

COVID-19 Updated Measures, Boosters and Rapid Antigen Testing in BC

Dec. 21, 2021



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**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

New Public Health Measures

PHO ORDERS

**New orders
effective
December 22
11:59PM to
January 18**

RAPID TESTING

**Accelerated roll-out
of rapid antigen
testing strategy
December - January.**

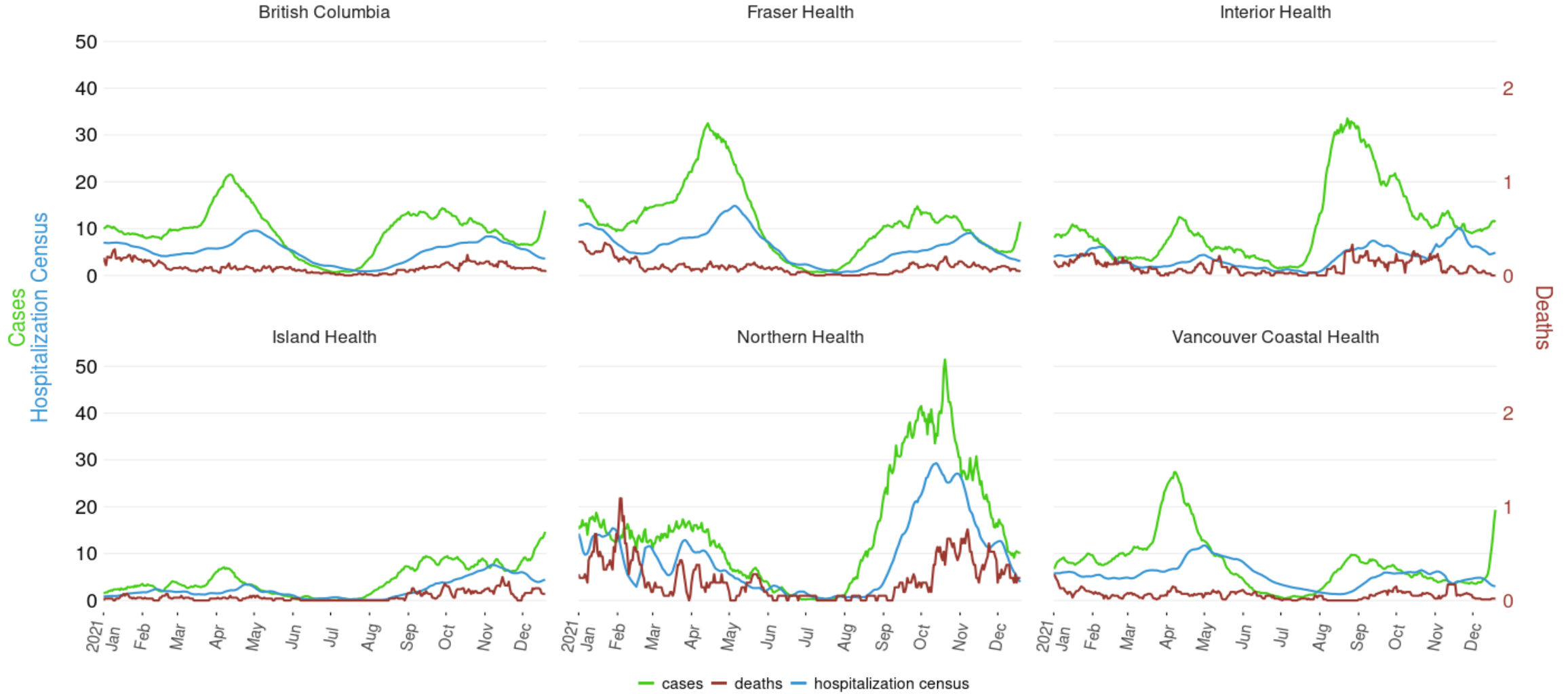
BOOSTERS

**Increase
vaccination capacity
and accelerate
booster campaign
for age-based
population from
January to
March 2022.**

