

Response to COVID-19: May 2022 Update

Presentation to the Board of Health

May 16, 2022





Status of the COVID-19 Epidemic in Toronto

Key indicators suggest a slowing down of virus activity

COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

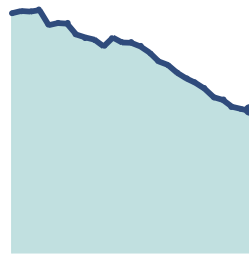


[Technical notes](#)

Virus Activity

Data as of: May 10, 2022 8:30 AM

New COVID-19 cases, 7 day moving average



Last 30 days

392

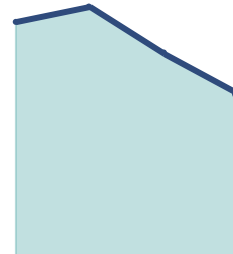
new cases

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



New COVID-19 cases, weekly incidence rate



Last 30 days

97

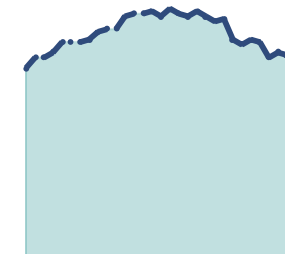
per 100,000

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



Active daily COVID-19 outbreaks in institutions



Last 30 days

74

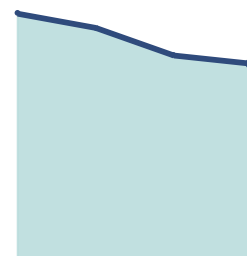
active outbreaks

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



COVID-19 Laboratory Tests Percent Positivity, weekly average



Last 30 days

12%

positive

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



Wastewater Surveillance

Data as of: May 10, 2022 9:00 AM

[More Info](#)

Overall Toronto Wastewater Trends

Weekly Trends

Recent 2 weeks: Previous 2 weeks:

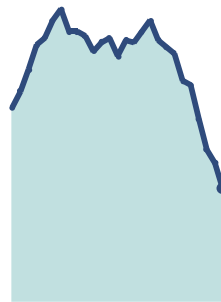


Hospitalizations are slowing down

Severity

Data as of: May 10, 2022 8:30 AM

New Hospitalizations, 7 day moving average



Last 30 days

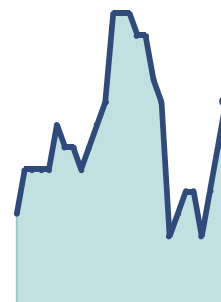
7
new hospitalizations

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



New ICU Admissions, 7 day moving average



Last 30 days

1
new ICU admissions

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



30-day Hospitalization Rate: Neighbourhood Inequities*

The hospitalization rate in the 35 priority neighbourhoods is:

0.9 times as high

as the hospitalization rate in all other neighbourhoods.

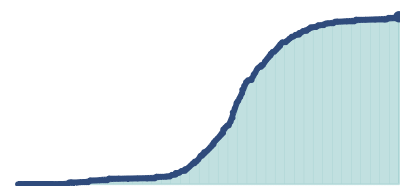
Some residents are at higher risk for COVID-19 because of their living and working conditions.

[More Info](#)

Vaccination

Data as of: May 05, 2022 12:00 AM

Vaccination coverage 60+ (three doses)



Since August 2021

The third dose coverage among 60+ is:

70%

Vaccination Rate: Neighbourhood Inequities*

The dose 3 vaccination rate for 12+ in the 35 priority neighbourhoods is:

12% lower

than the dose 3 vaccination rate for 12+ in all other neighbourhoods.

Health inequity can explain why some neighbourhoods may have lower vaccination rates.

[More Info](#)

- There is emerging evidence of reinfection among those who have previously had COVID-19. This is due to emerging variants and sub-variants, as the virus continues to evolve.
- There does not appear to be an increase in the severity of disease caused by new variants and sub-variants. Unvaccinated individuals, including those with immunity acquired from previous infection with COVID-19, appear to be at higher risk.
- Vaccination remains the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. It continues to provide strong protection against severe outcomes, and helps protect against infection and long COVID.

