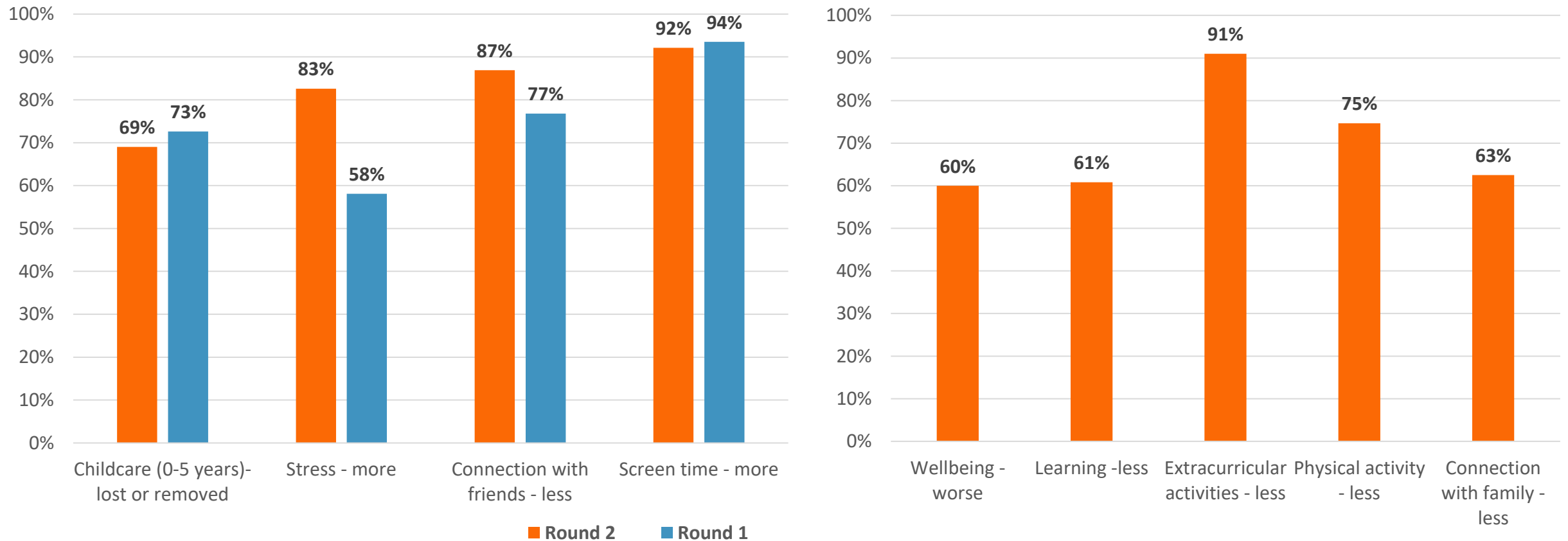
# Mental Health and Financial Security for Young Adults Since the Pandemic, Vancouver



- A greater proportion of young adults report their mental health worsening including increased stress and loneliness
- Young adults are more likely to report current financial stress as well as food insecurity
- More young adults also report feeling discriminated against because of their age