Omicron impacts

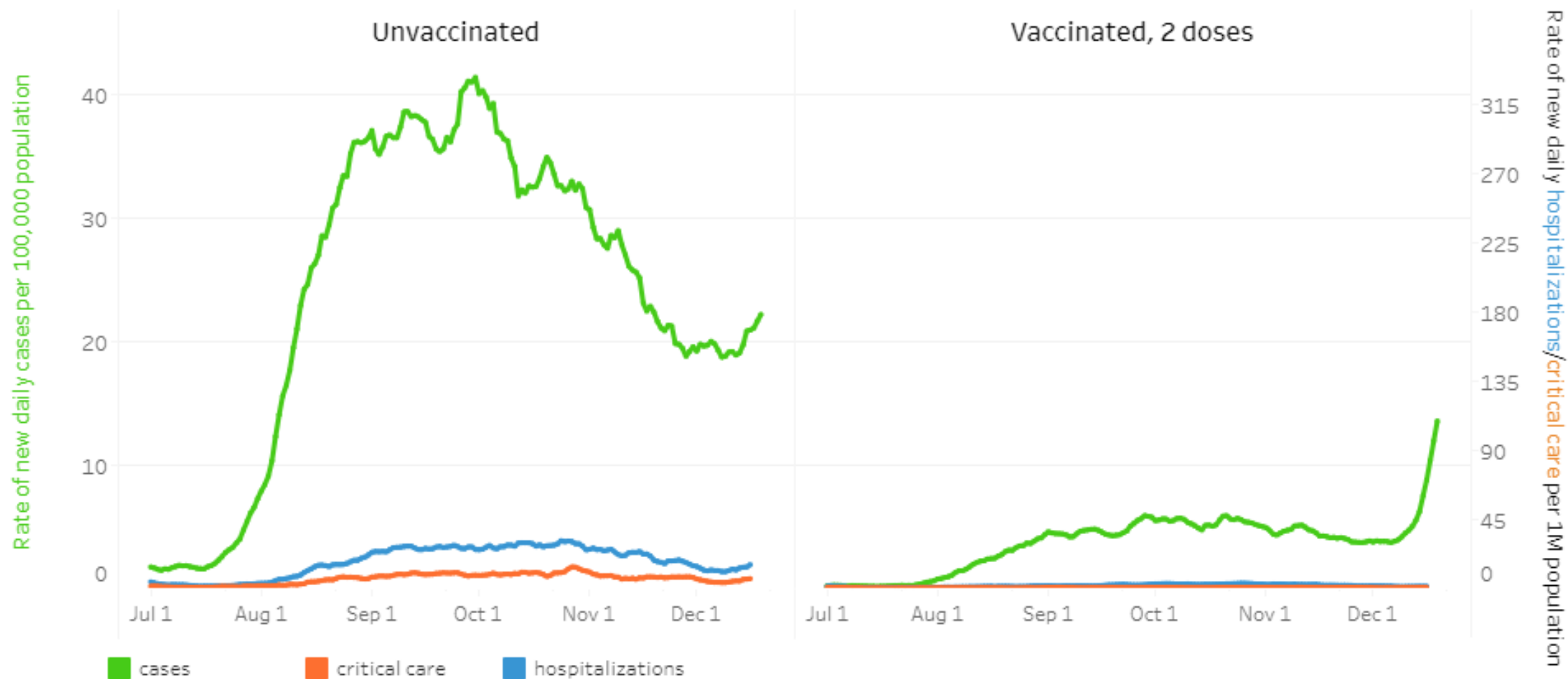
- Public health monitoring global trends since Friday:
 1. **How transmissible:** more than Delta, spreading rapidly
 2. **Severity of illness:** potential for significant impacts on hospitals, need to protect system for everyone
 3. **Immune escape:** reinfecting people who previously had COVID-19, also infecting people who are fully vaccinated
- Spike in COVID-19 cases in British Columbians aged 18-35
- Need to buy more time to learn more about Omicron and ensure more of the population have received booster doses

