

Response to COVID-19: January 2022 Update

Presentation to the Board of Health
January 17, 2022



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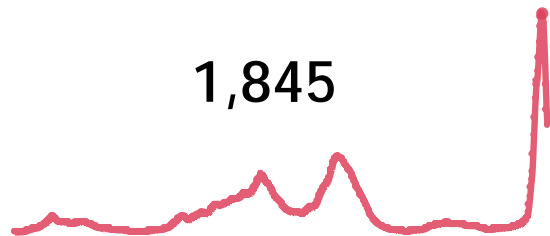
Status of the COVID-19 Epidemic in Toronto

Monitoring dashboard – Jan 12*, 2021

Virus Spread and Containment

New COVID-19 cases, 7 day moving average¹

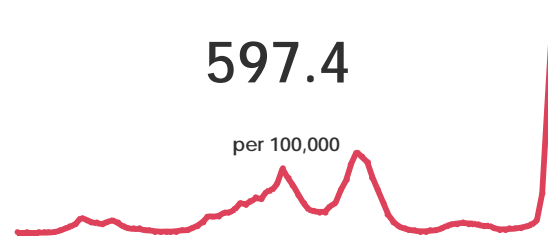
1,845



New COVID-19 cases, weekly incidence rate¹

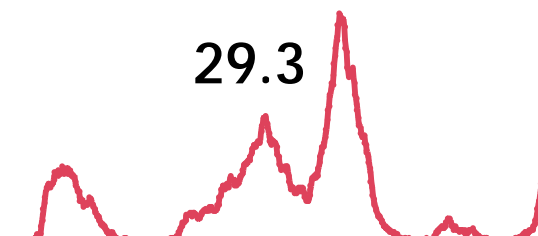
597.4

per 100,000



New Hospitalizations, 7 day moving average¹

29.3



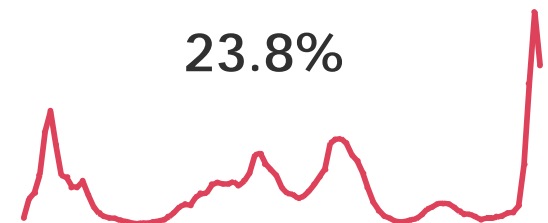
Active daily COVID-19 outbreaks
in institutions¹

234



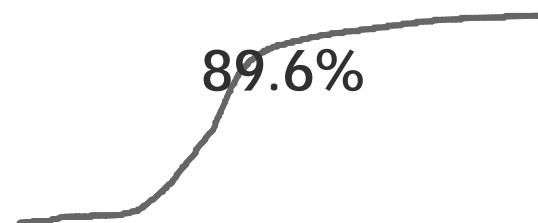
COVID-19 Laboratory Tests Percent Positivity,
previous week average³