A vertical blue bar on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the title text.

Update on COVID-19 Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccine coverage continues to increase

- Share of Toronto residents aged 12+ vaccinated:
 - Dose 1: 91.9%
 - Dose 2: 89.3%
 - Dose 3: 57.4%
- Vaccination rates among Toronto residents aged 5-11 continue to increase:
 - 58% have one dose
 - 44% have two doses
- Over 70% of individuals aged 60+ have received a third dose, and 19% have received a fourth dose.

Vaccination campaign update

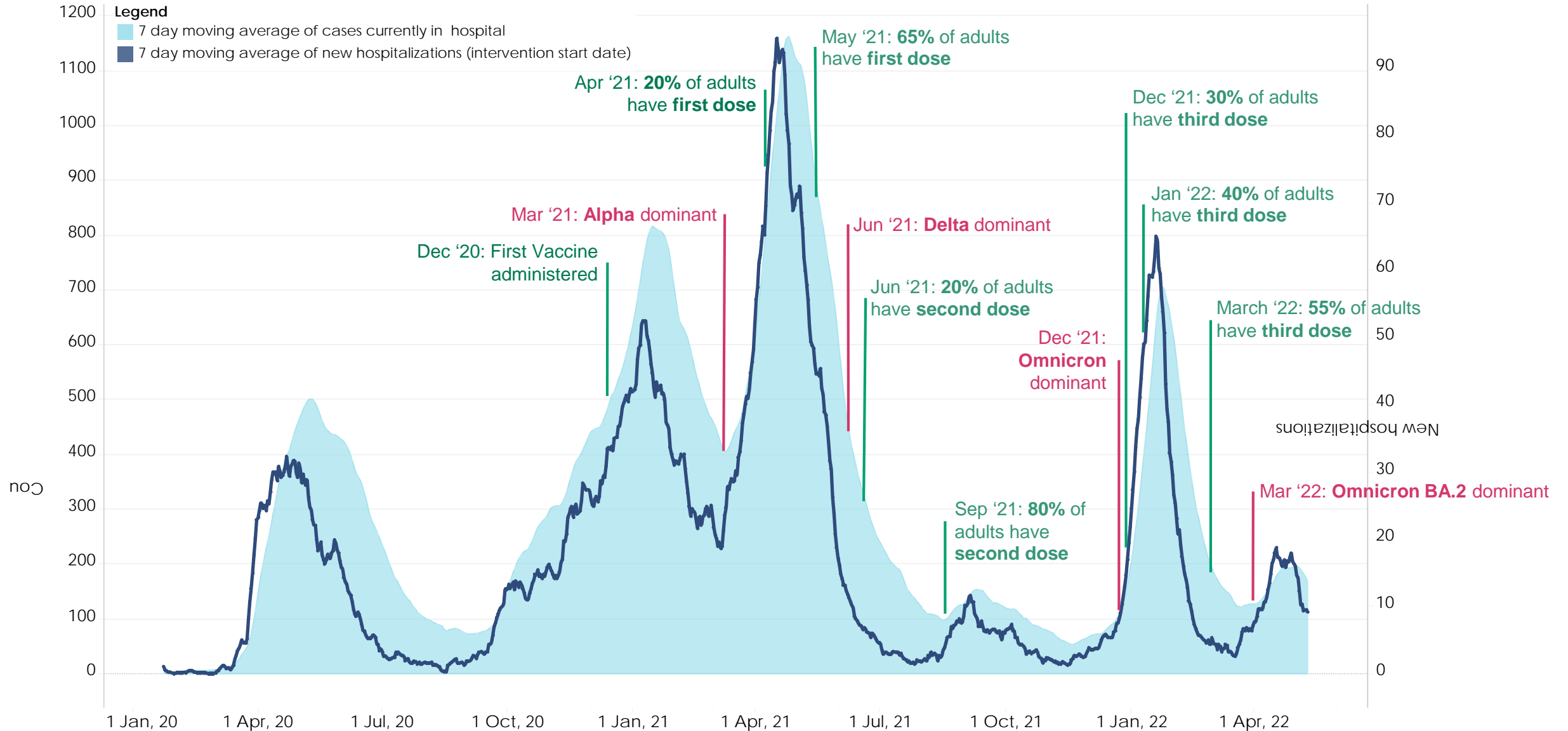
- Toronto Public Health and Team Toronto partners continue to work to bring the COVID-19 vaccine to the neighbourhoods and places where Torontonians live, work, and play.
- Given the demonstrated benefit of getting all the vaccines one is eligible for, a key area of focus is reaching Torontonians to help them get their next dose.
- Pharmacies are an increasingly important channel for the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine and will be an area of future focus to promote the uptake of additional doses.
- Toronto Public Health is now offering the new Novavax vaccine, providing an additional choice for those who want to protect themselves from COVID-19.