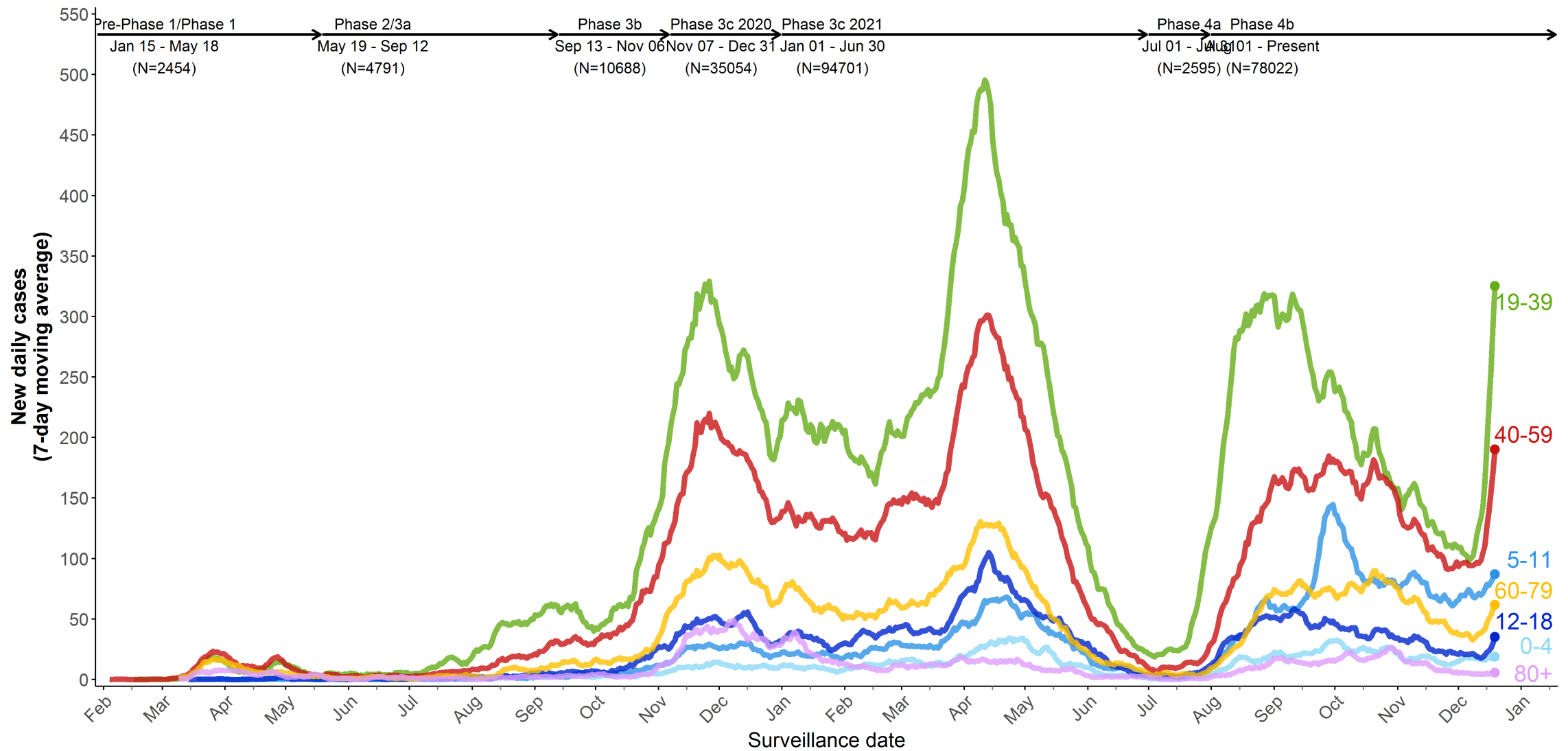
New daily rates per 100K population (7-day moving average)



