



This is the 4th Affidavit of
Vanessa Lever in this case and
was made on 2 March 2021

No. S-210209
Vancouver Registry

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Between

ALAIN BEAUDOIN, BRENT SMITH, JOHN KOOPMAN, JOHN VAN MUYEN,
RIVERSIDE CALVARY CHAPEL, IMMANUEL COVENANT
REFORMED CHURCH and FREE REFORMED CHURCH OF
CHILLIWACK, B.C.

Plaintiffs

And

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA and DR. BONNIE HENRY IN HER CAPACITY AS
PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER
FOR THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Defendants

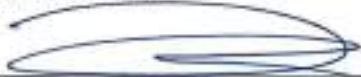
AFFIDAVIT

I, Vanessa Lever, Legal Assistant for the Legal Services Branch, Ministry of
Attorney General, 1301 – 865 Hornby St., Vancouver, B.C., AFFIRM THAT:

1. I provide legal administrative support to Jacqueline Hughes and Emily Lapper, counsel for the respondents, and as such have personal knowledge of the facts and matters hereinafter deposed except where stated to be made on information and belief, and where so stated, I believe the same to be true.
2. Attached as **Exhibit "A"** is a true copy of email correspondence dated February 8 to 23, 2021 between Dr. Brian Emerson and Rabbi Meir Kaplan regarding "Request for Variance to PHO Order - Purim and Sabbath Services to be held indoors".

3. Attached as **Exhibit "B"** is a true copy of email correspondence dated March 1, 2021 from [REDACTED] on behalf of Dr. Bonnie Henry, to Rabbi Meir Kaplan regarding "Updated Variance to PHO Order - Sabbath Services to be held outdoors", together with its attachment and the email correspondence attached above at Exhibit A.

AFFIRMED BEFORE ME at
Vancouver, British Columbia on
2/March/2021.



A commissioner for taking
affidavits for British Columbia


VANESSA LEVER

Jacqueline D. Hughes
Barrister and Solicitor
Ministry of Justice & Attorney General
Legal Services Branch
#1301 - 865 Hornby Street
Vancouver BC
V6Z 2G3

This is Exhibit "A" referred to in the affidavit of Vanessa Lever affirmed before me at Vancouver in the Province of British Columbia this 2 day of March, 2021.

A Commissioner for taking Affidavits
Within the Province of British Columbia

Lever, Vanessa AG:EX

From: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 3:55 PM
To: Rabbi Meir Kaplan
Cc: Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX
Subject: RE: Request for Variance to PHO Order - Purim and Sabbath Services to be held indoors

PS to be clear – As you mentioned that you submitted this request on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province this decision applies to those congregations, so please inform the other Rabbi's of this decision.

Thanks.

Brian Emerson

Dr. Brian P. Emerson, Deputy Provincial Health Officer (acting)
BC Ministry of Health, PO Box 9648 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
T 250.952.1701 C 250.514.2219 F. 250.952. 1713 brian.emerson@gov.bc.ca

From: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX
Sent: February 23, 2021 3:51 PM
To: 'Rabbi Meir Kaplan' <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>
Cc: Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Request for Variance to PHO Order - Purim and Sabbath Services to be held indoors

Dear Rabbi Meir Kaplan.

Further to the variance we issued below, I have reviewed the current COVID-19 situation in BC with Dr. Henry and your request to hold Purim and Sabbath services in-doors.

Case numbers and hospitalizations are staying steady but elevated, while outbreaks in long term care facilities have come down but are also staying steady. We are continuing to see virus variants of concern, and although at a low level, we are aware that they can rapidly escalate. This indicates that there is still concerning amounts of COVID-19 circulating in communities. Fortunately vaccine supplies are increasing and are being rapidly administered and we are expecting to substantially increase immunization activities in the next few weeks.

We recognize that you and other Rabbis have been very careful with respect to bringing people together for services, and have carefully thought through the risks and implementation of preventive measures. Considering this, and given the current epidemiology of COVID-19, on behalf of Dr. Henry this email is to grant you a conditional variance to the PHO *Gatherings and Events* order to hold your Purim and weekly Sabbath services indoors, subject to adherence to the conditions listed below.