Looking Back and Looking to the Future

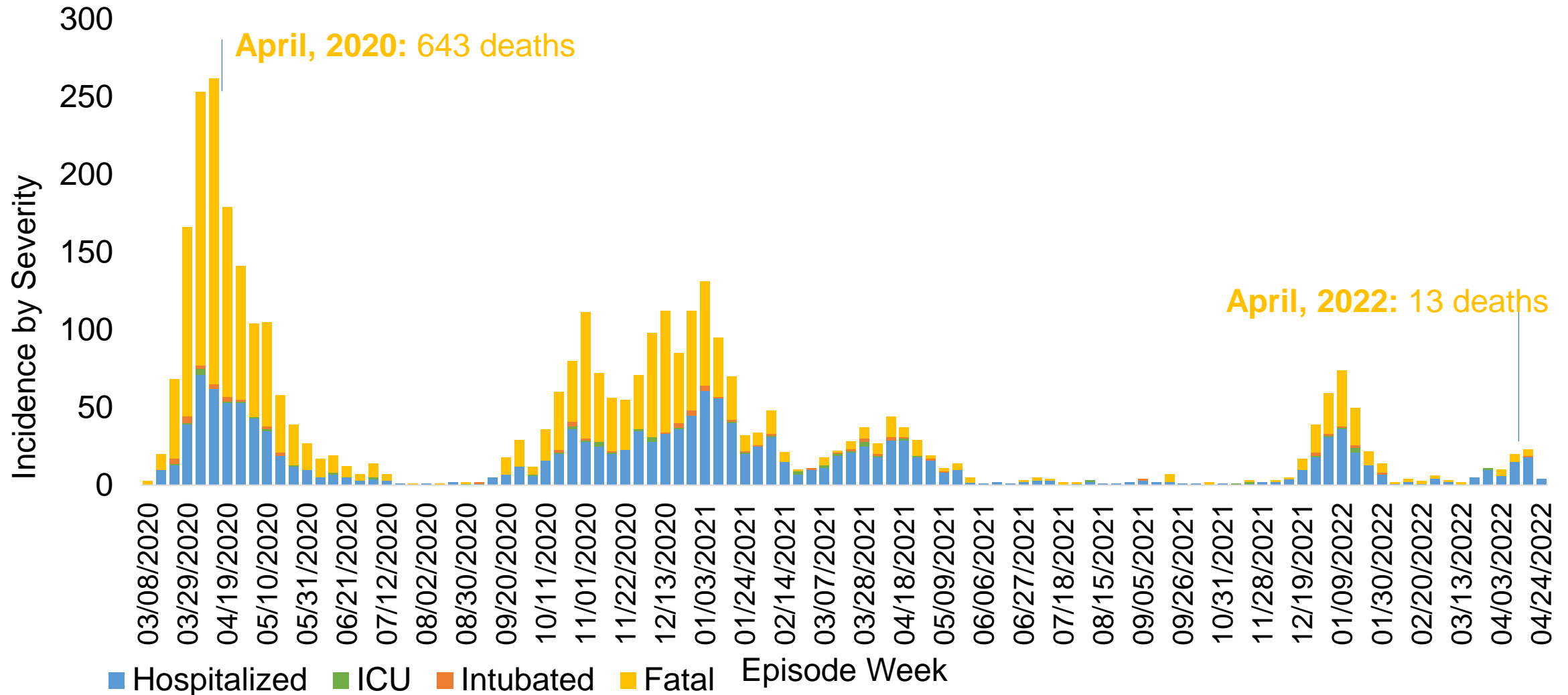
- At this point in the COVID-19 pandemic, we have better knowledge of COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread.
- Highly-effective vaccines are widely available, and we now have access to new treatments for those at greatest risk of severe outcomes.
- The impact and value of an equity-focused vaccination campaign has been apparent given the declining rates of severe outcomes in priority neighbourhoods.

