

Response to COVID-19: June 2022 Update

Presentation to the Board of Health

June 20, 2022



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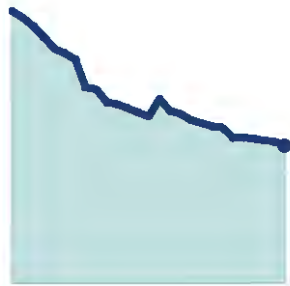
Status of the COVID-19 Epidemic in Toronto

Key COVID-19 metrics are stable or decreasing

Virus Activity

Data as of: June 14, 2022 8:30 AM

New COVID-19 cases, 7 day moving average



Last 30 days

165

new cases

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



New COVID-19 cases, weekly incidence rate



Last 30 days

42

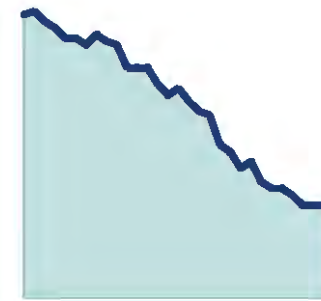
per 100,000

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



Active daily COVID-19 outbreaks in institutions



Last 30 days

25

active outbreaks

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



COVID-19 Laboratory Tests Percent Positivity, weekly average



Last 30 days

7%
positive

Weekly Trends

Current: Previous:



Wastewater Surveillance

Data as of: June 14, 2022 9:00 AM

[More Info](#)

Overall Toronto Wastewater Trends

Weekly Trends

Recent 2 weeks:

Previous 2 weeks:

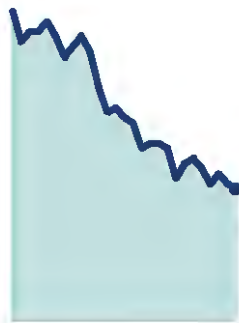


Hospitalizations and ICU admissions remain low

Severity

Data as of: June 14, 2022 8:30 AM

New Hospitalizations, 7 day moving average



Last 30 days

4
new hospitalizations

Weekly Trends

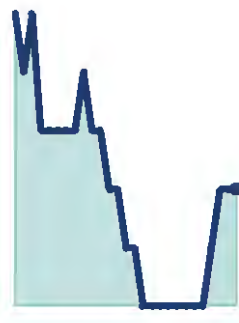
Current:



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:

1.1 times as high

as the hospitalization rate in all other neighbourhoods.

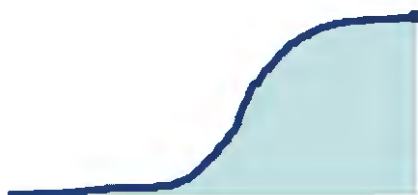
Some residents are at higher risk for COVID-19 because of their living and working conditions.

[More Info](#)

Vaccination

Data as of: June 09, 2022 12:00 AM

Vaccination coverage 60+ (three doses)



Since August 2021

The third dose coverage among 60+ is:

71%

Vaccination Rate: Neighbourhood Inequities*

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

12% lower

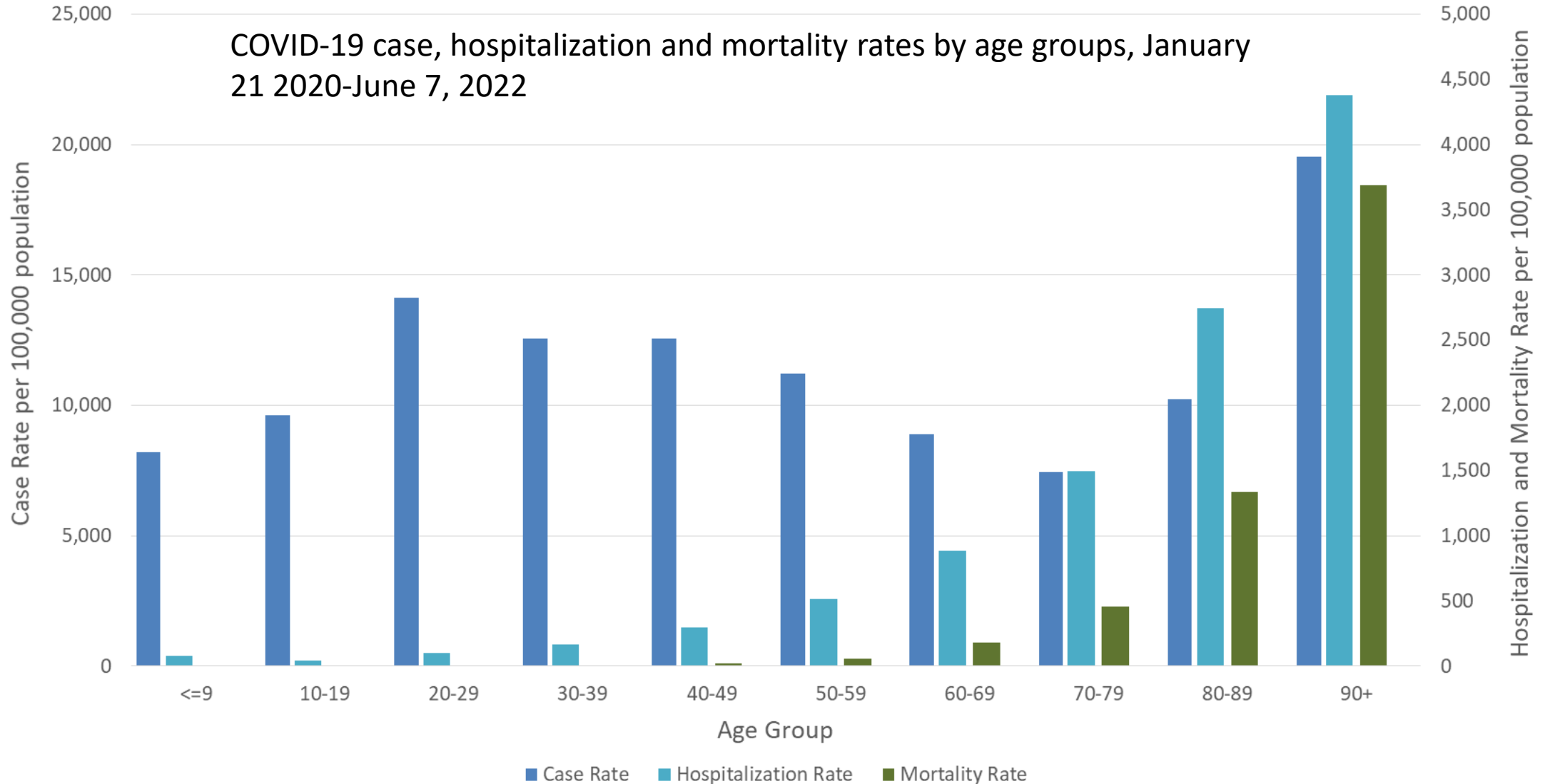
than the dose 3 vaccination rate for 12+ in all other neighbourhoods.

