



PAHO Side Event: Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

59th Directing Council

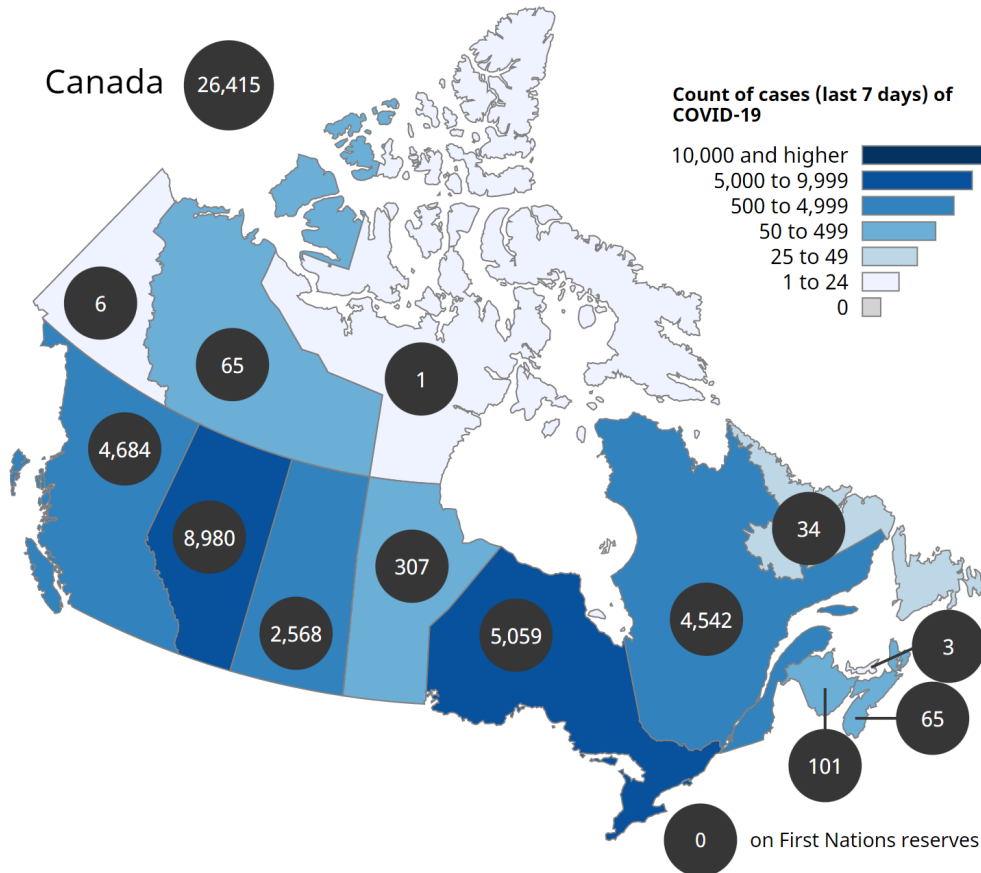
Michael Pearson, Branch Head
Office of International Affairs for the Health Portfolio
Government of Canada
September 22, 2021



Current Situation: Impacts on Health, Social, and Economic Conditions

Current Situation

Figure 1: Map of COVID-19 cases reported in Canada by province/territory



Data source: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/epidemiological-summary-covid-19-cases.html#a5>.