Peak of hospitalizations in wave 6 is far lower than initial Omicron wave



High vaccination rates and new treatments are contributing to better outcomes in institutional and congregate settings

Severe cases related to institutional and congregate setting outbreaks by episode week, March 2020 to April 2022



- Building on the success of focused infection prevention and control measures in long-term care, additional support for congregate settings other than long-term care can bolster the sector's preparedness to tackle COVID-19 in the future, and improve outcomes for those at higher risk of severe illness.

Recommendation 1: The Board of Health request the Province of Ontario to consider implementing, in a focused manner, in other congregate settings (such as shelters, group homes) the measures that have been used successfully to support better infection prevention and control in long-term care settings.

City of Toronto Vaccine Engagement Teams

[Community Ambassadors Highlights Video](#)

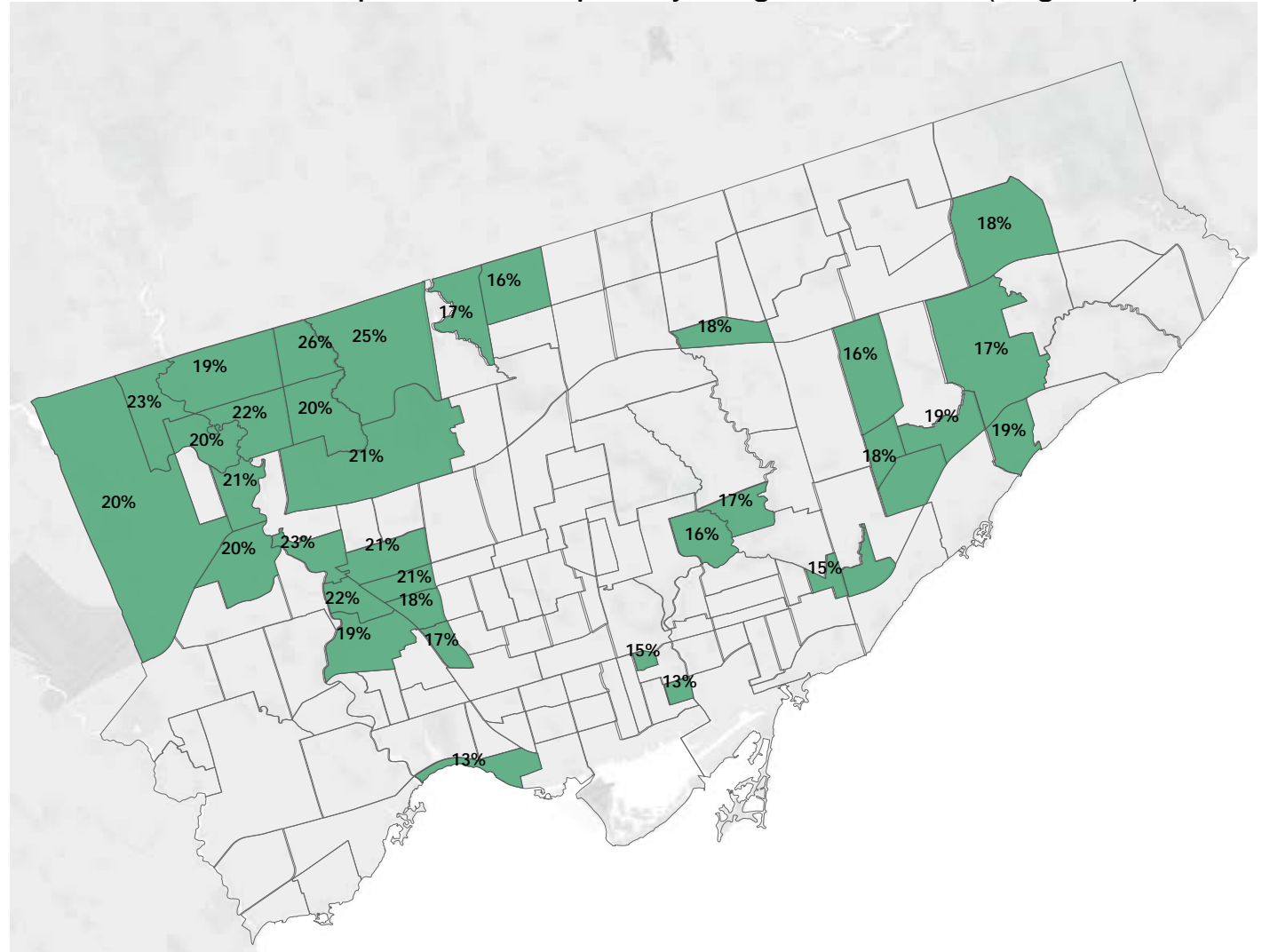
First dose COVID-19 vaccine coverage: Significant improvements in priority neighbourhoods