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

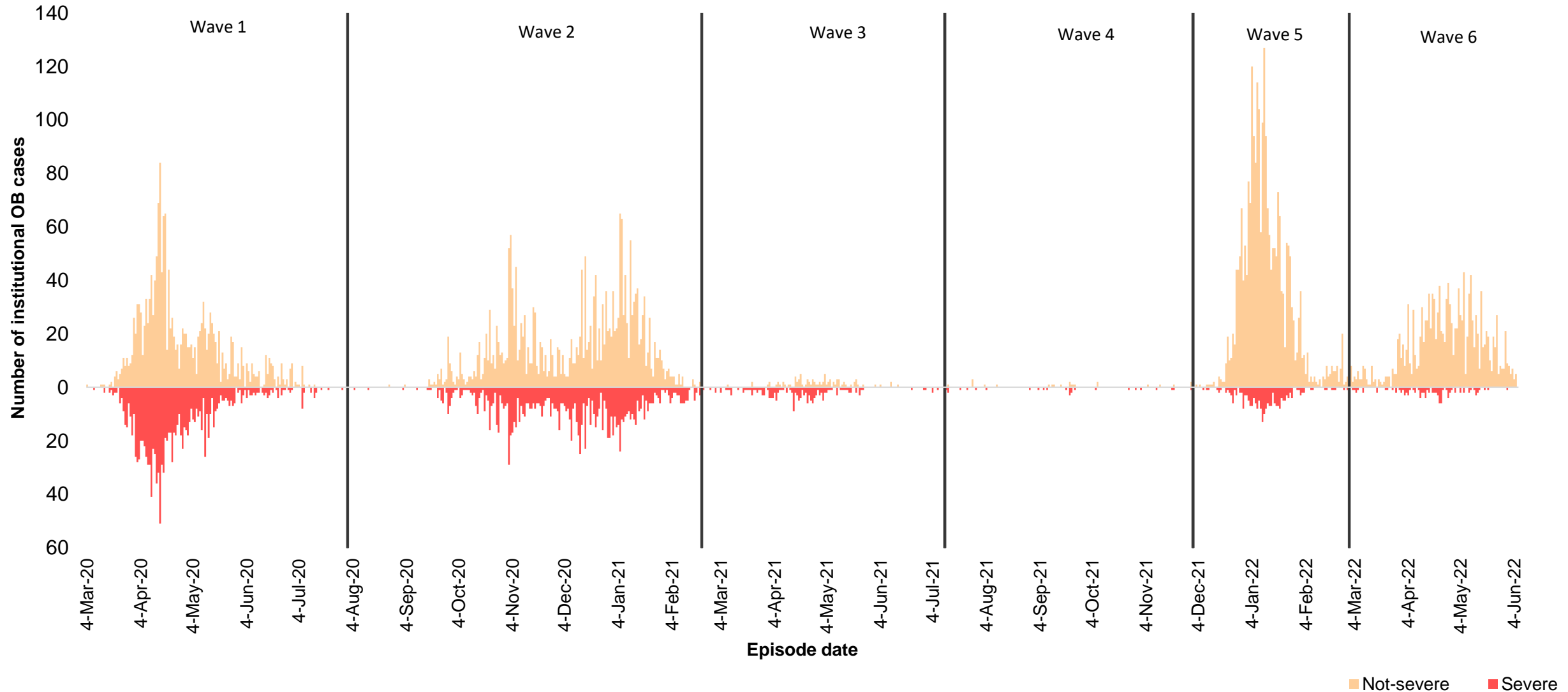
[More Info](#)

- As the sixth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to subside, there is evidence of:
 - the value of vaccination,
 - other layers of protection, and
 - the extensive efforts of public health staff and partners to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on Torontonians.

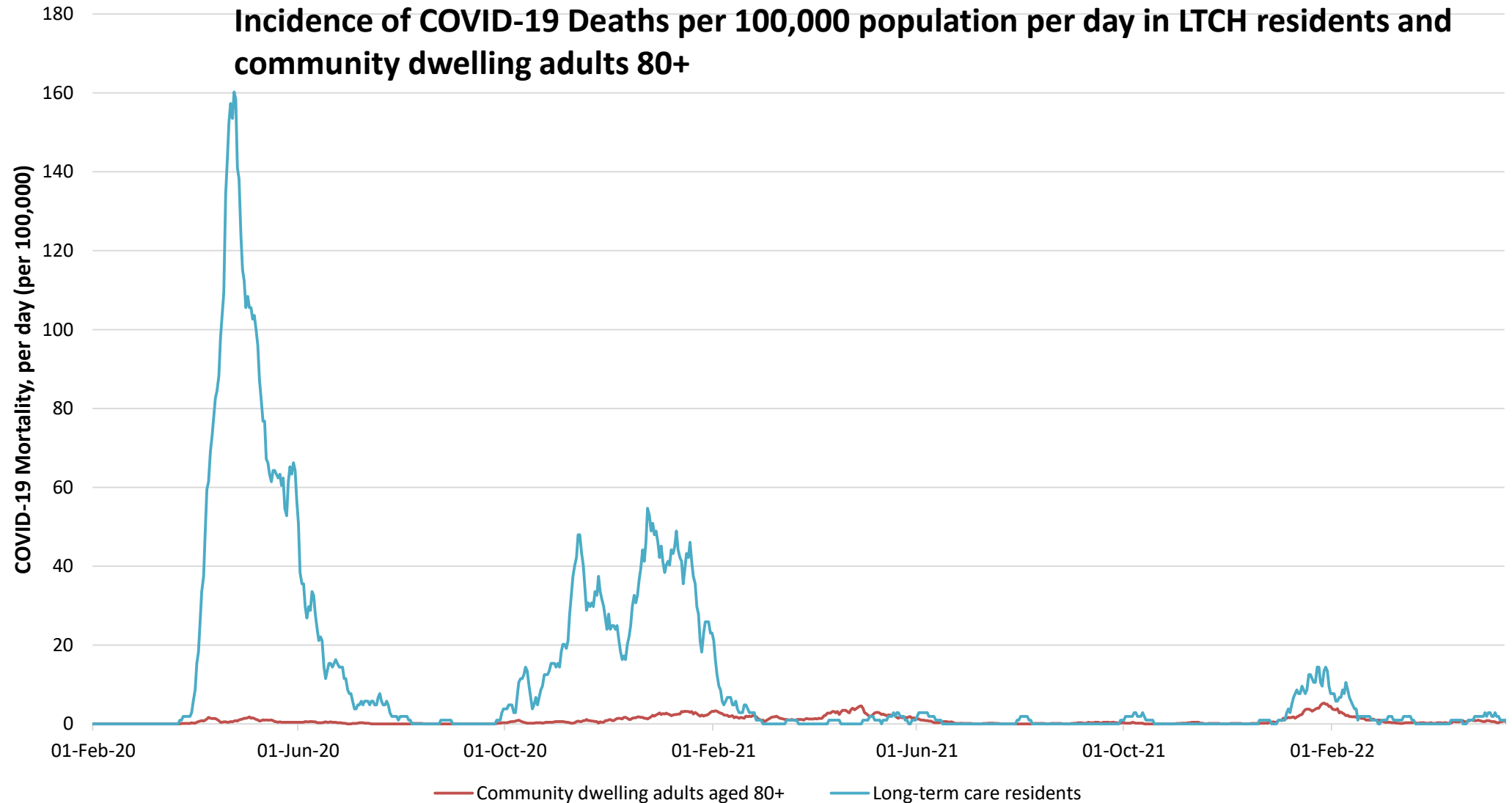
Older adults have the highest hospitalization and mortality rates