As of September 20, 2021

1,581,910 confirmed cases
including **27,434 deaths**
reported in Canada

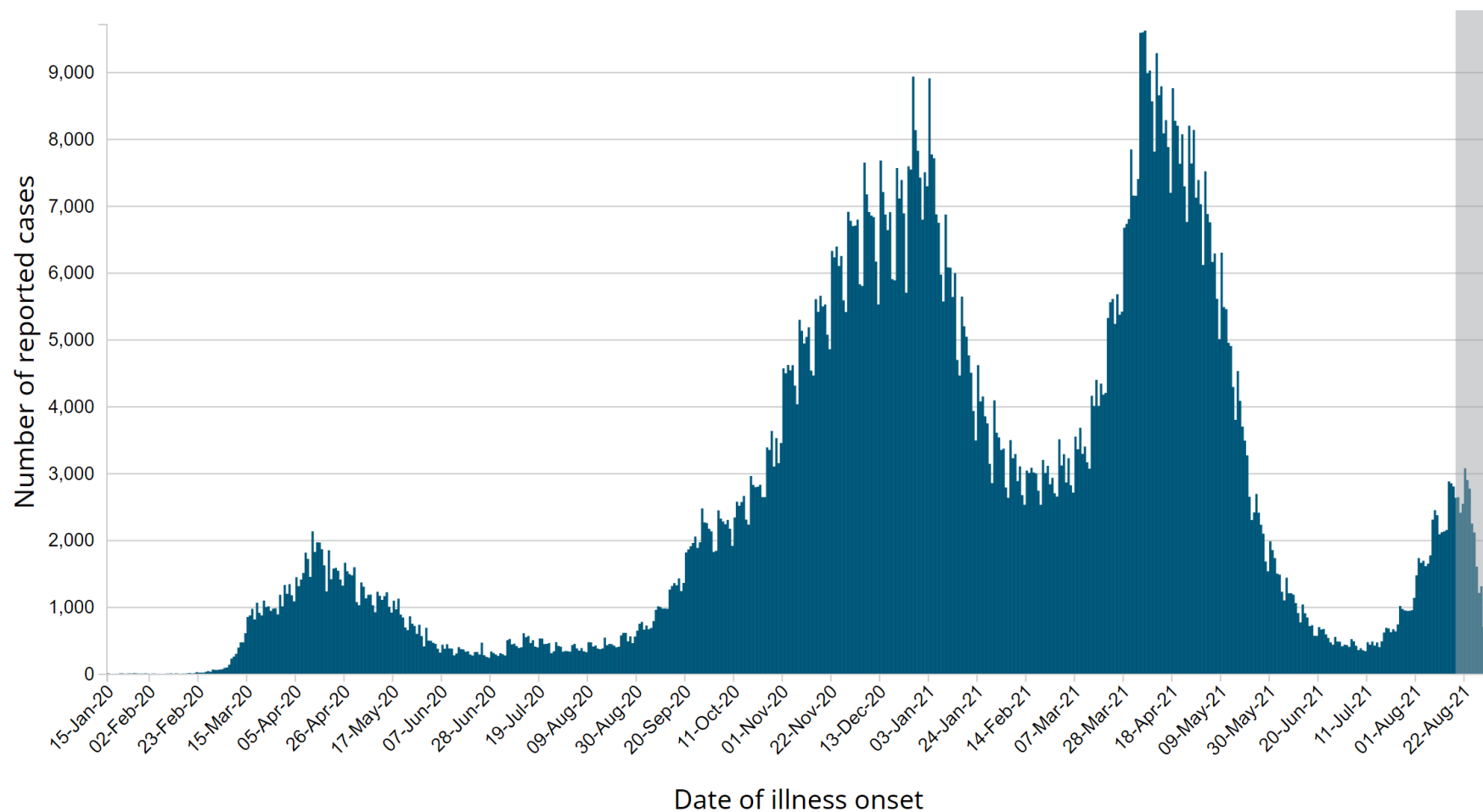
Over **42,287,266** people
tested to date (1.1 tests/per
Canadian)

Highest proportion of cases:
20-29 years (**19.5%**)
followed by <19 years
(**18.6%**)

Reported **hospitalizations**,
ICU admissions, and **deaths**
are significantly higher among
unvaccinated people,
compared to vaccinated
people.