The conditions of the variance to the order are:

1. There is to be no more than 25 people attending services, as long as there is enough space for each person to maintain 2 metre physical distance from each other.

2. Before attending the service participants must carry out a daily health check, which means reviewing the questions on the health check poster at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers?lang=en>.
3. If they have not carried out or passed the daily health check, participants must not be present at the service.
4. If participants exhibit [symptoms of COVID-19](#) they must not attend the service;
5. Every participant will be wearing a face mask on entry to the building, during the service and on exiting.
6. Celebrants may remove their mask when speaking, but there must be at least a three metre separation between them and the participant or there must be a physical barrier between them and other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
7. Each participant is to maintain 2 metres physical distance from one another (unless they are in the same family).
8. The services will last no more than one hour.
9. Hand sanitation supplies are to be readily available and high levels of hygiene maintained.
10. There will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors.
11. Ventilation is to be maximized through mechanical means and/or opening doors or windows.
12. There is to be no passing of a collection bag or plate and no sharing of ceremonial objects.
13. Participants are not allowed to sing.
14. Participants must disperse immediately after a service and must not congregate with patrons who are leaving the service or arriving for a subsequent service.
15. Following a service, and during an appropriate interval of time before another service commences, the organizer must ensure that:
 - a. the place is cleaned, sanitized and ventilated while there are no patrons present;
 - b. there is a sufficient period of time between services to permit a place to be cleaned, sanitized and ventilated without any participants being present, and
 - c. participants leaving one service, do not have contact with patrons arriving for a subsequent service.
16. To support contact tracing in case of an exposure to an infected participant, the organizer must
 - a. collect the first and last names and telephone number, or email address, of every participant who attends a service;
 - b. retain this information for thirty days, in case there is a need for contact tracing on the part of the medical health officer, in which case the information must be provided to the medical health officer; and
 - c. destroy the information after thirty days.
17. Due to higher risk of serious complications of COVID-19 infection, the organizer must advise and encourage the following people to NOT attend in-person services:
 - a. People over the age of 60
 - b. People who are living with someone with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms
 - c. People with underlying or comprised medical conditions.
 - d. Family members who live with people over 60 or those with underlying or comprised medical conditions

Please note that this variance does not have an expiry date but may be withdrawn at any time by the Provincial Health Officer should conditions exist that warrant doing so in the interests of protecting public health.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this decision.

Sincerely,
Brian Emerson

Dr. Brian P. Emerson, Deputy Provincial Health Officer (acting)
 BC Ministry of Health, PO Box 9648 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
 T 250.952.1701 C 250.514.2219 F. 250.952. 1713 brian.emerson@gov.bc.ca

From: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX
Sent: February 17, 2021 1:57 PM
To: 'Rabbi Meir Kaplan' <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>
Cc: Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Request for exemption - Purim

Dear Rabbi Meir Kaplan:

Thank you for your request below to Dr. Bonnie Henry for reconsideration of the provincial health officer *Gatherings and Events* order on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province as applied to the upcoming holiday of Purim on February 25 at night (from nightfall) and the day of February 26 (until sunset). Your request has been forwarded to me for response.

We have reviewed your request and taken into consideration that the event will be of short duration, have a limited number of people (25) attending, that people will maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other, attendees will wear masks, high levels of hygiene will be maintained and there will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors. We do take note that you are requesting that these events happen indoors.

Based on our review of the safety plan and current spread of COVID-19 in BC it is our opinion that these events would be low risk if held outdoors. We do have concerns about the events being held indoors due to the much greater ease of virus transmission associated with indoor settings. In addition we are concerned about increasing findings of virus variants of concern which can transmit rapidly through population and potentially triggering a third wave of disease, so it remains a time for much caution.

Therefore this is to inform you that, pursuant to section 43 (3) (c) of the *Public Health Act* (excerpt below), Dr. Henry is varying the order to allow Purim events to be held outdoors on February 25 and 26 as long as the safety plan is implemented as described, and you follow the other applicable requirements of the *Gatherings and Events* order posted on my website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>. The other conditions of the order, as applicable, continue to be in force.