23.8%



Vaccination coverage 12+
(at least one dose)⁵

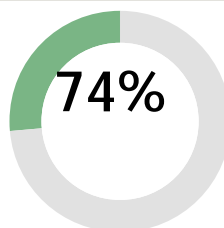
89.6%



Health System Capacity

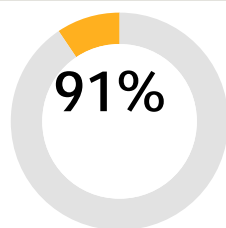
ICU bed
occupancy rate⁴

74%



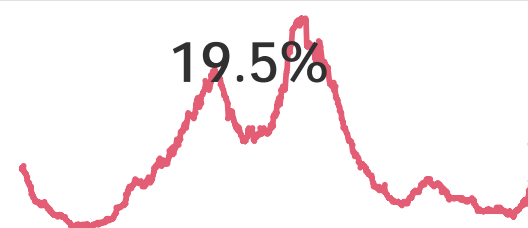
Acute bed
occupancy rate⁴

91%



COVID-19 related critical illness (ICU)
occupancy rate⁴

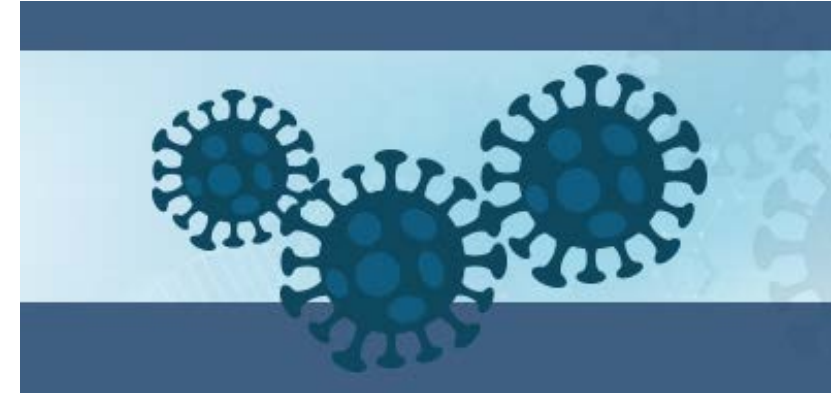
19.5%



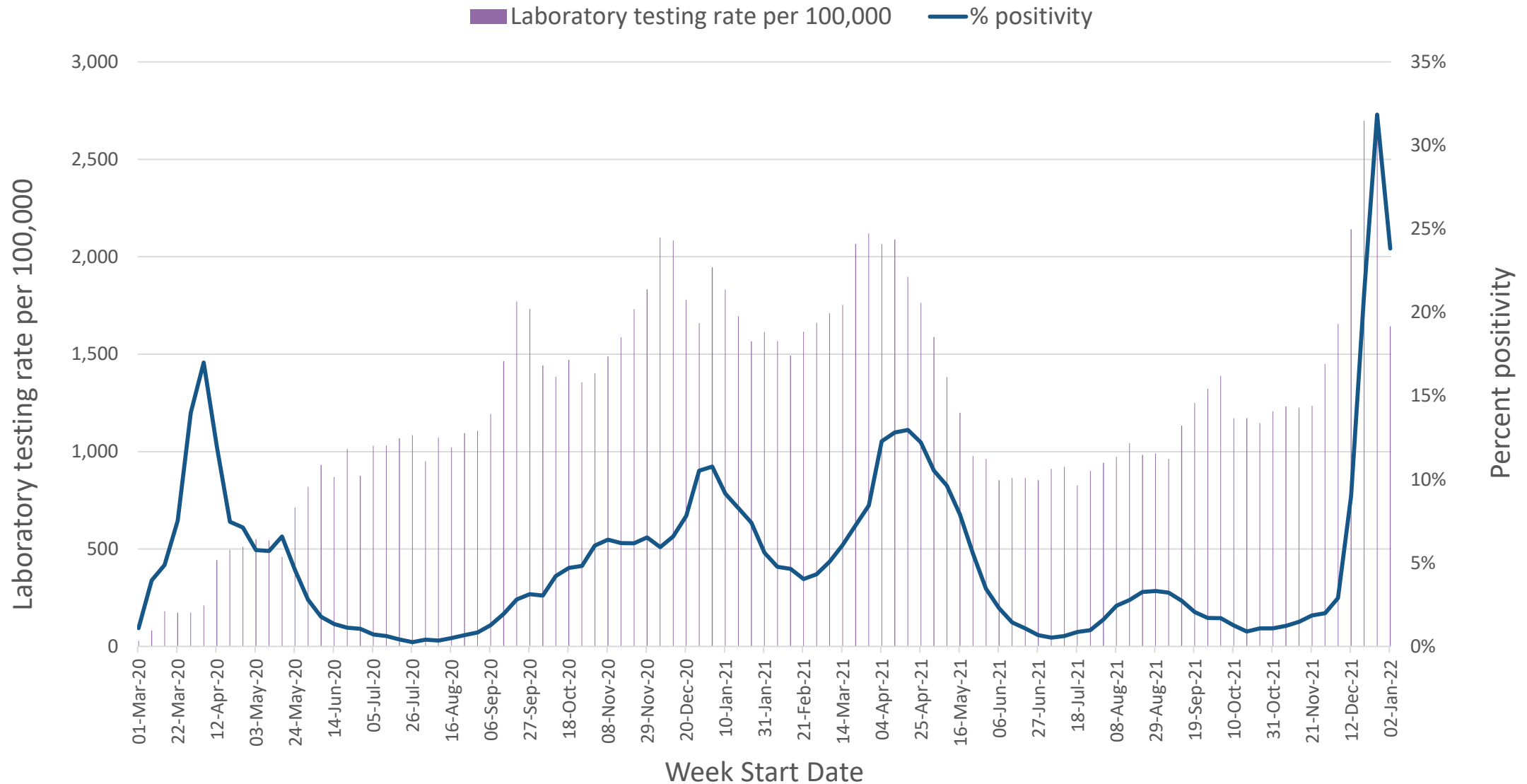
Due to changes in eligibility for testing driven by increasing COVID-19 cases related to the Omicron variant, case counts are an underestimate of the true number of individuals with COVID-19 in Toronto. Changes in trends should be interpreted with caution.

Recent epidemiological developments

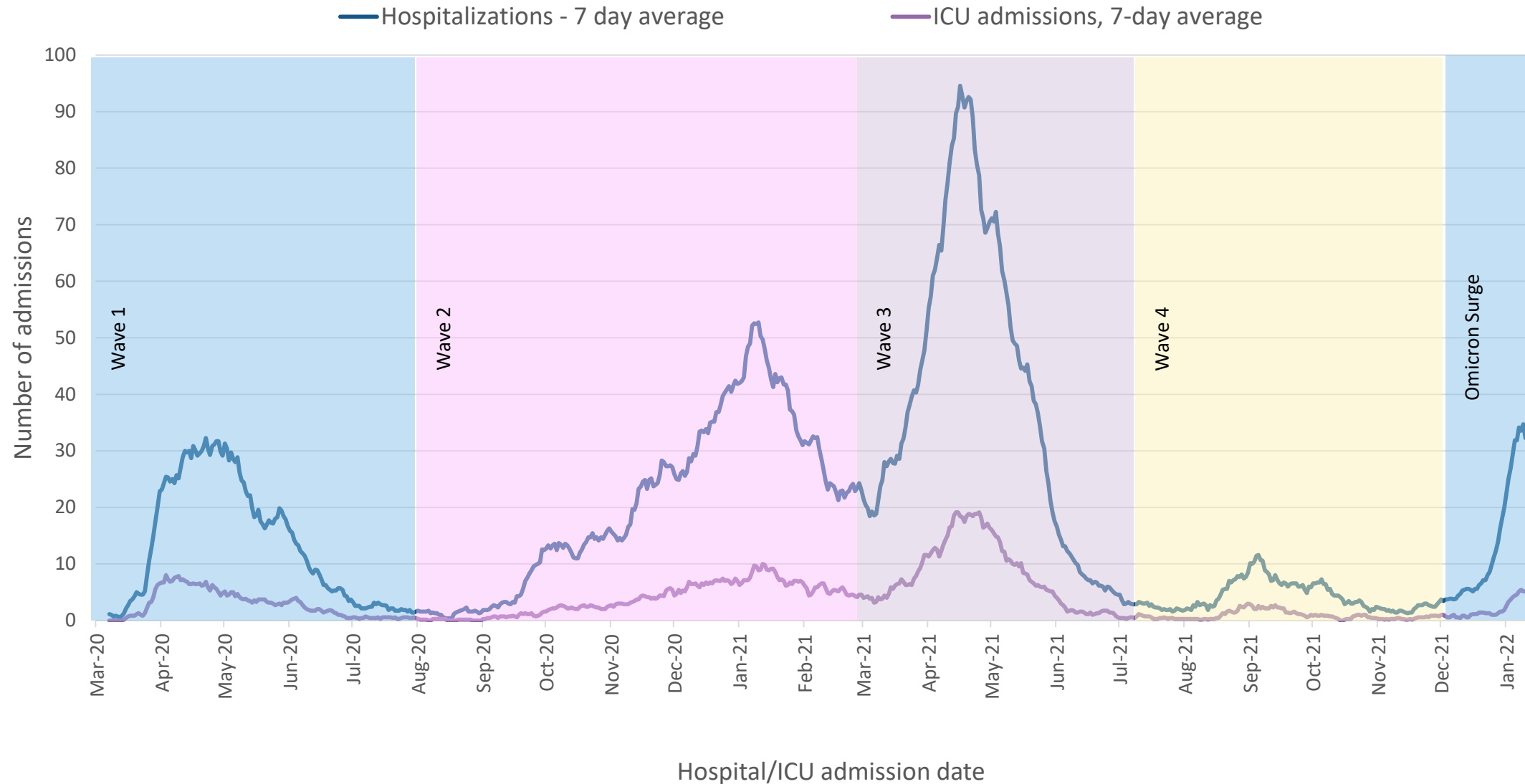
- Hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and outbreaks continue to rise
- While early evidence suggests Omicron is less severe than Delta, it can still result in serious health outcomes
- A third dose is effective in reducing the risks related to infection, hospitalization, and death from Omicron