Data up to 2021-12-20

Case, Hospitalization & Critical Care Rate, BC, all ages, Jul. 01 - Dec. 19

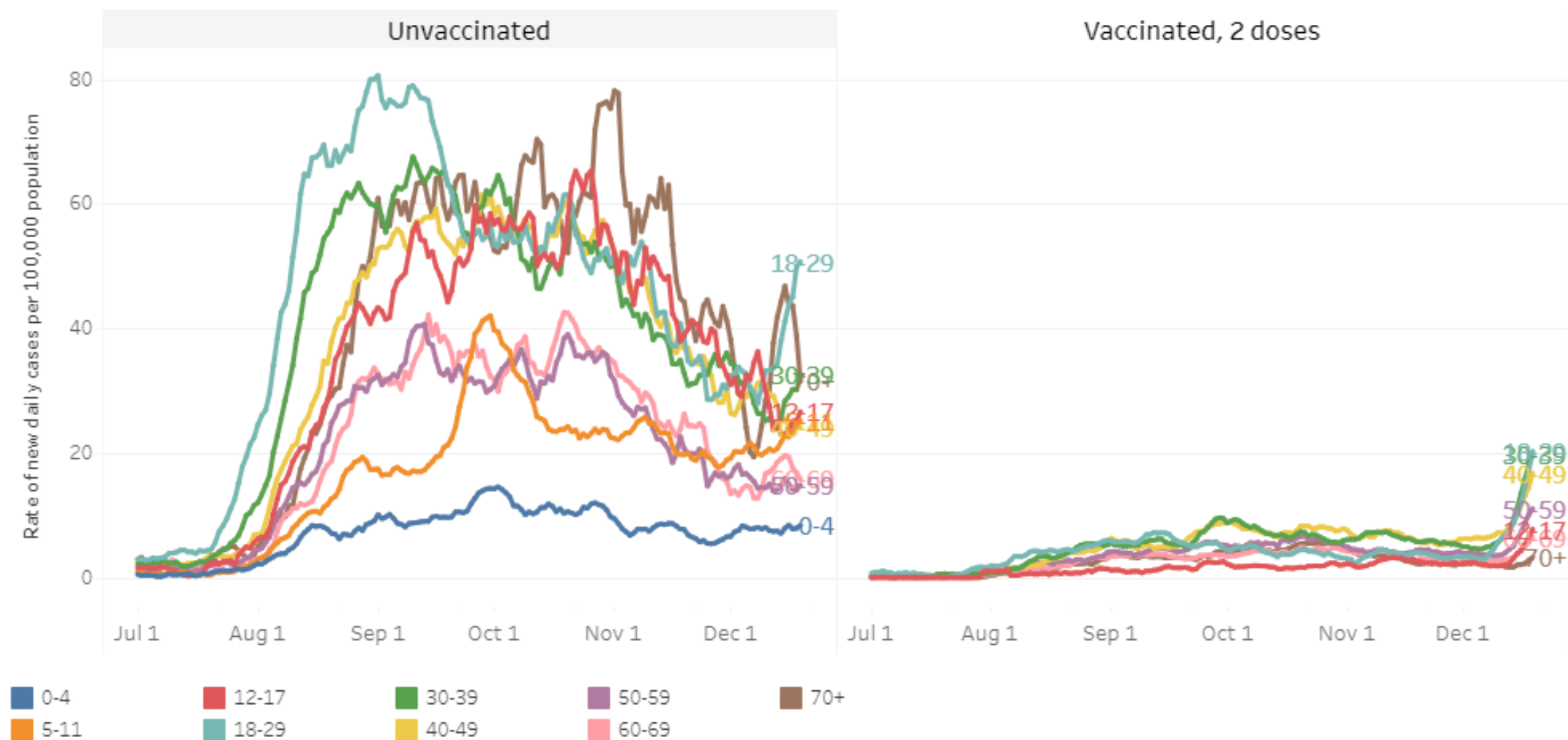




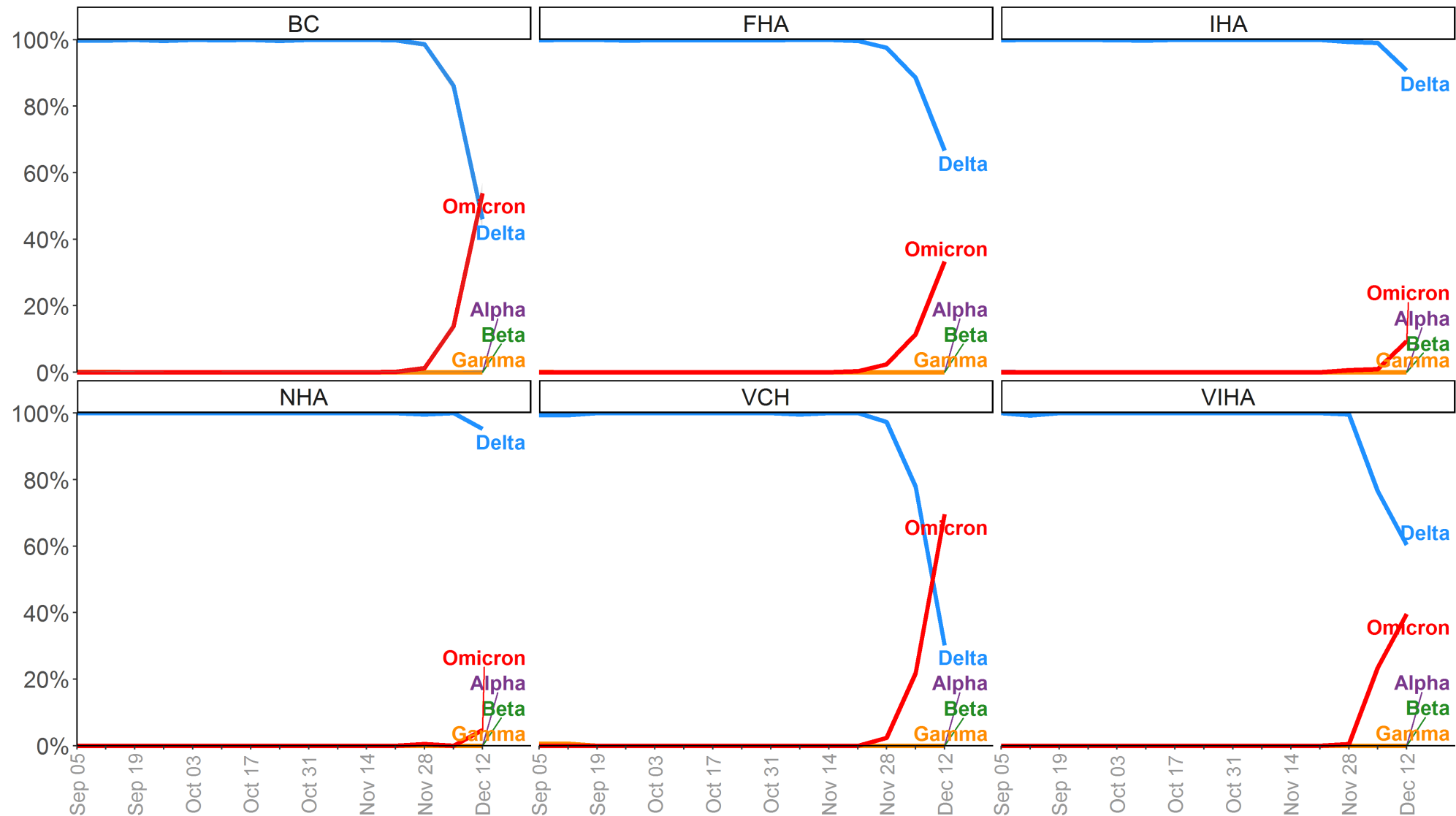
* Data based on surveillance date (i.e. lab result date, or when not available, date reported to public health)