# Mental health and Protective Factors Experienced by Children\* Since the Pandemic, Vancouver

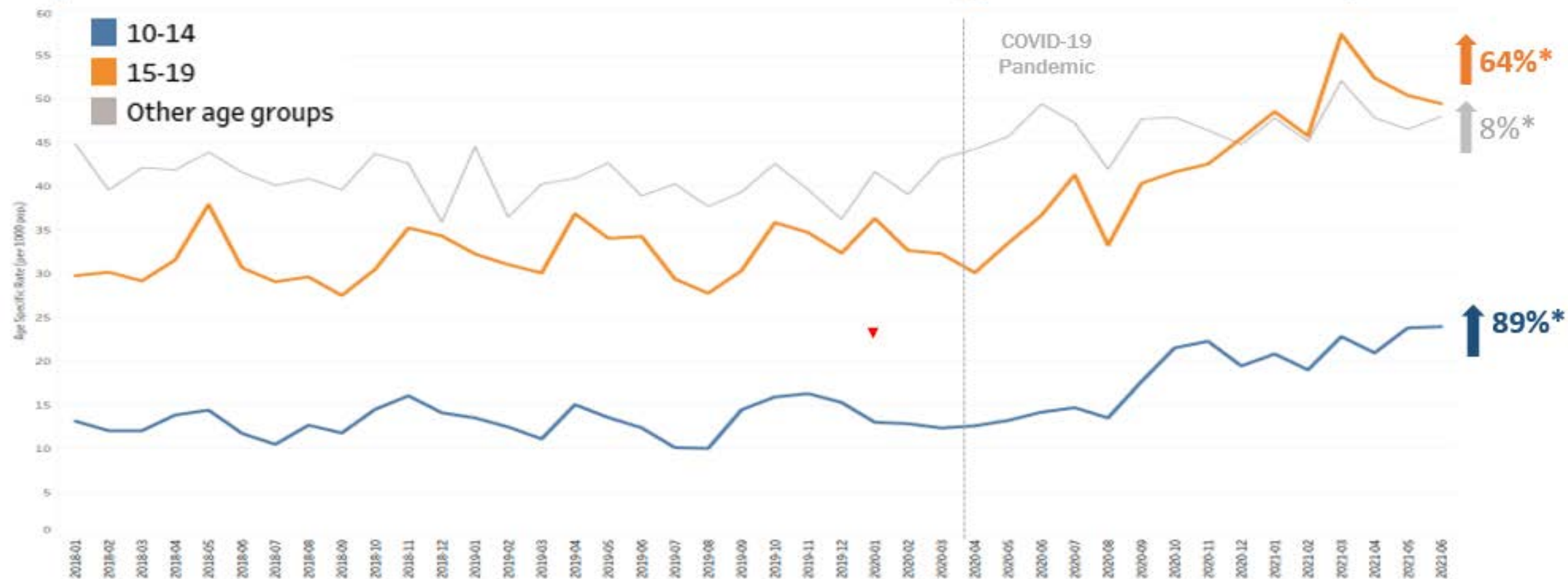


- A greater proportion of caregivers are reporting that children are more stressed and connecting less with friends than at the beginning of the pandemic while screen time and lost child care remain high throughout both periods.
- The majority of caregivers are also reporting their children have worse wellbeing, are learning less, participating in less activities and connecting with family less.

\*caregiver response for child



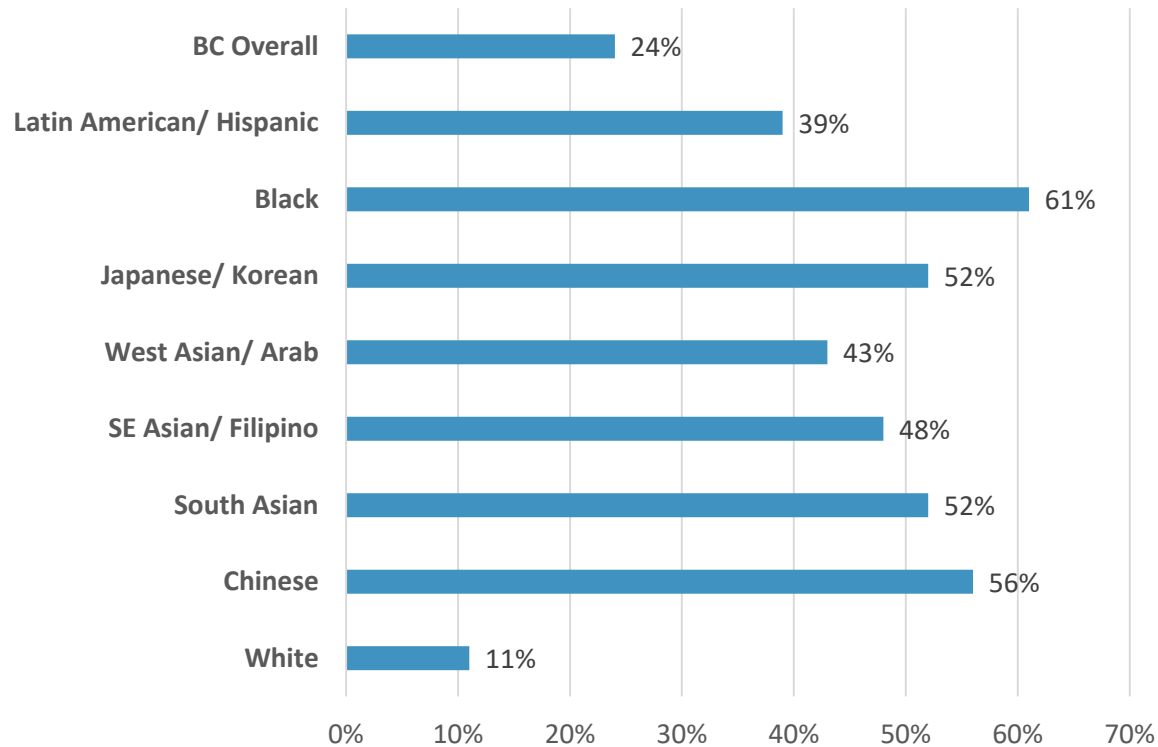
# Outpatient Visits for Mental Health Conditions among Children and Youth, Vancouver