Percent positivity increased dramatically before the change in testing guidelines



COVID-19-related hospitalizations and ICU admissions among Torontonians remain lower than Waves 2 and 3



Wastewater surveillance is an additional tool to track potential trends in COVID-19 incidence

What is wastewater surveillance?

- COVID-19 Wastewater surveillance involves the testing of sewage samples for the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is excreted in human waste.
- As this form of surveillance can detect virus activity independent of symptoms and or access to lab testing, it can be particularly valuable when there are more asymptomatic cases or when traditional lab confirmed case counts are limited.

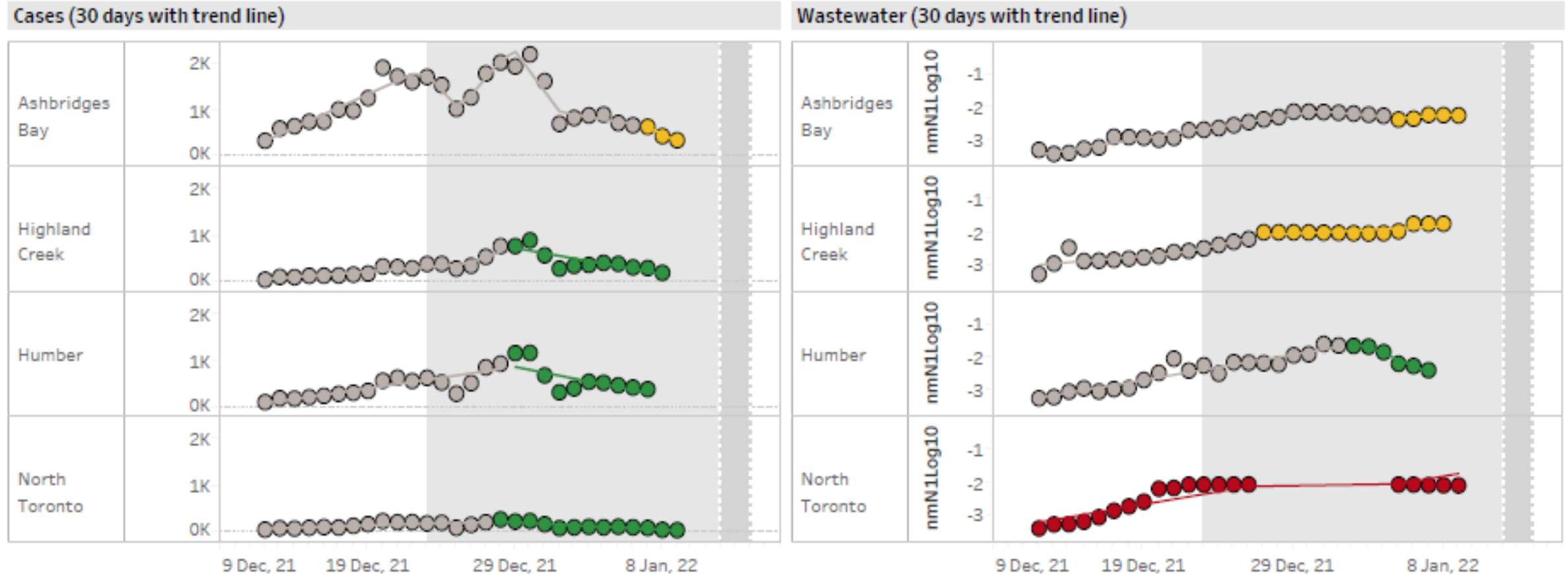
What is Toronto Public Health doing?

- TPH has collaborated with academic partners to implement a pilot to understand and validate this source of surveillance information.
- Analysis of pilot data has shown that wastewater does correlate with clinical data, and while not currently valuable as an early warning system does show potential as a confirmatory tool for increased or decreased trends from other data sources.

Plan for sharing publically:

- We are working to develop the best reporting format to share these trends publicly on our dashboard.

Toronto wastewater samples can be used to confirm trends from other surveillance data sources



Source – Ministry of the Environment, Conservations and Parks. Data as of January 12, 2022.