Case Rate by Age Group, Jul. 01 - Dec. 19

BC



Percentage of VoC occurrence
among sequenced specimens

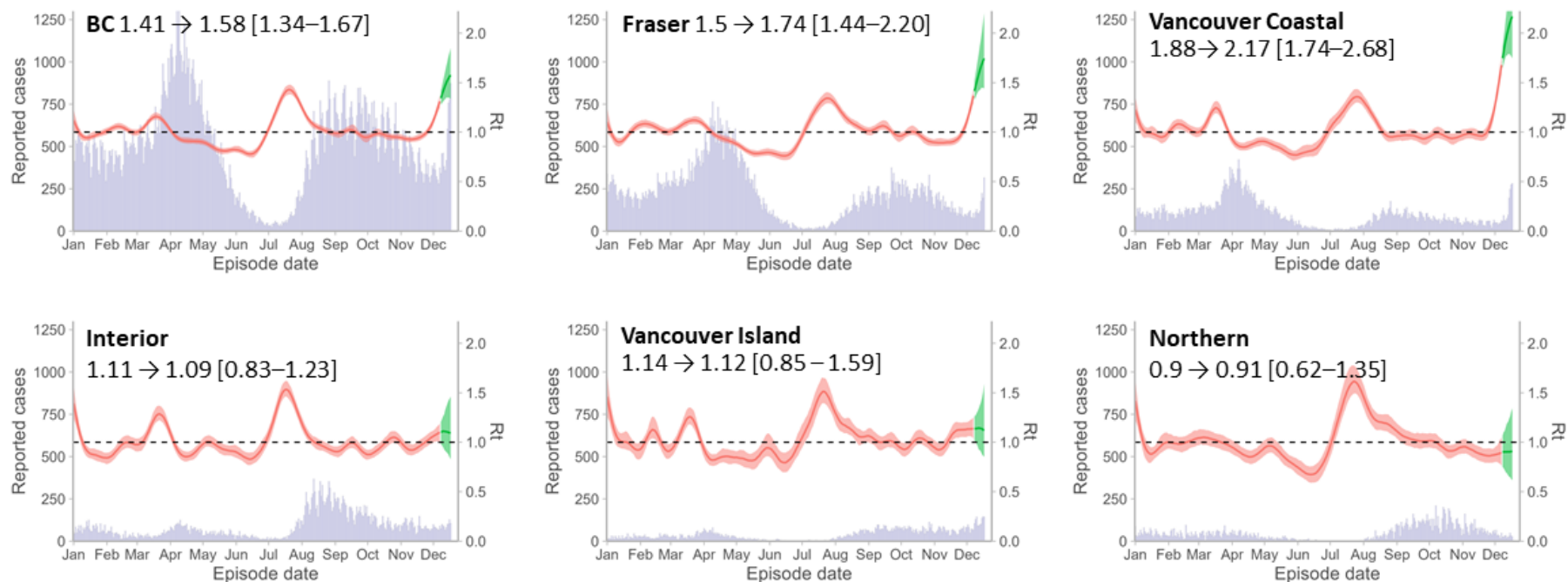


Epidemiological Week (based on collection date)

Rt Estimates (*data available to 17th Dec*)

Dynamic modeling: recent trends

Modelling indicates that R_t is above 1 in all regions. Note that estimates include both omicron and delta cases. Early estimates of R_t for omicron in BC are 2.07 [0.8 – 4.7] as of 13th Dec. Estimates are shown for last week → this week, with 90% range of possible values given next to most recent estimate.



Solid line: median R_t , modeled using all reported cases up to Dec 17, 2021; Red band: 5%-95% credible interval; Green band: estimate based on partial data – each week, current estimates are updated with new data to provide a clearer understanding of the trend. Purple bars: all reported cases. Only January 2021 onward shown here. Data source: BCCDC HA linelist.

NEW Public Health Orders

Dec 22 (11:59PM) to Jan 18



No indoor organized gatherings of any size.

Wedding receptions, celebratory events, etc.



Bars, nightclubs closed.



Gyms and fitness centres closed, dance studios closed. Sports tournaments cancelled.



Seated events reduced to 50% capacity, regardless of venue size with vaccination checking, masking.