However, we are aware that there appears to be decreasing rates of COVID-19 disease, indicating declining risk of disease transmission, so holding these events indoors may be a possibility. We are closely monitoring the occurrence of COVID-19 and are willing to revisit this decision by Monday, February 22. Specifically, if the COVID-19 situation is favourable we are willing to reconsider this decision with respect to providing a variance to authorize the proposed Purim events to be held indoors. I will contact you on Monday to let you know about issuing a variance to allow indoor events.

As you mentioned that you submitted this request on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province please inform the other Rabbi's of this decision.

We realize this is a very challenging time for all British Columbians, and appreciate your continued cooperation and compliance with our recommendations and order.

If you, or any of the other Rabbis, have any questions or concerns about this decision please let me know.

Sincerely,
Brian Emerson

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 BC Ministry of Health, PO Box 9648 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
 T 250.952.1701 C 250.514.2219 F. 250.952. 1713 brian.emerson@gov.bc.ca

Public Health Act excerpt

Reconsideration of orders

43 (3) After considering a request for reconsideration, a health officer may do one or more of the following:

- (a) reject the request on the basis that the information submitted in support of the request
 - (i) is not relevant, or
 - (ii) was reasonably available at the time the order was issued;
- (b) delay the date the order is to take effect or suspend the order, if satisfied that doing so would not be detrimental to public health;
- (c) confirm, rescind or vary the order.

Dr. Brian P. Emerson, Deputy Provincial Health Officer (acting)
 BC Ministry of Health, PO Box 9648 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
 T 250.952.1701 C 250.514.2219 F. 250.952. 1713 brian.emerson@gov.bc.ca

From: Rabbi Meir Kaplan <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>

Sent: February 8, 2021 1:07 PM

To: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX <Brian.Emerson@gov.bc.ca>; Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Request for exemption - Purim

Dear Dr Emerson,

As per our phone conversation, I am submitting here a request on behalf of all Orthodox congregation in the province, for the upcoming holiday of Purim.

The basis for the request

- The Holiday of Purim is celebrated this year on February 25 at night (from nightfall) and the day Of February 26 (until sunset)
- On the holiday of Purim, we are required to hear the reading of the Book of Esther once at night and once by day.
- According to Jewish law, one cannot fulfil the requirement of hearing the Megillah through an electronic device, it must be heard in person.

Request for exemption

Based on the above, we would like to get an exemption to hold an in-person reading of the Book of Esther on the night and day of Purim. Here is the protocol suggested:

1. 30 minutes service.
2. Services are limited to 25 people and 20% sanctuary capacity
3. People maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other
4. Attendees wear masks
5. High levels of hygiene are maintained
6. There will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors

Since we would like to inform our congregants about this holiday plans, we would appreciate it if you can get back to us as soon as a decision has been made.

Please contact me with any question.

With many thanks,

Rabbi Meir Kaplan

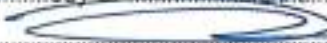


Chabad of Vancouver Island

2955 Glasgow Street Victoria, BC V8T 4H1

Cell: 250-858-6770 | kaplanvictoria@gmail.com | www.ChabadVI.org

This is Exhibit " B " referred to in the
affidavit of Vanessa Lever
affirmed before me at Vancouver
in the Province of British Columbia
this 2 day of March, 2021


A Commissioner for taking Affidavits
Within the Province of British Columbia

Lever, Vanessa AG:EX

From: [REDACTED] HLTH:EX on behalf of Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX
Sent: Monday, March 1, 2021 10:57 AM
To: 'kaplanvictoria@gmail.com'
Cc: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX; Bruce, Alan HLTH:EX
Subject: Updated Variance to PHO Order - Sabbath Services to be held outdoors
Attachments: Covid-19-canada-epidemiology-modelling-20210219.pdf

Dear Rabbi Meir Kaplan, and as you are acting on behalf of the other Rabbis, please inform the other Rabbis of this decision and forward this email to them:

Further to the variance granted I granted to the Orthodox Jewish congregations on February 23 to hold Purim and Sabbath services in-doors, this is to clarify that consistent with your original request, the variance only allowed indoor services for the Sabbath of February 27, given that it followed immediately after the Purim gatherings on Thursday and Friday.