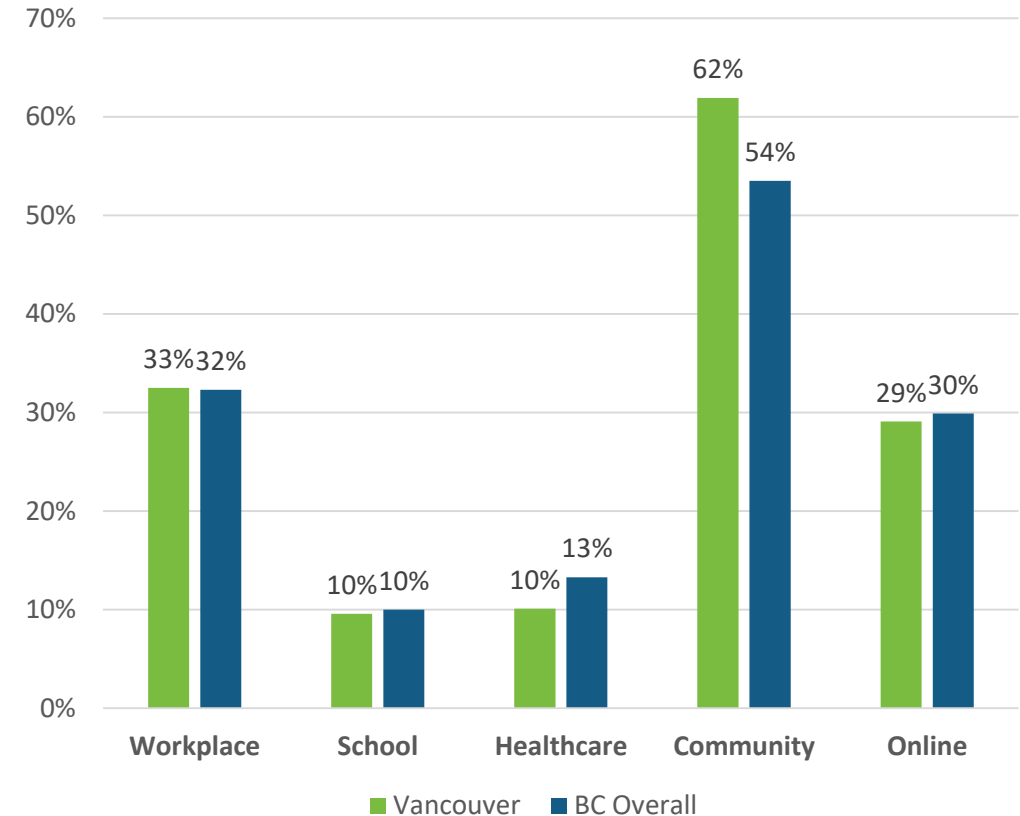
- Rate of outpatient visits for mental health conditions increased across all age groups compared to April 2020 when the pandemic began.
- The **greatest increases** in visits were **observed among children** aged 10-14 (**89% greater**) and those aged 15-19 years (**64% greater**)
- Trends consistent with overall global rise in major depressive disorder and anxiety disorders with younger age groups more affected than older age groups (Lancet, 10-2021)