Concerts, sports games, theatres, movie theatres etc.



Maximum 6 per table at restaurants, pubs, cafes, etc.

Plus physical distancing or barriers.

Overview of Public Health Orders



Personal gatherings limited to your household plus one other household or 10 guests, all vaccinated.



No indoor organized gatherings of any size including parties, weddings, etc.



All indoor venues reduced to 50% capacity, including concerts, movies, sports.



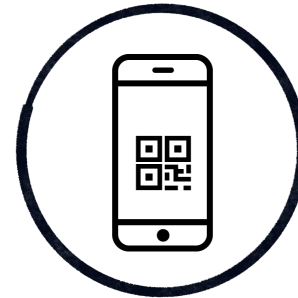
Gyms, fitness centres, dance studios closed.



Bars, nightclubs closed.



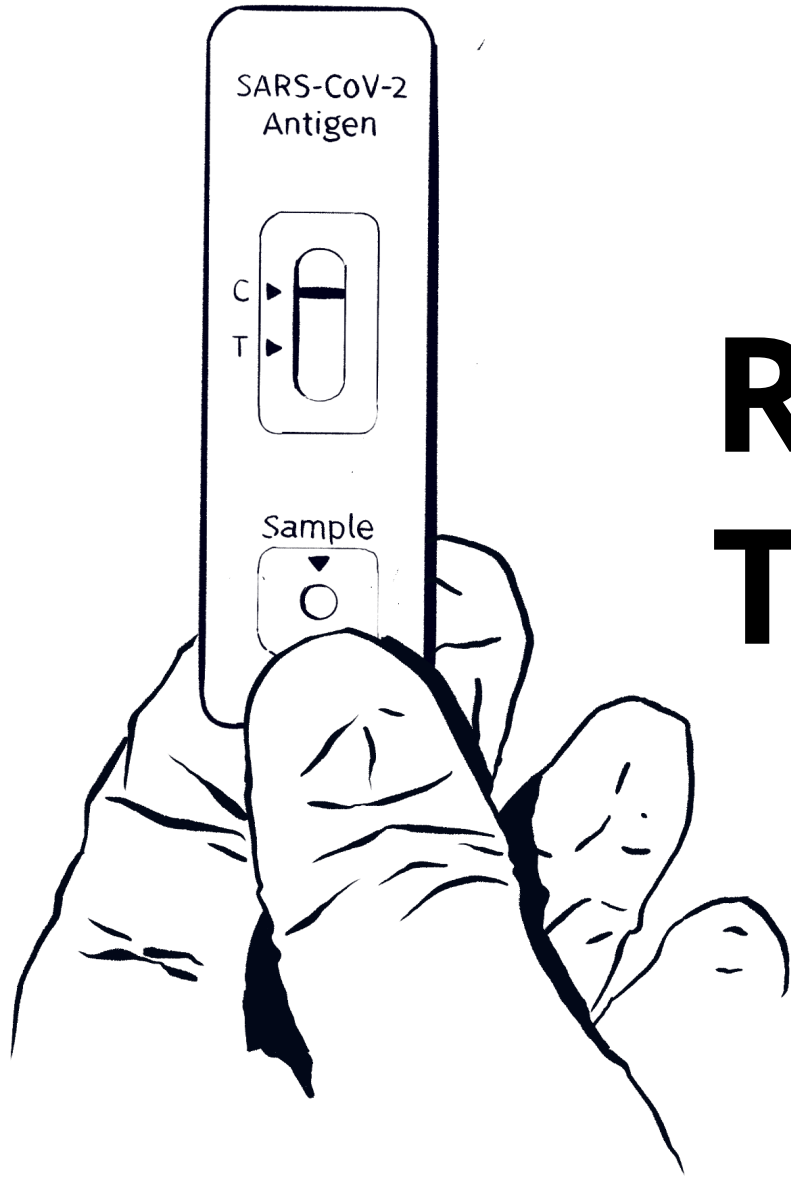
Maximum 6 people per table and no mingling at food primary establishments.



All organized events required to scan the BC Vaccine Card



No sports tournaments



Rapid Antigen Testing

Past and Current Deployment of Rapid Tests

To Dec. 15, 2021, BC has received **3,197,306** tests and distributed **1,266,513** tests across the province in five key areas:

- **Long Term Care** – testing staff who work in facilities
- **Provincial Corrections** – testing incoming residents
- **Rural, Remote and Indigenous Communities** – ensuring people who live in communities with less access to traditional laboratory testing are reached
- **Case/Contact/Cluster Management** – testing multiple people who may have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 (e.g., events with exposure)
- **Businesses/Organizations** – staff screening programs administered by both the Provincial Health Services Authority and through Government of Canada
- Medical Health Officers implement **rapid testing** in other areas with elevated risk.