We are noting that virus transmission remains elevated and there are indications of increasing viral transmission in some areas of the province. In addition we are seeing increased reports of virus variants of concern (VOCs). Modelling suggests that if these VOCs were to become established or predominant in our province, case counts will rise quickly and significantly. The enclosed presentation from the Public Health Agency of Canada notes that "With spread of VOC, current public health measures will be insufficient, and epidemic resurgence is forecast" (see slide 12) and "In all provinces current controls may not be sufficient to fully control the variants of concern. The early lifting of public health measures could lead to a resurgence of the epidemic, including the community transmission of variants of concern" (slide 16).

Furthermore, with the spring break season nearly upon us we anticipate that there will be additional people travelling, including people coming from other provinces where transmission is higher than in BC, in spite of our recommendation to limit travel to essential reasons. Also, with schools out of session we are concerned that additional socialization will also drive viral transmission to higher levels, potentially increasing hospitalizations, intensive care admissions and deaths.

With respect to the risk of indoor services, the likelihood of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is greater when people are interacting in communal settings, when people are close to each other, in crowded settings, in indoor settings due to less ventilation than outdoor settings; and when people speak, and especially when they sing, chant or speak at higher than conversational volume. These are all conditions that exist when services are held indoors, which make them of particular concern.

The likelihood of transmission also increases exponentially in a population when a number of people are simultaneously infected in a group setting, and subsequently infect their contacts, who infect their contacts and so on. This can, and has, quickly result in a scenario where local public health resources can be overwhelmed such that they are no longer able to trace all the contacts of such an exposure and require them to self-isolate. If this occurs, community spread can quickly become rampant, leading to increased case counts and, in time, has the potential to overwhelm our healthcare system as hospitalizations increase. As well, transmission in religious settings have led to introductions of the virus into vulnerable community settings such as long term care homes leading to serious outbreaks with resultant deaths.

For these reasons I am revising the variance to the order to be clear that weekly Sabbath services at all Jewish Orthodox Synagogues must be held outdoors, according to the following conditions.

Capacity, Setting and Attendee Limitations

1. The maximum number of people attending a service is 25.
2. Services are to be held outdoors.
3. Due to higher risk of serious complications of COVID-19 infection, the organizer must advise and encourage the following people to NOT attend in-person services:
 - a. People over the age of 70 (even if immunized, as there is currently uncertainty about the timing and duration of protection from immunization);
 - b. People who are living with someone with COVID-19, or upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms;
 - c. People with underlying medical conditions or compromised immune systems that put them at higher risk of severe illness or complications from COVID-19;

Preparation

1. To support contact tracing in case of an exposure to an infected participant, the organizer must:
 - a. pre-register participants to assure maximum number of attendees is not exceeded
 - b. collect the first and last names and telephone number, or email address, of every participant who attends a service;
 - c. retain this information for thirty days, in case there is a need for contact tracing on the part of the medical health officer, in which case the information must be provided to the medical health officer; and
 - d. destroy the information after thirty days.
2. Before attending the service, all participants must carry out a health check, which means reviewing the questions on the health check poster at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers?lang=en>.
3. If a participant has not carried out or passed the health check, they must not be present at the service.
4. If a participant exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 they must not attend the service;
5. Hand sanitation supplies are to be readily available.

Conduct of Services

1. Every participant will wear a non-medical face covering or mask.
2. Celebrants may remove their mask when speaking, but there must be at least a three-metre separation between them and other participants or there must be a physical barrier between them and other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
3. Each participant is to maintain 2 metres physical distance from one another, unless they reside in the same household.
4. No service will last more than one hour.
5. There will be no social gatherings or social interaction among participants before or after the services, whether indoors or outdoors.
6. There is to be no passing of a collection bag or plate and no sharing of ceremonial objects.
7. Participants are not permitted to sing or chant.
8. Participants must disperse immediately after a service and must not congregate with patrons who are leaving the service or arriving for a subsequent service.