Severe outcomes among individuals 70+ in institutional settings decreased significantly following widespread vaccination



COVID-19 mortality: A significant improvement in long-term care home residents post vaccine



Protecting seniors requires a multi-pronged effort and remains a priority

- For long-term care home residents:
 - collaboration to improve infection prevention and control (IPAC) protocols,
 - IPAC hub support to partners in the health unit,
 - testing programs, and
 - access to early treatment.
- For community dwelling seniors:
 - improving vaccination accessibility, e.g. mobile clinics at Toronto Community Housing seniors buildings and other naturally occurring retirement communities.

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Update on COVID-19 Vaccination and Public Health Guidance

COVID-19 vaccine coverage continues to increase

- Share of Toronto residents aged 12+ vaccinated:
 - Dose 1: 92.1%
 - Dose 2: 89.6%
 - Dose 3: 58.0%
- Vaccination rates among Toronto residents aged 5-11 continue to increase:
 - 59% have one dose
 - 45% have two doses
- Over 70% of individuals aged 60+ have received a third dose, and 27% have received a fourth dose.

- TPH recommends that individuals get the doses they are eligible for, and continues to maximize access to the COVID-19 vaccine through its hyper-local, equity focused vaccination campaign.
- Proactive COVID-19 vaccination planning for children aged 6 months to 4 years, working with partners and in consultation with parents to develop a needs-based approach.

- Toronto Public Health has started planning to ramp up vaccination efforts later in the year.
- As the Province expands its live-calling efforts, TPH is focusing on complementary approaches to increase confidence in and access to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Sector-specific planning is also underway.

- On April 11, 2022, the Province of Ontario lifted most remaining masking requirements.
- Masking remains mandatory in all long-term care and retirement homes, shelters, and the TTC's Wheel Trans service.

Enjoying a Safer Summer

- Take advantage of warmer weather. It's easier—and safer—to socialize, visit, exercise and unwind in the summer months. Don't forget the sunscreen, hat, water bottle and bug repellent!
- Keep wearing your mask when you're indoors with people outside your household—especially in crowded settings. Open windows when you can to improve ventilation.
- Stay home if you're feeling sick—even if your symptoms are mild.
- Get caught up in your health appointments and all of your vaccinations—including COVID-19 vaccinations.



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Toronto Public Health's short term priorities

- Given improvement in COVID-19 indicators, TPH is turning its attention to other pressing health issues impacting Toronto and has articulated goals and guiding principles to inform this work.

Goals

1. Maintain and improve the health status of Toronto's population,
2. Reduce inequities in health status, and
3. Prepare for and respond to outbreaks of disease and public health emergencies.