Expected Supply of Rapid Tests in BC

- BC is expecting delivery (from Canada) of **200,000 PANBIO RAPID POC TESTS** (nasal swab kits) by Dec. 31, 2021.
- BC has purchased **500,000 BTNX tests** with nasal swabs. Expected delivery is late December.
- BC is expecting delivery of a significant volume of tests in mid/late January 2022. Canada has indicated that **84 million tests** (from five different manufacturers) are expected to arrive in the country for provinces and territories.
 - Of these, 10 million expected for “at home” use (Roche SD Biosensor).
- BC has requested 13.5% or **at least 11 million** of the 84 million expected tests from the Government of Canada.
- Canada has not confirmed its expected supply of tests beyond January 2022.

Mid-December to Mid-January

- Current usage of ~35,000 tests per week under existing initiatives is expected to continue
- With access to an expected inventory of approximately 2,600,000 tests, BC will expand to:
 - **Make available at sample collection sites for people with symptoms**
 - 700,000 tests
 - **Long Term Care**
 - 100,000 tests distributed by facilities for use by staff and all visitors
 - **Health Care Workers (Acute)**
 - 100,000 tests available at acute care sites for symptomatic staff and/or close contacts
 - **Rural, Remote, Indigenous, and Vulnerable Communities**
 - 1,200,000 tests for symptomatic testing, and for case & contact management
 - **Businesses and Organizations**
 - 250,000 tests to expand Rapid COVID-19 Point of Care Screening Program
 - **Case/Contact Management and Outbreaks**
 - 250,000 tests will be managed by regional Medical Health Officers and health authorities

Expansion Mid-January

- With expected available inventory of up to 11 million tests, BC will expand rapid testing:
 - **Provide publicly funded tests at additional locations in the community**
 - Approximately 7 million will be reserved for public health and health authorities to help manage community transmission through distribution to cases/contacts and clusters/outbreaks, and as additional tool to protect Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and 70+ population. More details to come.
 - **Education (K-12 students and staff)**
 - 500,000 tests for students and staff to be deployed as needed to support return to school and continuity of in-person learning.
 - **Post-Secondary Education (students, faculty and staff)**
 - 500,000 tests for rapid testing of symptomatic students, faculty and staff, students etc. to support return to campus.
 - **Expansion and/or Replenishment** of supply for Long Term Care, health care workers, rural, remote and Indigenous communities, businesses and organizations, and case/contact management) – 3,000,000 tests.

Monitoring and Expectations

- BC will assess the effectiveness and utility of expanded rapid testing through December and January by:
 - monitoring of the number of tests distributed, monitoring demand/uptake, and through consultation with the PHO, regional Medical Health Officers, and the First Nations Health Authority on the ongoing effectiveness of efforts.
- This monitoring, and the timing/availability of supply of rapid tests to BC, will help determine any additional allocations of rapid tests and modifications in mid/late January and into February.
- Expanded use of rapid tests is intended as an adjunct to existing testing methods, and results do not reduce or replace the need to take precautions and adhere to PHO orders and guidance, regardless of vaccine status.

Capacity Enhancement for Booster Campaign



Booster campaign to date

- Boosters for all British Columbians 18 and older announced on October 26.
- 727,761 boosters/third doses administered, plus 101,266 pediatric vaccines.
- Currently operating at 35% more capacity than previously announced, including pharmacies and health authority clinics.
- 67% of people aged 70+ have received a booster, more than 50% of people aged 65+.
- Approximately 65,000 healthcare workers have received their booster.
- 125,000 CEVs have received third doses.

Risk-based rollout with proven results

- B.C.'s immunization rollout continues to be based on risk – with priority given first to those most at-risk of severe illness and death.
 - Clinically extremely vulnerable
 - Long-term care
 - Seniors (65+)
 - Indigenous adults
 - Healthcare workers
 - Two doses of AZ
- The age-based rollout will continue at an accelerated pace – with invites sent out when appointments can be guaranteed.