In summary, pursuant to section 43 (3) (c) of the *Public Health Act* (excerpt below), I am varying the order with respect to the weekly Sabbath events further to the conditions above. The other applicable requirements of the *Gatherings and Events* order posted on my website at

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus> continue to be in force.

Please note that this variance does not have an expiry date but may be withdrawn at any time by me should conditions exist that warrant doing so in the interests of protecting public health, such as if the variants of concern proliferate in the general population or we see increasing community transmission due to other factors.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this decision.

My best,

Dr Bonnie Henry
Provincial Health Officer
Office of the PHO
Ministry of Health
4th floor, 1515 Blanshard St
Mailing address: PO Box 9648, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC
V8W 9P4
Bonnie.henry@gov.bc.ca

Phone: 250 952-1330

I gratefully acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional unceded territory of the Lekwungen Peoples, specifically the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. Hay'sxw'qu Si'em

Warning: This email is intended only for the use of the individual or organization to whom it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged or confidential. Any distribution, disclosure, copying, or other use by anyone else is strictly prohibited. If you have received this in error, please telephone or e-mail the sender immediately and delete the message.

Public Health Act excerpt

Reconsideration of orders

43 (3) After considering a request for reconsideration, a health officer may do one or more of the following:

- (a) reject the request on the basis that the information submitted in support of the request
 - (i) is not relevant, or
 - (ii) was reasonably available at the time the order was issued;
- (b) delay the date the order is to take effect or suspend the order, if satisfied that doing so would not be detrimental to public health;
- (c) confirm, rescind or vary the order.

From: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX
Sent: February 23, 2021 3:55 PM

To: 'Rabbi Meir Kaplan' <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>

Cc: Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: RE: Request for Variance to PHO Order - Purim and Sabbath Services to be held indoors

PS to be clear – As you mentioned that you submitted this request on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province this decision applies to those congregations, so please inform the other Rabbi's of this decision.

Thanks.

Brian Emerson

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BC Ministry of Health, PO Box 9648 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9P1
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We recognize that you and other Rabbis have been very careful with respect to bringing people together for services, and have carefully thought through the risks and implementation of preventive measures. Considering this, and given the current epidemiology of COVID-19, on behalf of Dr. Henry this email is to grant you a conditional variance to the PHO *Gatherings and Events* order to hold your Purim and weekly Sabbath services indoors, subject to adherence to the conditions listed below.

The conditions of the variance to the order are:

1. There is to be no more than 25 people attending services, as long as there is enough space for each person to maintain 2 metre physical distance from each other.
2. Before attending the service participants must carry out a daily health check, which means reviewing the questions on the health check poster at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entry-check-workers?lang=en>.
3. If they have not carried out or passed the daily health check, participants must not be present at the service.
4. If participants exhibit [symptoms of COVID-19](#) they must not attend the service;

5. Every participant will be wearing a face mask on entry to the building, during the service and on exiting.
6. Celebrants may remove their mask when speaking, but there must be at least a three metre separation between them and the participant or there must be a physical barrier between them and other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
7. Each participant is to maintain 2 metres physical distance from one another (unless they are in the same family).
8. The services will last no more than one hour.
9. Hand sanitation supplies are to be readily available and high levels of hygiene maintained.
10. There will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors.
11. Ventilation is to be maximized through mechanical means and/or opening doors or windows.
12. There is to be no passing of a collection bag or plate and no sharing of ceremonial objects.
13. Participants are not allowed to sing.
14. Participants must disperse immediately after a service and must not congregate with patrons who are leaving the service or arriving for a subsequent service.
15. Following a service, and during an appropriate interval of time before another service commences, the organizer must ensure that:
 - a. the place is cleaned, sanitized and ventilated while there are no patrons present;
 - b. there is a sufficient period of time between services to permit a place to be cleaned, sanitized and ventilated without any participants being present, and
 - c. participants leaving one service, do not have contact with patrons arriving for a subsequent service.
16. To support contact tracing in case of an exposure to an infected participant, the organizer must
 - a. collect the first and last names and telephone number, or email address, of every participant who attends a service;
 - b. retain this information for thirty days, in case there is a need for contact tracing on the part of the medical health officer, in which case the information must be provided to the medical health officer; and
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17. Due to higher risk of serious complications of COVID-19 infection, the organizer must advise and encourage the following people to NOT attend in-person services:
 - a. People over the age of 60
 - b. People who are living with someone with upper respiratory or flu-like symptoms
 - c. People with underlying or comprised medical conditions.
 - d. Family members who live with people over 60 or those with underlying or comprised medical conditions