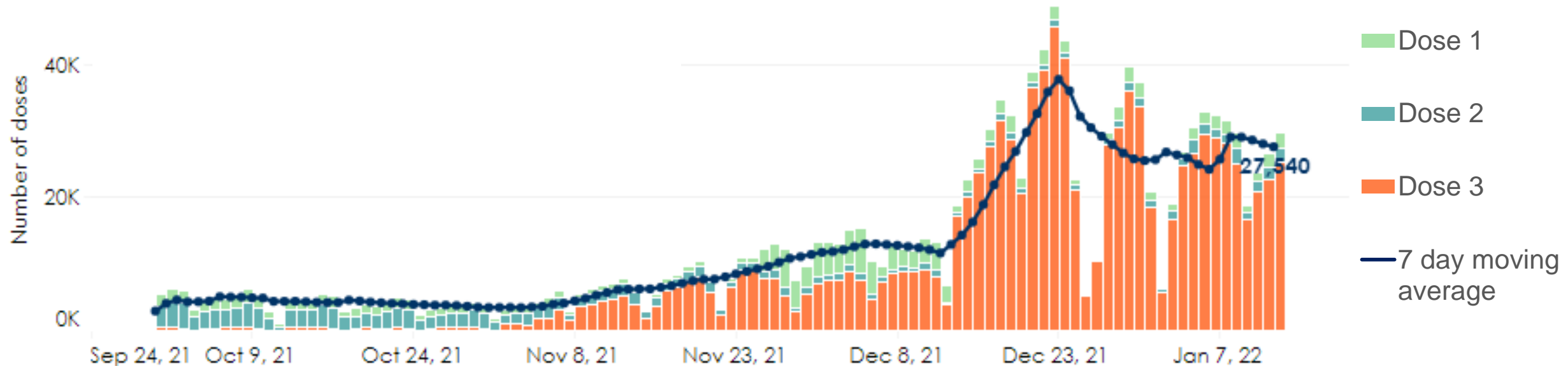
Update on COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 40% of Toronto residents aged 18+ have three doses of COVID-19 vaccine

Share of Toronto residents aged 18+ vaccinated:

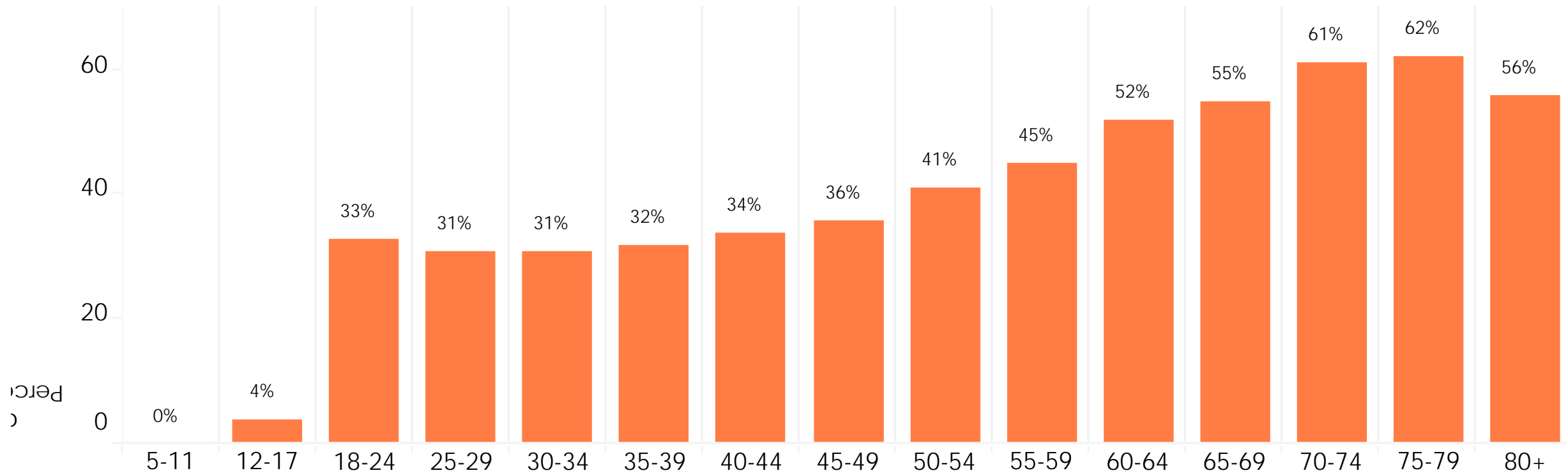
- Dose 1: 89.6%
- Dose 2: 86.7%
- Dose 3: 41.0%