# Experiences of Discrimination during the Pandemic

Discrimination due to Ethnicity – Increased, BC overall



Location where Discrimination Experienced

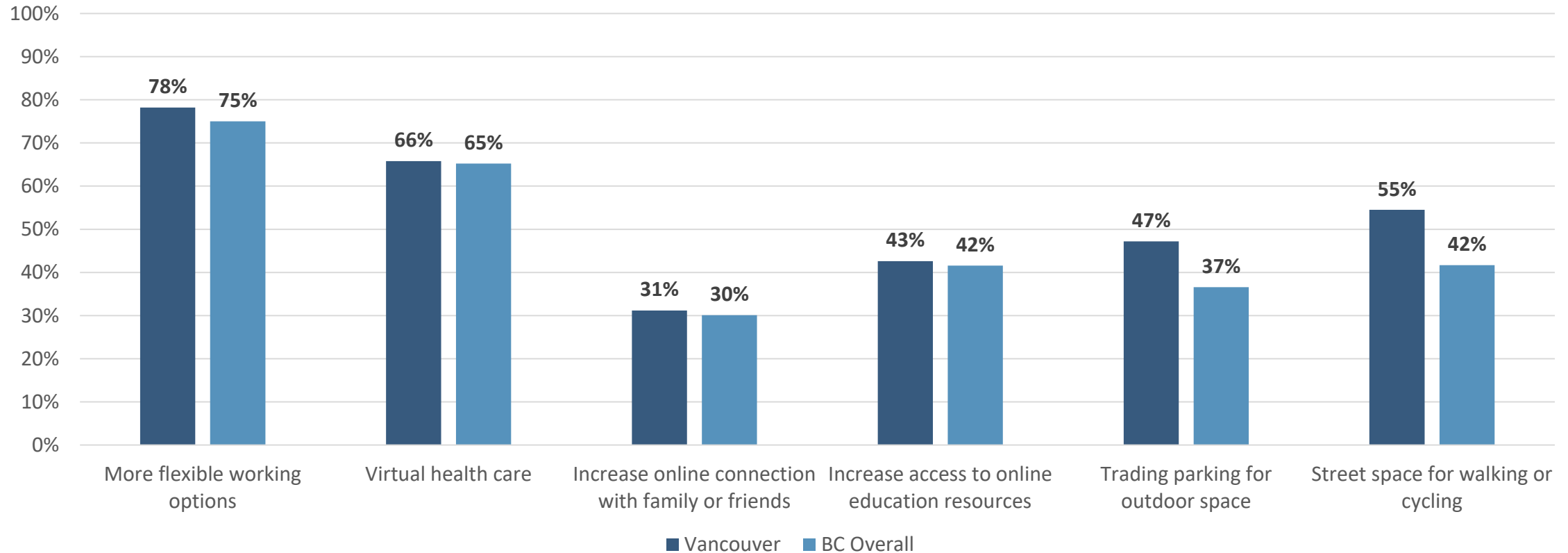


- A greater proportion of respondents who self identified as Black or Chinese reported increased discrimination during the pandemic.
- In Vancouver, the most frequent location where any discrimination is experienced is in the community.



# Adaptation to the “new” normal, Vancouver

## Pandemic Measures Continued



- A greater proportion of people in Vancouver want more flexible working options, continue trading parking for outdoor space, and continue to use street space for walking or cycling compared to BC overall





# Summary

## COVID-19: High vaccination coverage, decreasing rates in Vancouver

- Vaccination mandates, “Vaccine Passport” increase population vaccination rates, allow removal of public health measures
- Worsening mental health of children and youth may be a risk factor for the future

## Illicit Drug Toxicity Crisis: Worsening in Vancouver and in BC

- Pandemic response has contributed to the worsening crisis
- Replacement of illicit drug supply with regulated alternatives urgently needed
- Investment in support for children and youth