Guiding Principles

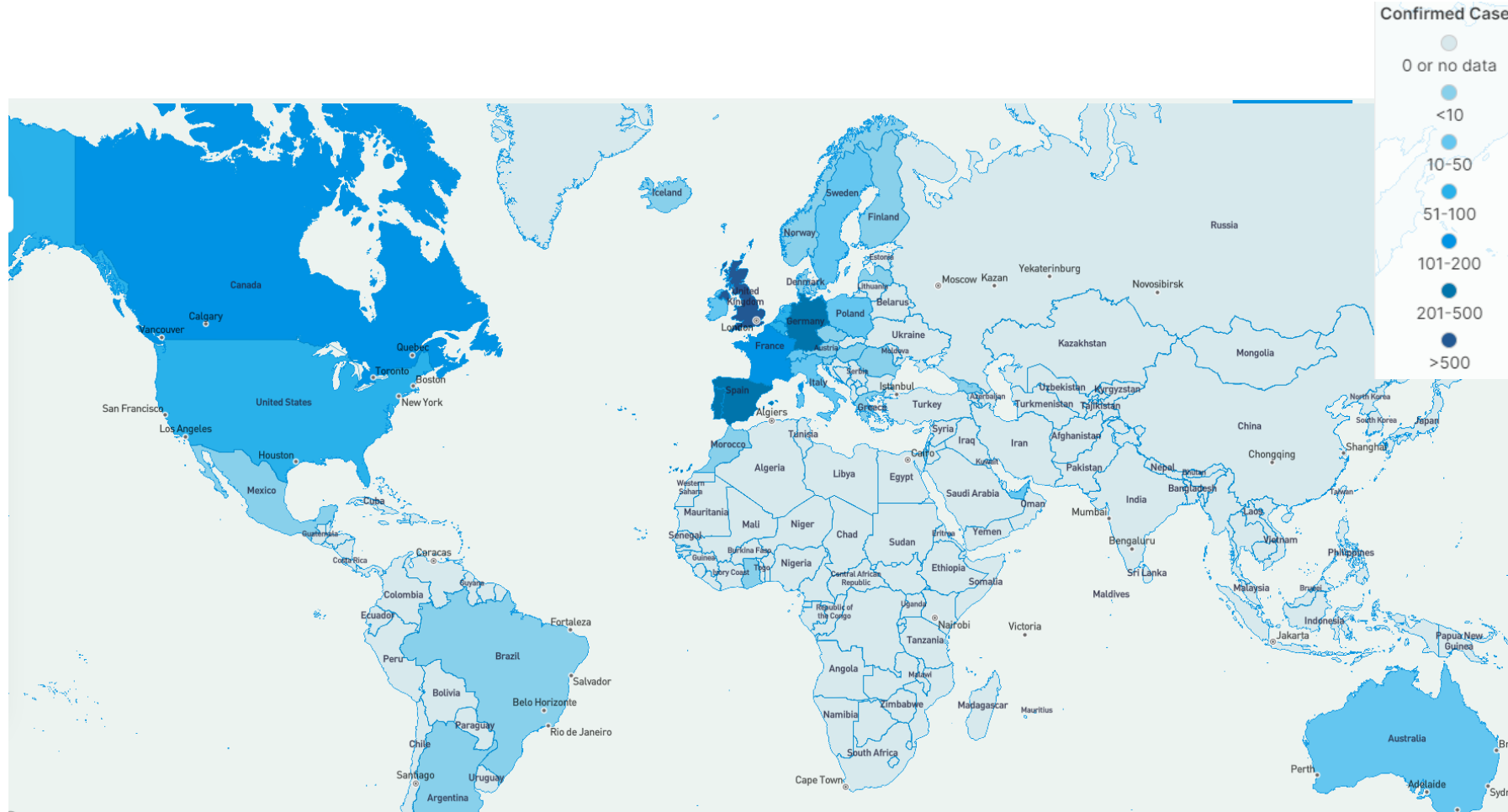
1. Evidence-informed decision making
2. Equity
3. Public health is a public good

- Based on a review of current population health evidence, TPH has identified the following short-term priorities:
 - continuing to respond to COVID-19 and supporting TPH's readiness for other emerging public health issues
 - responding to the drug poisoning epidemic,
 - promoting mental health, and
 - rebuilding public health functions.