Expansion Plan - January to March 2022

SCENARIO 1

Current

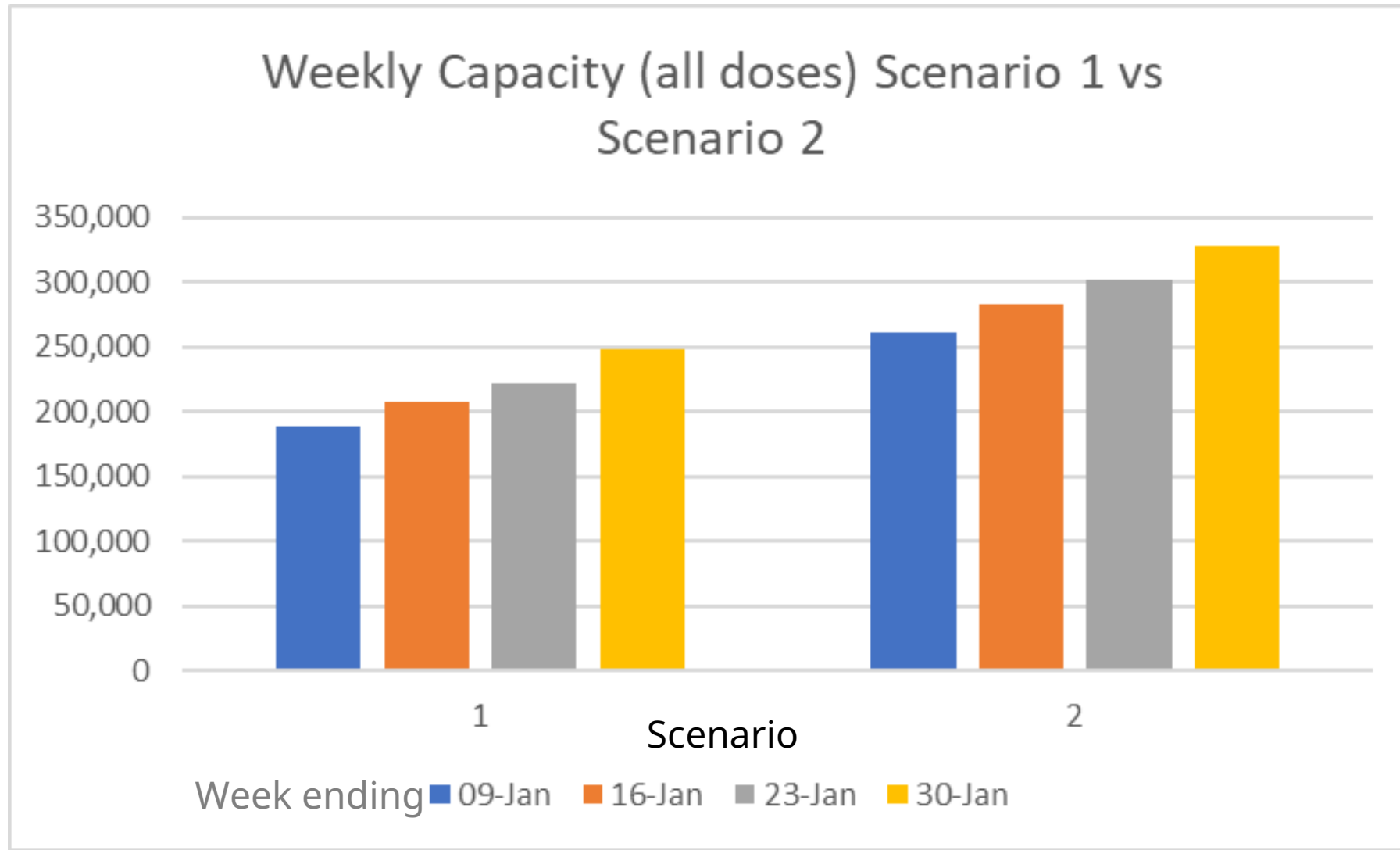
- HAs have increased capacity 35% over plan of October 26 (since Omicron)
- Priorities: boosters for priority groups - Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, 18+ Indigenous, HCW's including community; 60+ ; 18+ reaching long interval (7.5 months); 5-11 Program, D1, D2
- Total projected for January: 730,000 Boosters; total of 868,000 vaccinations
- Booster program would be completed by end of April (one month earlier than Oct 26 plan)

SCENARIO 2

Augmentation starting January – complete booster program by March 31

- This scenario will increase vaccination capacity by 62% overall through HA clinic expansion
- Pharmacy capacity will increase throughout January as ramp up continues.
- Increase in capacity will allow accelerated booster program and ensure appointment wait times remain reasonable (avg 1-3 weeks)

Scenario 1 and 2: Weekly Vaccination Capacity – January 2021



Scenario 2 - Progress

- **Since Friday, significant progress to ramp up capacity:**
 - VCHA has secured the Vancouver Convention Centre
 - Represents capacity potential of 130,000 shots in January with start up of January 5
 - This capacity will serve the whole lower mainland
 - FHA has secured Guildford site in Surrey; others to come
 - VIHA is securing mass vaccination clinic sites in Victoria and regional centres
 - IHA in process of securing larger space in a number of centres
 - NHA securing partners to deliver mobile clinic strategy throughout north
 - Community partners: Call out is in progress to previous community partners

Scheduled surgeries update



- Scheduled surgeries will be postponed starting January 4, 2022, to manage pressures on hospital capacity through redeployment of key staff.
- Urgent and emergency schedules to continue.
- Rescheduling will be determined through continuous monitoring of capacity and COVID-19 impacts throughout January and on a regional basis.

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