Please note that this variance does not have an expiry date but may be withdrawn at any time by the Provincial Health Officer should conditions exist that warrant doing so in the interests of protecting public health.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this decision.

Sincerely,

Brian Emerson

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To: 'Rabbi Meir Kaplan' <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>
Cc: Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: RE: Request for exemption - Purim

Dear Rabbi Meir Kaplan:

Thank you for your request below to Dr. Bonnie Henry for reconsideration of the provincial health officer *Gatherings and Events* order on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province as applied to the upcoming holiday of Purim on February 25 at night (from nightfall) and the day of February 26 (until sunset). Your request has been forwarded to me for response.

We have reviewed your request and taken into consideration that the event will be of short duration, have a limited number of people (25) attending, that people will maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other, attendees will wear masks, high levels of hygiene will be maintained and there will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors. We do take note that you are requesting that these events happen indoors.

Based on our review of the safety plan and current spread of COVID-19 in BC it is our opinion that these events would be low risk if held outdoors. We do have concerns about the events being held indoors due to the much greater ease of virus transmission associated with indoor settings. In addition we are concerned about increasing findings of virus variants of concern which can transmit rapidly through population and potentially triggering a third wave of disease, so it remains a time for much caution.

Therefore this is to inform you that, pursuant to section 43 (3) (c) of the *Public Health Act* (excerpt below), Dr. Henry is varying the order to allow Purim events to be held outdoors on February 25 and 26 as long as the safety plan is implemented as described, and you follow the other applicable requirements of the *Gatherings and Events* order posted on my website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>. The other conditions of the order, as applicable, continue to be in force.

However, we are aware that there appears to be decreasing rates of COVID-19 disease, indicating declining risk of disease transmission, so holding these events indoors may be a possibility. We are closely monitoring the occurrence of COVID-19 and are willing to revisit this decision by Monday, February 22. Specifically, if the COVID-19 situation is favourable we are willing to reconsider this decision with respect to providing a variance to authorize the proposed Purim events to be held indoors. I will contact you on Monday to let you know about issuing a variance to allow indoor events.

As you mentioned that you submitted this request on behalf of all Orthodox congregations in the province please inform the other Rabbi's of this decision.

We realize this is a very challenging time for all British Columbians, and appreciate your continued cooperation and compliance with our recommendations and order.

If you, or any of the other Rabbis, have any questions or concerns about this decision please let me know.

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Public Health Act excerpt

Reconsideration of orders

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 T 250.952.1701 C 250.514.2219 F. 250.952. 1713 brian.emerson@gov.bc.ca

From: Rabbi Meir Kaplan <kaplanvictoria@gmail.com>

Sent: February 8, 2021 1:07 PM

To: Emerson, Brian P HLTH:EX <Brian.Emerson@gov.bc.ca>; Henry, Bonnie HLTH:EX <Bonnie.Henry@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Request for exemption - Purim

Dear Dr Emerson,

As per our phone conversation, I am submitting here a request on behalf of all Orthodox congregation in the province, for the upcoming holiday of Purim.

The basis for the request

- The Holiday of Purim is celebrated this year on February 25 at night (from nightfall) and the day of February 26 (until sunset)
- On the holiday of Purim, we are required to hear the reading of the Book of Esther once at night and once by day.

- According to Jewish law, one cannot fulfil the requirement of hearing the Megillah through an electronic device, it must be heard in person.