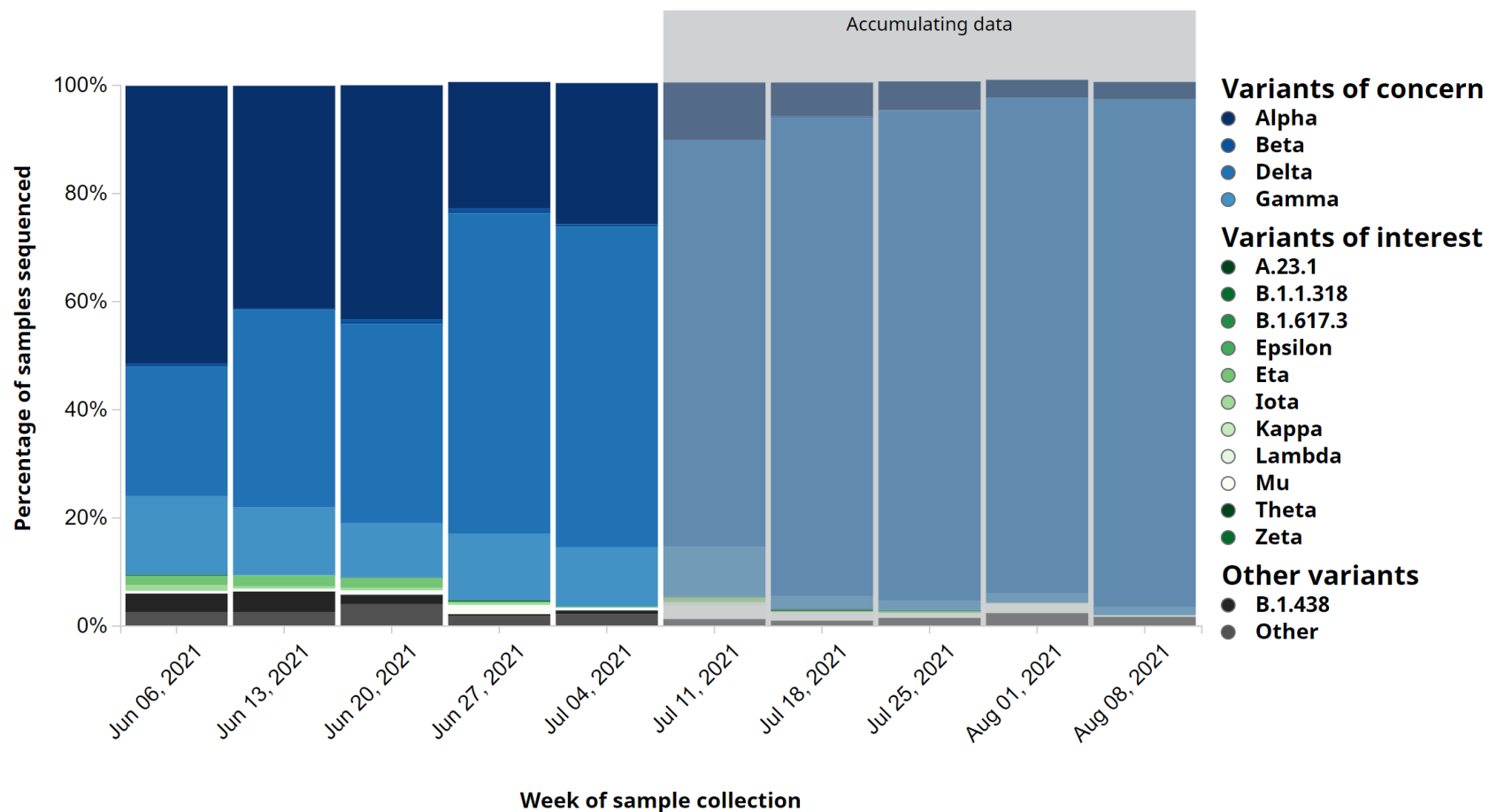
COVID-19 cases in Canada by date

Figure 2: COVID-19 cases in Canada by date of illness onset

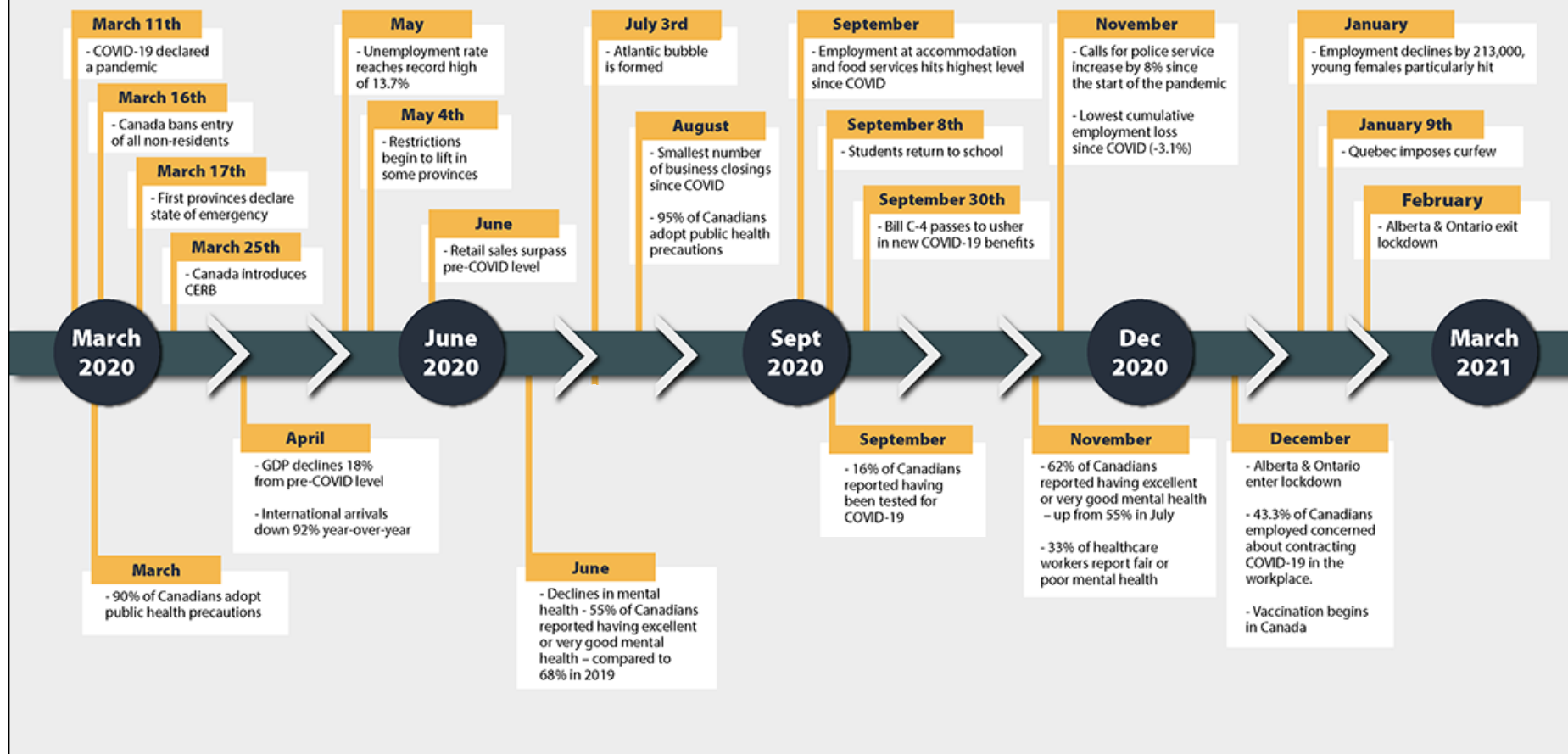


Variant Breakdown

Figure 3: Weekly variant breakdown



COVID-19 Social and Economic Impacts - Timeline



Measures to Control the Pandemic and Strategies for Social and Economic Recovery

Guiding Principles for Canada's Response

Canada's response is based on plans and guidance related to pandemic preparedness, with the following guiding principles:

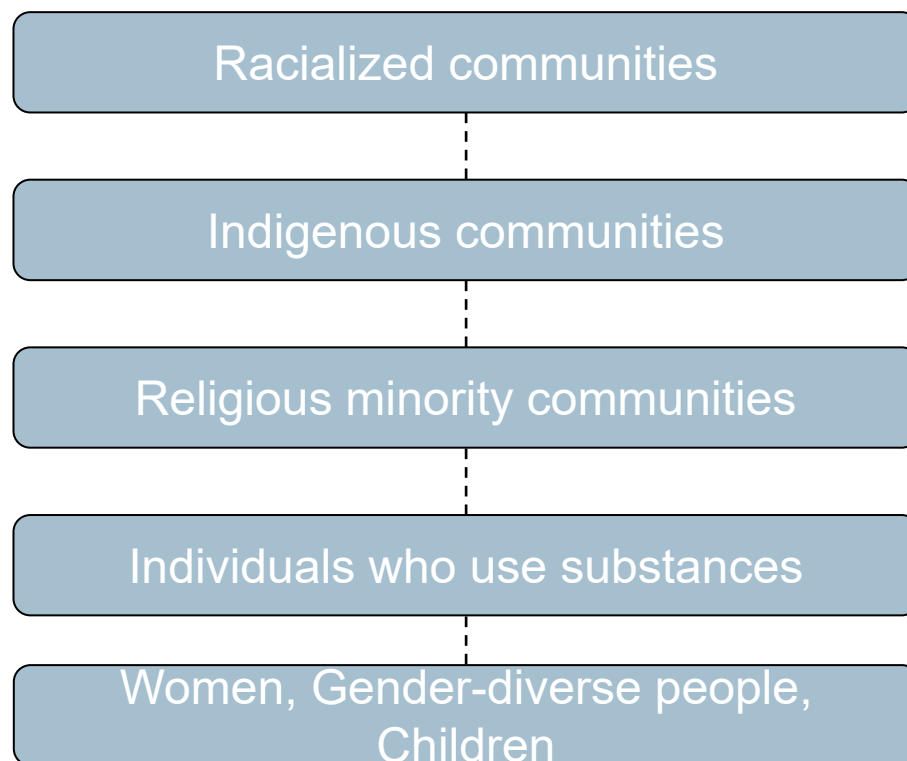
- 1 Collaboration**
All levels of government and stakeholders need to work in partnership to produce an effective and coordinated response
- 2 Evidence-informed decision-making**
Decisions should be based on the best available evidence
- 3 Proportionality**
The response to a pandemic should be appropriate to the level of threat
- 4 Flexibility**
Actions taken should be tailored to the situation and evolve as new information becomes available
- 5 A precautionary approach**
Timely and reasonable preventive action should be proportional to the threat and informed by evidence to the extent possible
- 6 Use of established practices and systems**
Well-practised strategies and processes can be rapidly ramped up to manage a pandemic
- 7 Ethical decision-making**
Ethical principles and societal values should be explicit and embedded in all decision-making

Collaboration and Equity: Key to Addressing COVID-19 in Canada

We are working closely with provinces and territories, Indigenous leaders and communities, and across sectors to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated response to COVID-19.



Canada is taking a health equity-approach in responding to the pandemic to ensure that it is inclusive of the needs of diverse communities.



Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

The Government of Canada is taking immediate, significant and decisive action to support Canadians and businesses facing hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes supporting:

- ☐ Individuals
- ☐ Businesses
- ☐ Sectors
- ☐ Communities

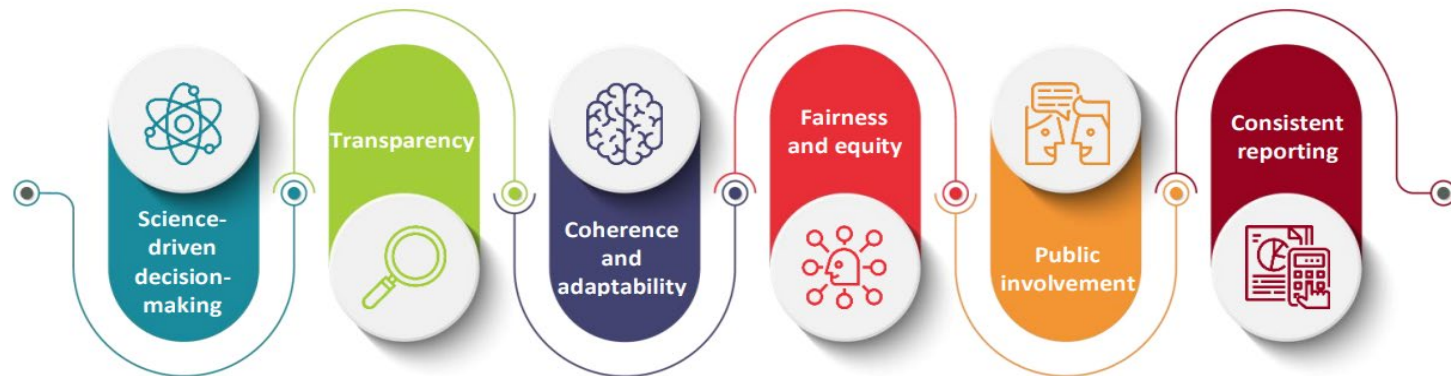
Recovery Benefits
The Emergency Wage Subsidy
The Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support
The Canada Emergency Business Account
Additional Recovery and EI Regular Benefits