Doses administered over time



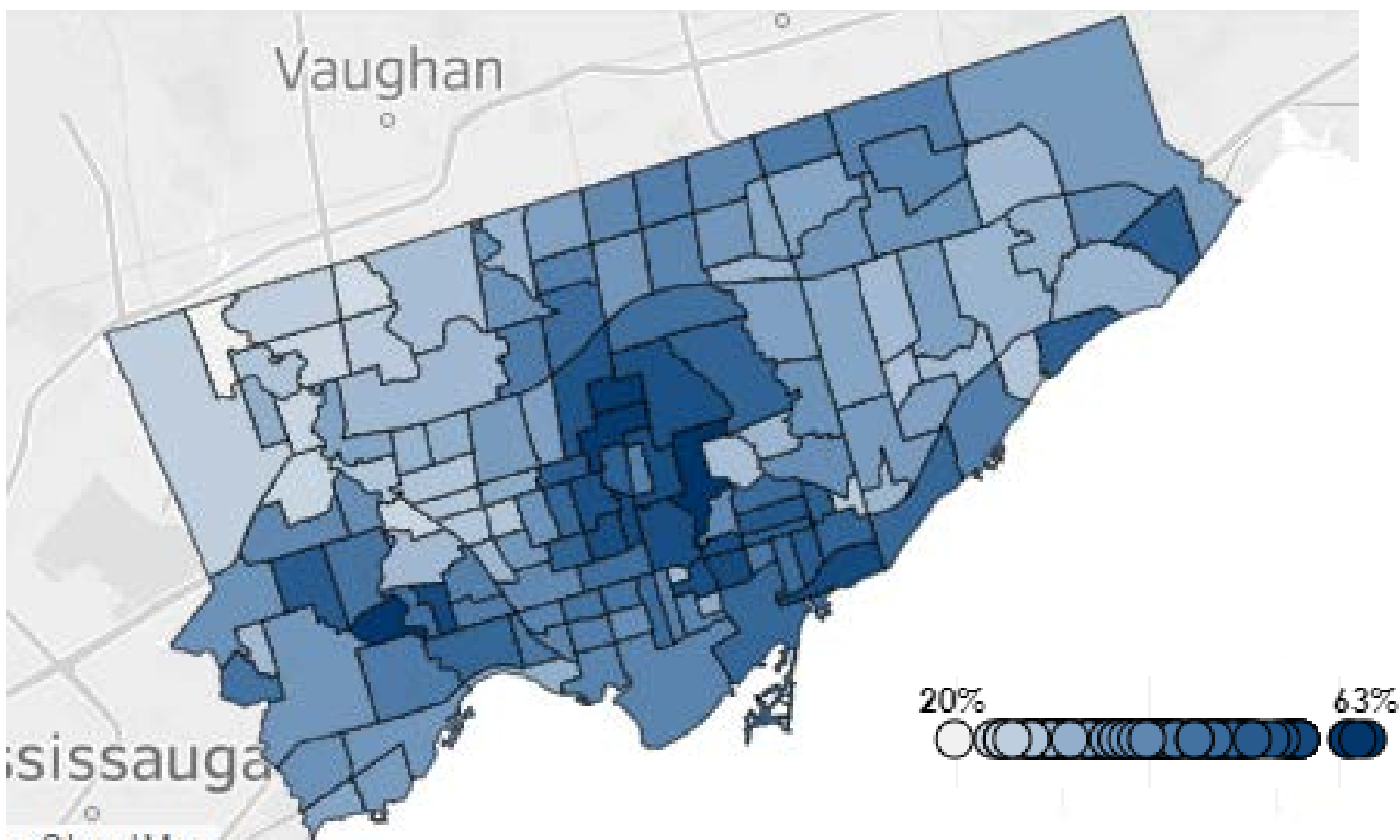
Third dose coverage is above 50% for those 50 and older

Percent of total population aged 18+ who have received a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine by age group



Disparity in third dose coverage is emerging

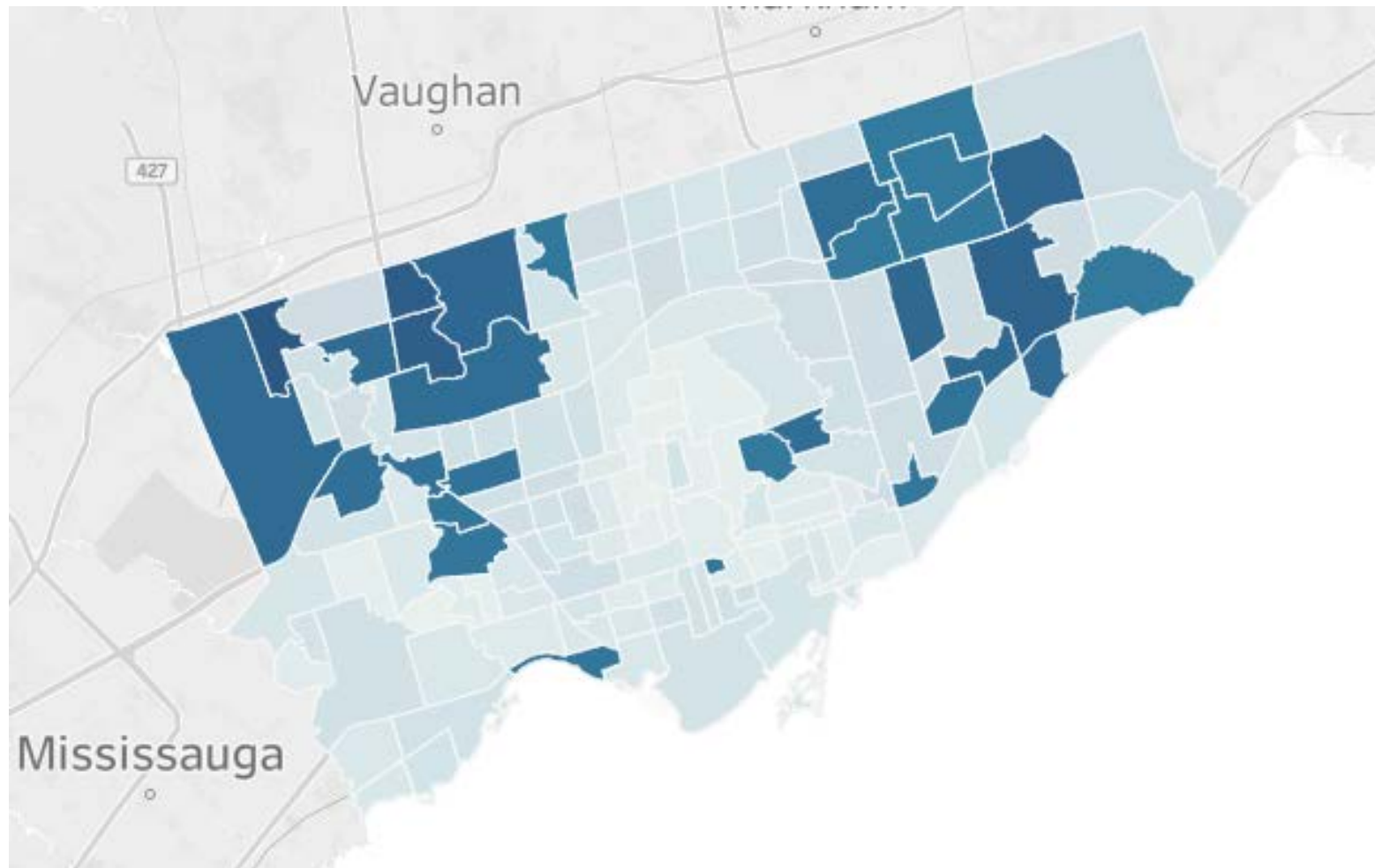
Percent of total population aged 18+ who have received a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine



- Since mid-December 2021, TPH and partners have worked to rapidly expand the number of vaccination appointments and walk-ins available at MICs, pop-ups, mobile clinics, pharmacies and physicians.
- Team Toronto is working to ensure equitable vaccine access for communities that are most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and bringing vaccines to where people live, work, and learn through:
 - hyper-local vaccination clinics,
 - school-based clinics,
 - dedicated appointments and clinics for focused neighbourhoods,
 - special event vaccination clinics, and
 - extensive community-based outreach

Neighbourhoods for third dose prioritization have been updated and expanded

Top 30 Neighbourhoods for Dose 3 Prioritization Based on Index



* Index based on % coverage of those eligible (50+) who have received third dose (weighted x 2), count of those aged 50+ eligible without third dose (weighted x 2) plus three equity indicators

Supporting vaccine uptake in congregate living settings

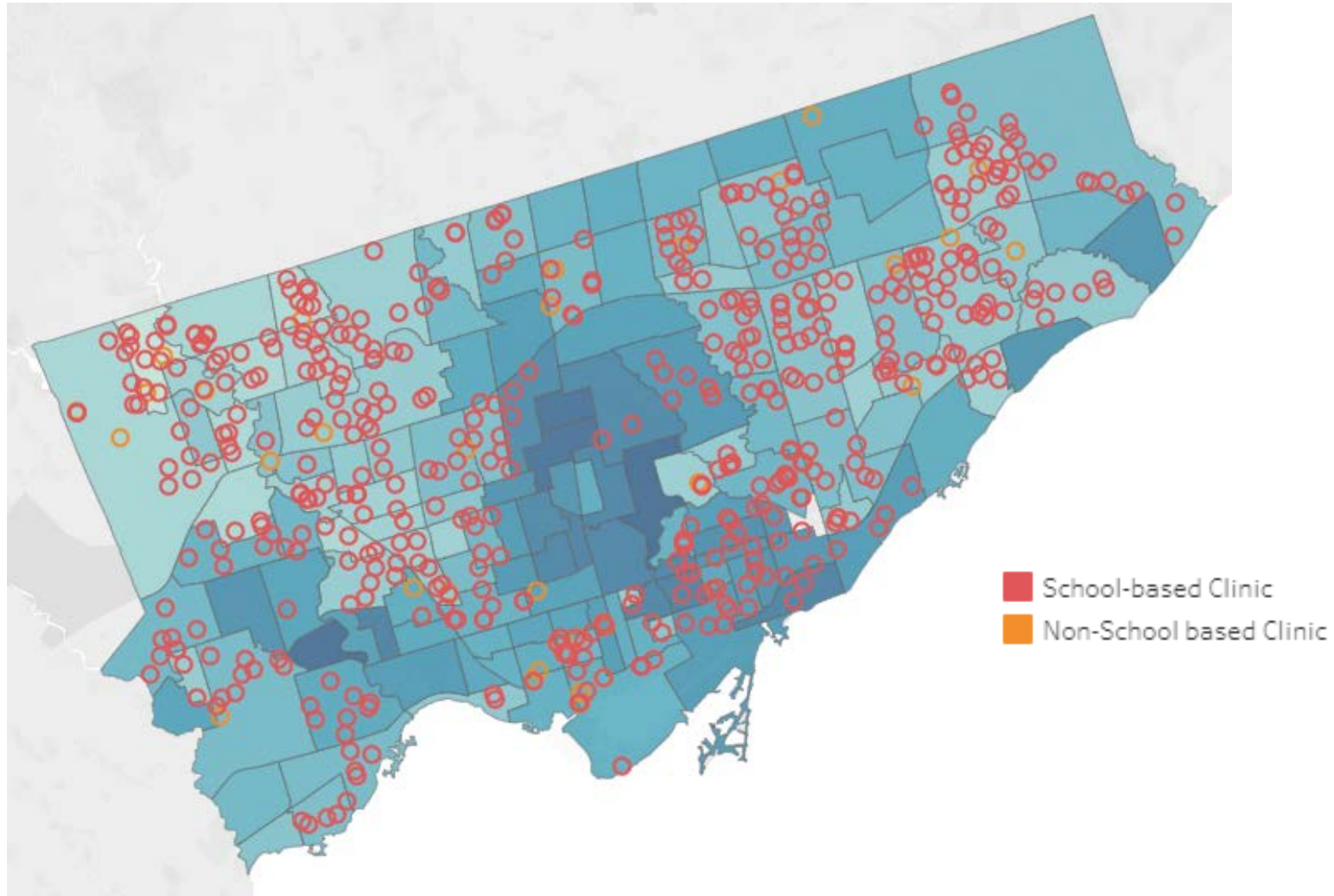
- Toronto Public Health and its partners are working to maximize access to vaccine in congregate settings, including shelters and long-term care homes.
- Over 1300 TPH and partner-led vaccine clinics have been held at shelters, 24-hour respite sites and 24-hour women's drop-ins, seven days a week, which have delivered over 15,000 doses.
- These efforts are bolstered by incentives, a Peer Champion program, outreach by vaccine ambassadors with lived experience of homelessness, and targeted information sessions.
- Toronto Public Health is supporting the roll-out of 3rd doses to eligible long-term care home staff, essential caregivers, volunteers, students, and residents, including 4th doses to eligible residents.