Request for exemption

Based on the above, we would like to get an exemption to hold an in-person reading of the Book of Esther on the night and day of Purim. Here is the protocol suggested:

1. 30 minutes service.
2. Services are limited to 25 people and 20% sanctuary capacity
3. People maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other
4. Attendees wear masks
5. High levels of hygiene are maintained
6. There will be no social gatherings or social interaction before or after the services, indoors or outdoors

Since we would like to inform our congregants about this holiday plans, we would appreciate it if you can get back to us as soon as a decision has been made.

Please contact me with any question.

With many thanks,

Rabbi Meir Kaplan



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Update on COVID-19 in Canada: Epidemiology and Modelling

February 19th, 2021

Canada.ca/coronavirus



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada



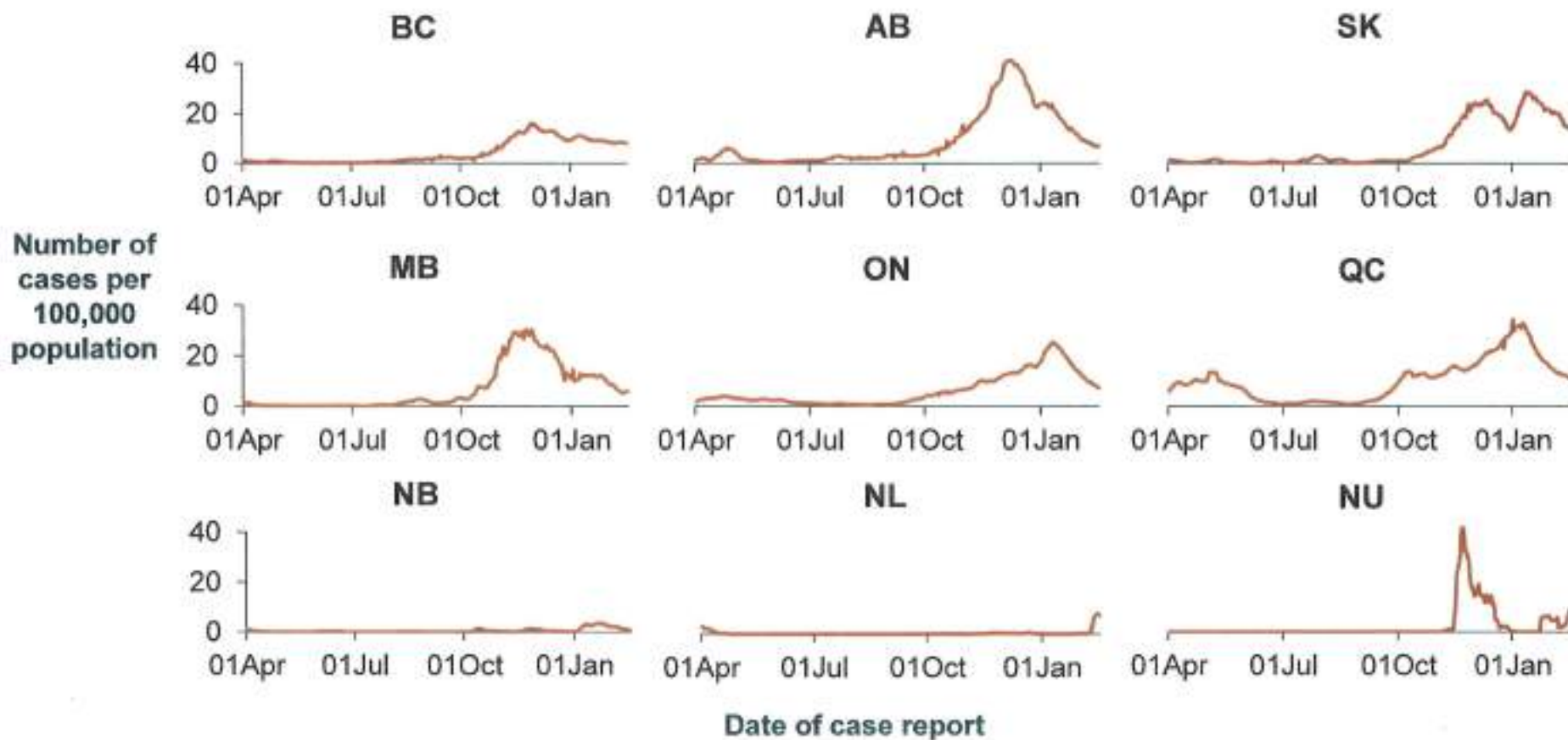
COVID-19 daily case counts continue to decline nationally