As of August 2021, Canada has experienced key economic highlights:

- Employment has risen for the third consecutive month, mostly occurring among the services-producing sector, led by gains in accommodation and food services, and information, culture and recreation.
- The number of people working in construction increased for the first time since March 2021.
- The proportion of people working from home is the lowest since the onset of the pandemic.
- Unemployment rate is at lowest level since February 2020.

Canada's Approach to Vaccines

- Vaccines are our best defence against COVID-19.
- The goal of Canada's COVID-19 immunization response is to **enable as many Canadians as possible to be immunized against COVID-19 as quickly as possible, while ensuring that high-risk populations are prioritized.**
- It involves collaboration between the Government of Canada, provinces and territories, First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders, municipal governments, public health and logistical experts, and all Canadians. The plan is rooted in **core principles** of:



Approved Vaccines:

- ☐ Spikevax (Moderna)
- ☐ Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech)
- ☐ Vaxzeveria (AZ/COVISHIELD)
- ☐ Janssen

Mixed-Dose Strategy: By taking an evidence-based, flexible approach to vaccine rollout, including the use of mixed vaccine schedules and extended dose intervals, Canada has been able to implement a successful vaccination campaign via a diverse vaccine portfolio.



Working from our borders outward

Canada is currently implementing robust border measures and maintains its global travel advisory against non-discretionary travel.

Non-essential, non-vaccinated travellers are subject to:

- PCR tests pre-departure, on-arrival and on day-8
- 14-day quarantine (no longer required for fully vaccinated foreign nationals)
- Compliance verification through calls, emails, door knocks and follow-ups by local law enforcement

We are also strengthening measures at Canadian airports:

- Building resilience in Canada's aviation system by ensuring measures are in place to limit spread, protect Canadians, and help the industry to recover



But we need to scale-up our work beyond our borders to mitigate the global threat from COVID-19, accelerate global economic recovery, and build capacity for future public health crises.

We need to:

- Accelerate the drive for global vaccine coverage, which will help to decrease the threat of new variants of concern emerging elsewhere in the world
- Facilitate global economic recovery by hastening the end of the crisis phase of the pandemic
- Support strengthening of primary health care, including core public health capacities in all countries to prevent and respond to future pandemics

Looking Ahead

- ❖ Effective responses requires leadership, commitment and a strong public health system.
- ❖ In Canada, we continue to remain vigilant to assess the risks.
- ❖ Risk communication is an important tool to keeping Canadians informed.
- ❖ Ongoing coordination at all levels of government continues to be critical in ensuring an effective response to the direct and wider health impacts of COVID-19, including for people with longer-term effects (post COVID-19 condition).
- ❖ Domestic and international partners are key to ensure coherent action, collaboration, coordination and the flow of information.
- ❖ High-quality evidence and public health intelligence are essential to inform decision-making and planning.
- ❖ Canada continues to be a strong supporter of the IHRs.
- ❖ In Canada, the response takes a health-equity approach to pandemic response, recovery, and future preparedness and resilience that is inclusive of the needs of diverse communities.

A Global Snapshot: A Path Forward

Mitigating Economic and Social Costs

The OECD projects a total loss of **~USD 10 trillion if vaccines are not deployed fast and globally**. Global economic recovery is interconnected due to the integration of global markets and supply chains.

Working Towards Health Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on **priority populations experiencing marginalization** within and outside of Canada, including severe ramifications on access to health care and essential services.

Protect the health and well-being
of all and support global
economic recovery

Containing the Spread of New Variants

Pandemics burn out when they are **unable to spread**. Potential new variants risk effective immunization efforts and will prolong the crises; efforts to accelerate equitable access to vaccines around the world will help mitigate these risks.

Preparing for the Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of investing in emergency management and social determinants of health. Enhanced international efforts that bolster health equity now will help prepare the world for future outbreaks and other public health crises.

Thank you