Priority neighbourhoods had an average increase of **19 percentage points** from June 2021 to April 2022 for dose 1 coverage (66% to 85%).

All other neighbourhoods had a **13 percentage point** increase (72% to 85%).

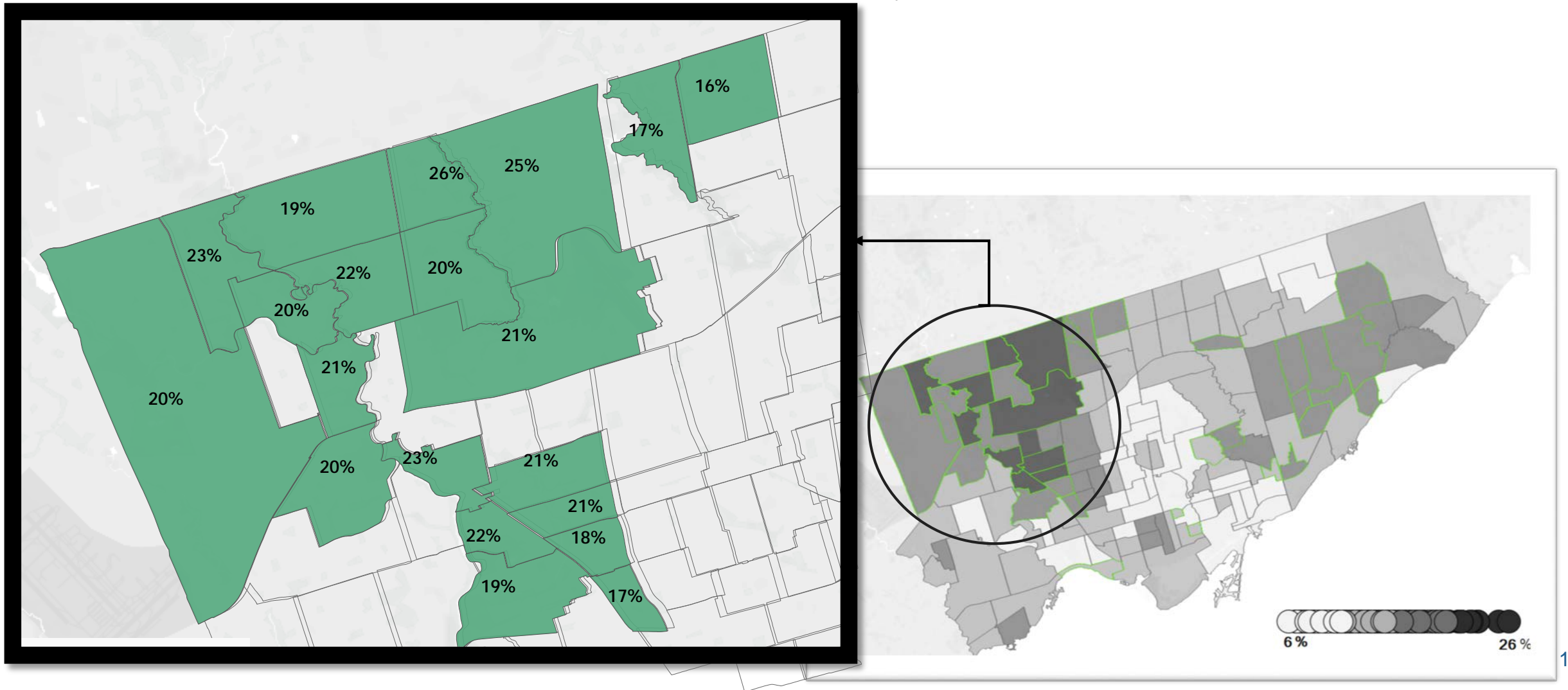
**Please note that correlation does not equal causation. Several interventions were taking place at the same time.*