Prioritizing vaccination of children and youth

- Toronto Public Health and its partners continue focused efforts to vaccinate 5-17 year olds
- Over 250 school based clinics delivered since November
- Pop-up and mobile clinics in neighbourhoods with low vaccine coverage among children and youth

Team Toronto clinics for 5-11 year olds focused in areas with lowest vaccination rates

Locations of Team Toronto vaccine clinics for 5 to 11 year olds



Recommendations – Continuing efforts to maximize vaccine uptake

Recommendation 1: The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to accelerate the hyper-local COVID-19 vaccination strategy in order to maximize access to clinics and appointments in areas with COVID-19 low vaccination coverage, including building-specific clinics where feasible.

Recommendation 2: The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to continue to explore and, where appropriate, implement measures to incentivize vaccination against COVID-19 on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 3: The Board of Health request the Province of Ontario to explore and, as appropriate, enhance and expand programs and measures to increase vaccine confidence amongst parents and caregivers of children and youth, such as information and consultation services to address questions on vaccine and the development and implementation of public information campaigns aimed at both parents and youth.

Recommendation 4: The Board of Health request the Province of Ontario to facilitate access to vaccinations by allowing third doses to be booked where out of province vaccination records are not yet entered, with the requirement that valid proof of eligibility is provided at clinics as is done for 5-11 year olds without OHIP.

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Supporting Safer Re-Opening of Schools

- Students returned to classrooms today, January 17
- Research from Ontario and other jurisdictions shows that in-person learning benefits children's physical and mental health and development
- The Province has released new direction in anticipation of the return to in-person learning

TPH role under changing Provincial COVID-19 school and child care guidance

Local Public Health Role	Fall 2021 Provincial Guidance	Winter 2022 Provincial Guidance
Liaison Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided recommendations, education and advice on infection prevention and control and measures to prevent and mitigate COVID-19 transmission • Answered questions and provided resources to schools, Directors of Education and School Board members 	Continue previous activities
Vaccine Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided vaccine education to school communities • Promoted school based vaccine clinics 	Continue and enhance previous activities
Vaccine Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered mobile school-based vaccine clinics focussed on 12-17 year population 	Continue and enhance delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile school-based vaccine clinics for school community and expand focus on students to 5-17 year population
Case, Contact and Outbreak Management	<p>Based on testing resources in Fall 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated COVID-19 cases, conducted contact and outbreak management 	<p>Based on testing resources in Winter 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited role for case, contact and outbreak management by local public health in school • Support and provide guidance to schools and school boards if the absenteeism > 30 per cent above baseline.

To maintain in-person learning, we must all do our part to support a safe learning environment. This includes:

- Maximizing vaccine uptake among children, parents and guardians, teachers, and essential education workers.
- Continuing public health and infection control and prevention measures
- **Recommendation 5:** The Board of Health request the Province of Ontario to make every effort to maintain in-person learning, which is critical to the physical and mental health of students, by implementing measures to promote safety in schools and child care settings, including but not limited to testing, the provision of personal protective equipment, and efforts to encourage vaccine uptake by children and youth, their families, and workers in the education and child care sectors.

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Continuity of City Services: Emergency and Critical Services

- The City of Toronto continues to operate under a declared emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Our COVID-19 Strategic Command Team continues to lead the IMS effort. Key members include:
 - Mayor Tory
 - Councillor Joe Cressy – Chair – Toronto Board of Health
 - Dr. Eileen de Villa – Medical Officer of Health
 - Chris Murray – City Manager
 - Wendy Walberg – City Solicitor
 - Brad Ross – Chief Communications Officer
 - Fire Chief Matthew Pegg – COVID-19 Incident Commander (Chair)
- The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and all associated task force operations report to the Strategic Command Team via the COVID-19 Incident Commander.

- The City's COVID-19 Incident Management System (IMS) is constantly evolving and expanding in response to the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic.
- We proactively reactivated the Emergency Operations Centre on December 16, 2021.
 - Including the reactivation of the Business Continuity Task Force and the PPE Management Task Force.
- The COVID-19 Strategic Command Team continues to effectively and efficiently manage Toronto's response to COVID-19 in live-time
 - Including planning for and responding to increased COVID-19 related staff absences.
 - Remain committed to ensuring effective emergency / essential / critical services.

- In response to forecasted / potential unplanned absence rates – arising from the spread of the Omicron COVID-19 variant – each City service area has developed proactive business continuity and mitigation plans.
- Plans for unplanned absence up to 40% have been in place throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We proactively enhanced this planning to include up to 60% unplanned absence.