1. Addressing emerging public health issues

- With the recent decline in COVID-19 activity, there has been a resurgence in other communicable diseases.
- This includes a recent increase in influenza and non-COVID-19 respiratory illness (e.g. the common cold), as well as the spread of monkeypox.
- While continuing its COVID-19 response, TPH is applying best practices and lessons learned in responding to these new challenges.

A global epidemiological shift is occurring for monkeypox



Confirmed cases in top 6 non-endemic countries

<u>United Kingdom</u>	574
<u>Spain</u>	497
<u>Germany</u>	338
<u>Portugal</u>	276
<u>France</u>	183
<u>Canada</u>	167

<https://monkeypox.healthmap.org> as of June 17, 2022

Local monkeypox epidemiology reflects global trends

Highlights: Monkeypox in Toronto As of June 17, 2022 @ 12 pm

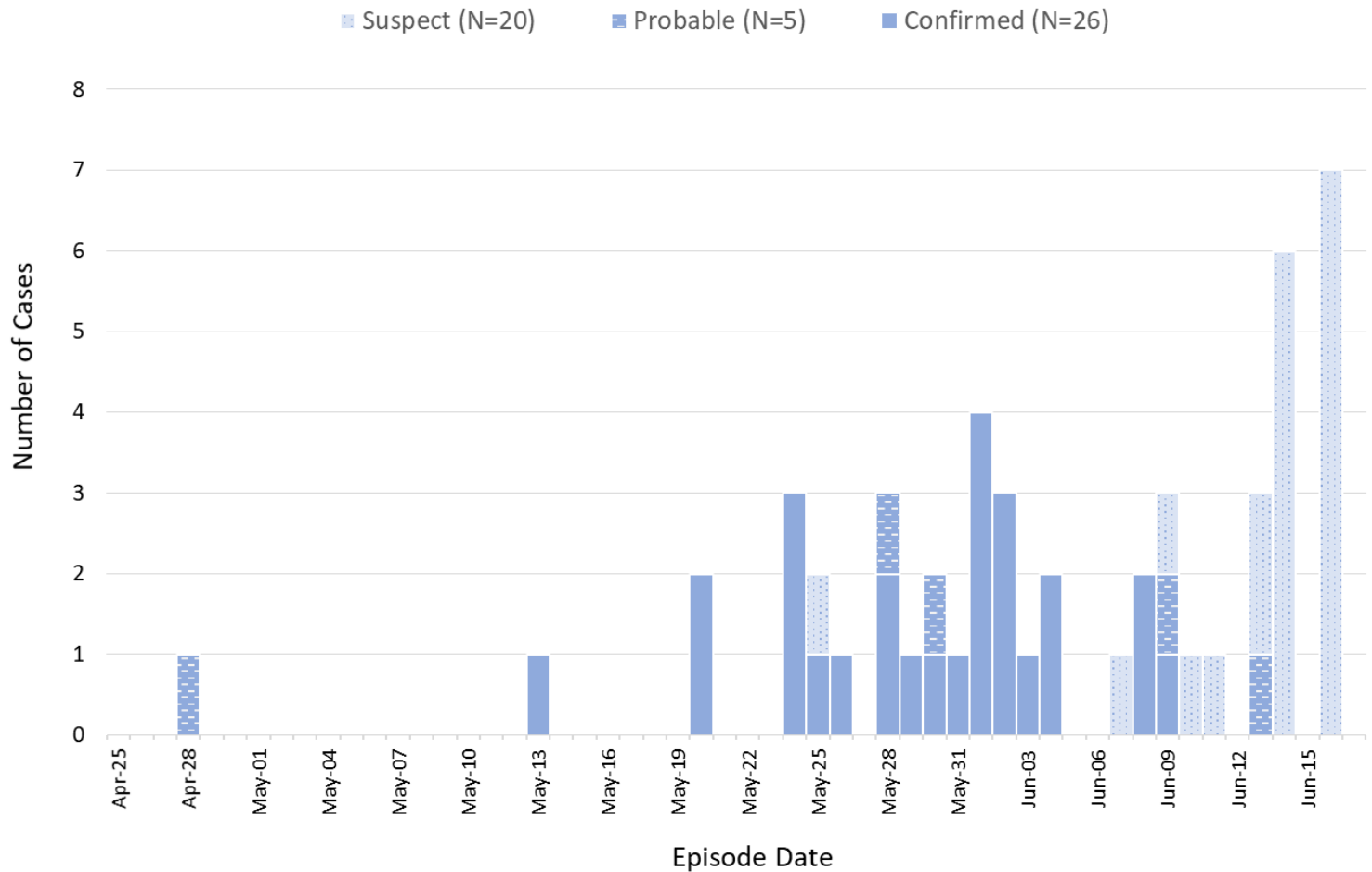
First case was reported to Toronto Public Health on May 20, 2022.