Percentage point change in vaccine coverage for dose 1 by neighbourhood, from June 2021 to April 2022, 35 priority neighbourhoods (in green)



Dose 1 success in the North West

Percentage point change in vaccine coverage for dose 1 by neighbourhood, from June 2021 to April 2022: Focus on north west area of the city



Improving ongoing service delivery & evaluating impact

- Regular monitoring and reporting on Vaccine Engagement Teams has helped the City and community agencies respond to ongoing trends, identified gaps, and emerging issues
- Evaluation findings identify Vaccine Engagement Teams as:
 - Increasing vaccine confidence, access and health equity across Toronto
 - An innovative and effective model for place-based, community-driven health programming
 - Responsive to diverse community needs by using tailored outreach efforts
 - Responsive and effective platforms for community ambassador training, community building, outreach and engagement
 - An effective model of community-based partnership and interdivisional coordination
- Findings and insight gathered from the evaluation will inform immediate program improvements as well as the exploration of ways to apply the model to address other health and social inequities



Our ambassadors have been really great in supporting barrier-free vaccination support. I don't think Toronto would even be in the place that we're at without their support and their constant engagement.

***Consortium
Coordinator***

The City has done a good job of recognizing that the best way to reach vulnerable community members is through the community itself. This collaborative model has been really good.

***Agency
Representative***

The ambassadors have their voice now in the community. The community knows that these are the ambassadors. They speak their language, and now the community is comfortable to talk with them. The ambassador is a link!

***Community
Ambassador***



Additional funding needed to continue engagement

- There is an ongoing need for continued outreach to equity-deserving groups in high-priority neighbourhoods to:
 - Provide COVID-19 vaccine engagement for families with children, particularly those under 5
 - Promote uptake of 4th and booster doses to those who are eligible
 - Respond to potential changes in public health mandates driven by future variants, hospitalization rates, or additional vaccine doses
 - Plan for an expected seasonal increase in COVID-19 activity in the fall
- An additional provincial commitment is required to continue operating Vaccine Engagement Teams until December 31, 2022
- Without these funds, the Vaccine Engagement Teams will be unable to continue promoting health equity in communities hardest hit by COVID-19 beyond July 1, 2022

- Given ongoing COVID-19 activity, and expected seasonal increases in the fall and winter, Toronto Public Health expects to maintain its COVID-19 response.
- Key priorities at this point include:
 - ensuring readiness to respond to a future surge in COVID-19 activity, including providing proactive support for long-term care and other congregate settings to maximize their preparedness, and
 - reducing overall risks to public health, for example, by addressing routine childhood vaccinations and responding to new or emerging public health issues (e.g. acute pediatric hepatitis).