- The COVID-19 Strategic Command Team monitors daily staffing / service levels for each of the City's emergency and critical services:
 - Toronto Paramedic Services
 - Toronto Fire Services
 - Shelter, Support and Housing Administration
 - Senior Services and Long-Term Care
 - Children's Services
 - Toronto Water
 - Toronto Public Health - including the City-Operated Vaccine Clinics
- Also directly connected with Essential Service agencies:
 - Toronto Police
 - TTC

Contingency Planning for Emergency Services

- The City's emergency services will continue to respond to emergency calls without interruption.
- Our emergency services have best-in-class contingency and business continuity plans in place, ensuring the City is always safe.
- Unplanned absence mitigation measures include:
 - The use of overtime and shift extensions
 - 9-1-1 and emergency incident triaging
 - Dynamic deployment of resources – including staff
 - Cross-training of staff to support critical functions and roles

Contingency Planning for Critical Services

- Our *Business Continuity Task Force* continues to work daily with *People & Equity* and the City's Senior Leadership Team on redeployment efforts to provide critical services with staffing resources needed to ensure continued service.
- Our *PPE Task Force* continues to manage PPE including Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT).
 - RAT's have now been distributed to Priority 1 service areas – including emergency / critical services
 - Distribution to Priority 2 service areas is now ongoing
- Ongoing collaboration with other levels of Governments remains ongoing.

Effective Implementation of Mitigation Plans

- Our teams continue to implement their mitigation plans effectively.
 - We have been able to reduce our daily unplanned absence rate from 17.6%* to a daily average of 12.2%*.
- Emergency services continue to deliver effective services.
- The healthcare sector continues to be challenged by unplanned absence and increasing demand:
 - Offload delays are the key issue impacting Paramedic Services operations
- Focused staff redeployment is underway to support critical services:
 - Shelter Support and Housing Administration
 - Senior Services and Long Term Care
 - Children's Services
 - City-operated COVID-19 vaccine clinic operations

** Data from BCIS: December 24, 2021 to January 13, 2022.*

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Business Continuity – Community and Social Services

- Children's Services
 - Supporting system recovery – currently 94% of centres open, 65% capacity
 - Approx. 600 children accessed emergency childcare w/o January 10th
 - Rapid Test and PPE distribution
 - On-going support to sector to maintain safe operation
- Economic Development & Culture
 - Rapid Test distribution to businesses
 - One to one support for businesses
 - CafeTO and other initiatives to support business
- Employment and Social Services
 - Online, telephone support expanded
 - Maintained some in-person service for those who require it

- Shelter Services
 - Expansion of shelter system to address COVID-19 protocols
 - Warming centres and additional shelters opened to address winter weather
 - Continued outreach to assist people to find shelter and housing
 - Distribution of N95 masks to shelters for staff AND residents
 - Operation of shelters supported by redeployment of staff
- Long Term Care
 - Redeployment of staff to mitigate absences due to COVID-19
 - 4th doses being administered to eligible residents in all 10 City-run LTCs
 - Increased support for virtual visits and connections due to limitations on visitors

- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
 - Continuing to support access to programs, services and spaces in compliance with provincial guidelines
 - Welcome TO Winter outdoor activities continue including:
 - Skating at over 50 artificial outdoor ice rinks and skating trails
 - 26 toboggan hills in neighbourhoods across Toronto
 - Seven snow loops for walking and snowshoeing at four of the City's golf courses
 - Skiing and snowboarding at Earl Bales Park and Centennial Park ski and snowboard centres
 - More than 1,500 parks are open to the public, many with enhanced snow clearing
 - 148 winter-maintained washrooms in key locations
 - 30 firepits and five outdoor ovens in parks available to book
 - 30 parks with outdoor fitness equipment and the archery range in E.T. Seton Park
 - Outdoor sport courts, including 50 tennis courts with nets in place
 - 70 outdoor table tennis and 60 outdoor chess tables
 - 68 dogs off-leash areas
 - Seven disc golf locations, including Dentonia Park and Scarlett Woods golf courses
 - Bird watching at Toronto's parks, ravines and natural areas
 - Animals at High Park Zoo and Riverdale Farm

TO Supports - City-Community COVID Response Partnerships

Established		
Community Coordination Clusters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10 Geographic Clusters, 1 City-Wide, 1 Black Resilience Cluster• 400+ community agencies• Local coordination, resource sharing, donation distribution	April 2020
Mental Health Support Strategy Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 key mental health service providers, 211 Central• Free counselling and mental health support to Toronto residents and frontline workers	April 2020
Emergency Food Access Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 Leading Food Agencies + United Way• Problem-solve Toronto emergency food system needs	April 2020
COVID Equity Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 Community Agencies• Meet basic resident needs in high priority areas with a focus on Black, Indigenous and Undocumented residents	Dec 2020
City-Community Response Table	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 Community Agencies, United Way• Integrated communication and planning	April 2020 Reconvened Jan 2021
Vaccine Engagement Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11 Geographic Consortia, 1 Newcomer, 1 Black Resilience• 400 Community Ambassadors• Engagement and support to increase vaccination and wellbeing	April 2021

Through our City-Community Partnerships, we are hearing that:

Residents in vulnerable circumstances continue to struggle to meet basic needs

- Food access is in high demand (including culturally appropriate food)
- Residents continue to struggle with their mental health
- Residents continue to face job loss and housing precarity
- Concerns are increasing about vulnerable children being left behind

Not-for-Profit Community Service Delivery is threatened

- Increasing staff absences threaten agency capacity
- The Sector is struggling to access to N95 and Rapid Antigen Tests to keep workforce safe

Residents need support to stay healthy

- Vaccinations and boosters are still required in communities and among children
- Some residents are struggling to access masks and tests for their families

We are leveraging our City-Community partnerships to focus on 3 priorities:

- Meet the basic needs of residents in vulnerable circumstances
- Help Stabilize Community Service Delivery
- Support Residents to Stay Healthy

Next Steps:

- Resources are in place to address some of these priorities such as vaccine engagement, work with COVID Equity Partners, Community Coordination Clusters, Rent Bank
- Exploring additional resources to enhance supports for food security and community service delivery



Looking Back and Looking to the Future