As of June 17, 2022, 51 cases are under investigation – 26 confirmed, 5 probable, and 20 suspect.

29/31 (94%) confirmed and probable cases are male. 26/29 male cases (90%) have a reported risk factor of sex with same sex.

Several confirmed and probable cases frequented a Toronto bathhouse in the same time period.

Monkeypox Cases in Toronto, by Case Classification & Episode Date.
May 20 - June 17, 2022



- On June 16, 2022, the Province designated monkeypox a Disease of Public Health Significance, meaning that cases must be reported to the Medical Officer of Health.
- Toronto Public Health is undertaking a coordinated effort to mitigate the impact of monkeypox in Toronto, including:
 - case and contact management,
 - vaccination of individuals at greatest risk of exposure, and
 - education and outreach efforts.

2. Responding to the drug poisoning epidemic

- The drug poisoning epidemic is an urgent health priority that requires TPH's immediate attention.
- The drug poisoning crisis has intensified since 2015 and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been an increase in opioid toxicity deaths, non-fatal suspected overdose calls, and emergency department visits due to drug poisoning.

- Key activities include:
 - facilitating the development and implementation of evidence-based primary substance-use prevention across the lifespan;
 - working with partners to expand low-barrier access to safer supply programs, harm reduction, treatment and health and social services, for those most at-risk of drug-related harm; and
 - continuing to work with Health Canada and other community stakeholders on an alternative approach to drug criminalization for Toronto.

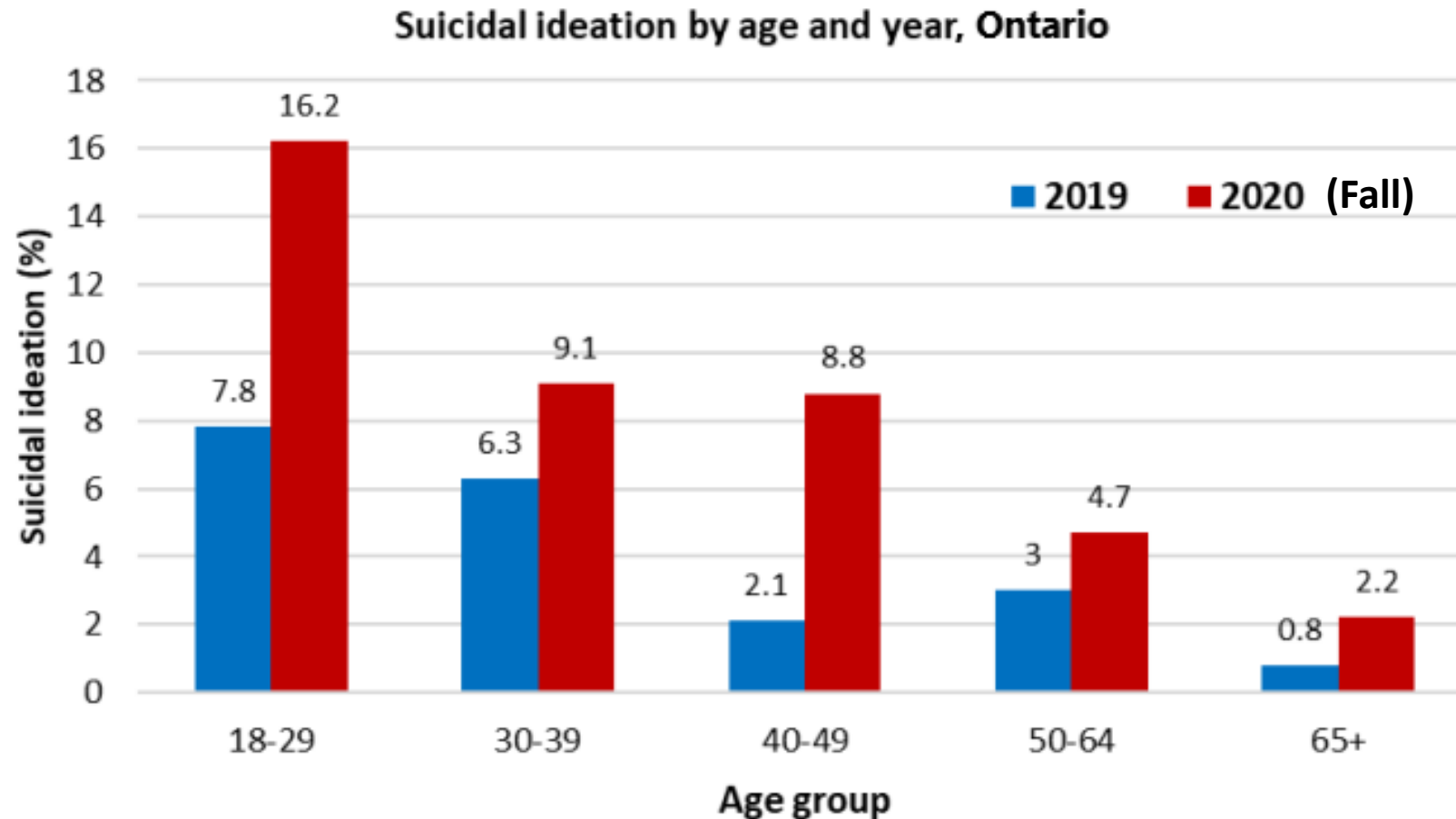
3. Promoting mental health

- The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the mental health and well-being of communities, individuals, and families.
- More people are reporting increases in stress and anxiety, including children and youth who have been impacted by school closures and interruptions.
- Toronto District School Board students (Jan 2021) were less happy and hopeful for the future, more lonely, stressed and nervous/worried compared to before (Apr 2017)
- Pregnant people who gave birth during COVID (Apr 2020-Jun 2021) experienced more anxiety and depression compared to pre-COVID (Jan 2019-Mar 2020)

- Increase in outpatient visits for mental health care (Ontario; Nov 2016-Mar 2020 vs Apr 2020-Jul 2021)
- Decrease in emergency department visits for mental health related issues (Apr 2020-Dec 2021 vs July 2018-Mar 2020)

Key Findings : Increased suicide ideation during COVID-19

There was a statistically significant increase in overall suicide ideation in Ontario among those aged 18-29 and 40-49.



Sources:

Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), 2015/2016. Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (Toronto pre-COVID only)

Nigatu, Y.T., Elton-Marshall, T., Rehm, J., & Hamilton, H. A (2021). CAMH Monitor e-Report: Substance Use, Mental Health and Well-Being Among Ontario Adults, 2020. Toronto, ON: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Available at: <http://www.camh.ca/camh-monitor>.

Key actions to promote mental health

- TPH is working with partners to contribute to effective strategies to improve mental health at a population level, such as:
 - contributing to the collation of local mental health data and evidence,
 - contributing to the development of a post-pandemic mental health strategy for implementation by a range of partners, and
 - improving access to mental health resources in collaboration with other City divisions and community organizations.
- Additional work is focused on integrating mental health promotion into existing TPH programs and services.

4. Re-building public health services

- During periods when COVID-19 activity is lower and presents fewer demands on staff, TPH is re-starting or scaling up other public health functions, as resources permit.
- In doing so, TPH is exploring opportunities to innovate and improve service delivery, drawing on lessons learned from the pandemic. Examples include:
 - Virtual breastfeeding consultations
 - Video-based assessment of suspected rabies cases in animals

Fostering collaborative, evidence-informed responses to population health priorities

- The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that complex and difficult population health issues can be tackled where the time, resources, and will to collaborate exist.
- In tackling these issues, TPH will continue to collaborate with other orders of government and partner organizations, especially in relation to the development of policies that support the social determinants of health.
- Recognizing that many population health issues require a long-term approach, TPH will undertake further data collection and develop a process to establish a long-term strategic plan.

Recommendation 1: The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to report back to the Board of Health in 2023 with an update on new, resumed, and enhanced public health functions, as well as a process for the development of a new strategic plan to guide Toronto Public Health's long-term priorities.

Thank you to public health staff

- The progress that we have made to date is due to the extensive efforts of TPH staff, as well as those of our partners.
- At this time, affording staff the opportunity to rest and recover is a key priority for TPH.
- Moving forward, TPH will be looking to foster a resilient workforce, and enhance supports for staff as they work to address the key priorities outlined today.