Data as of February 16, 2021



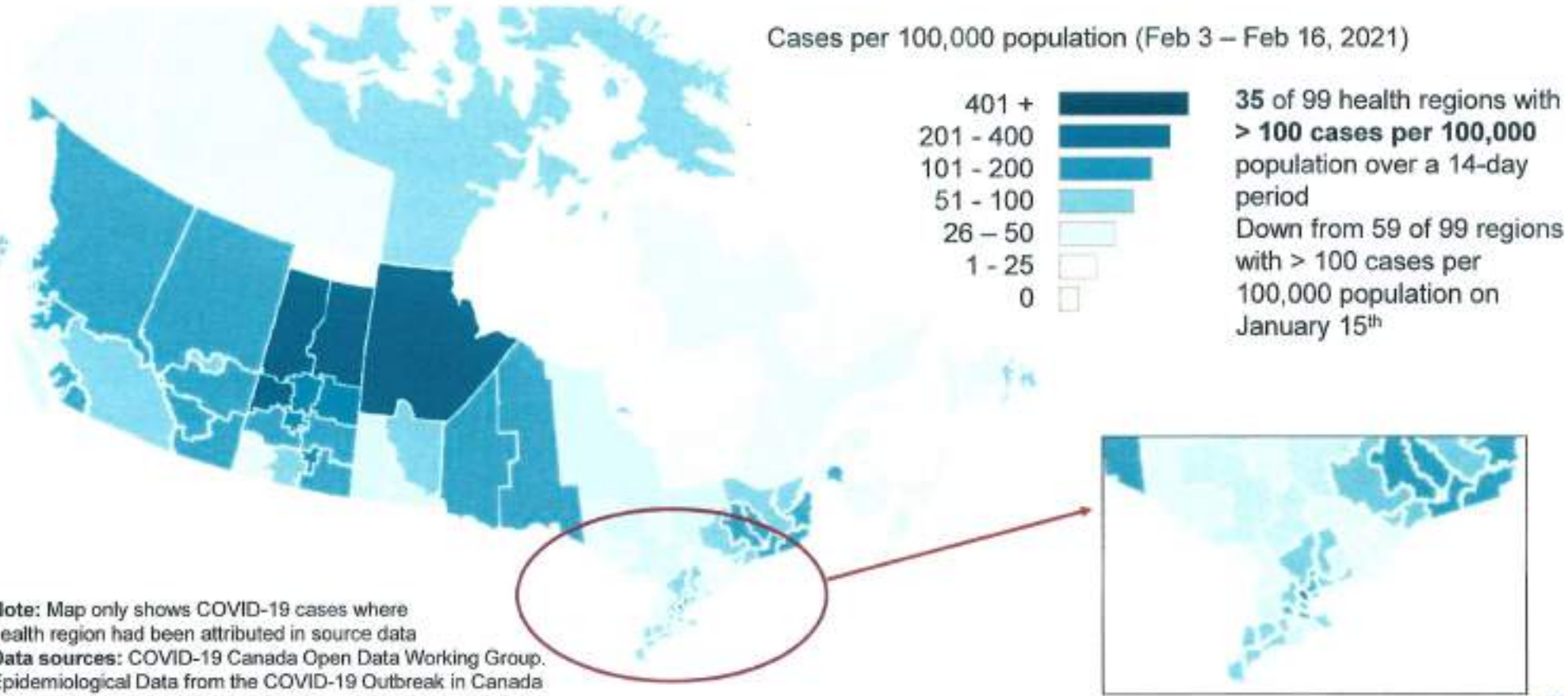
COVID-19 incidence rate over time in nine Canadian jurisdictions



Data as of February 16, 2021



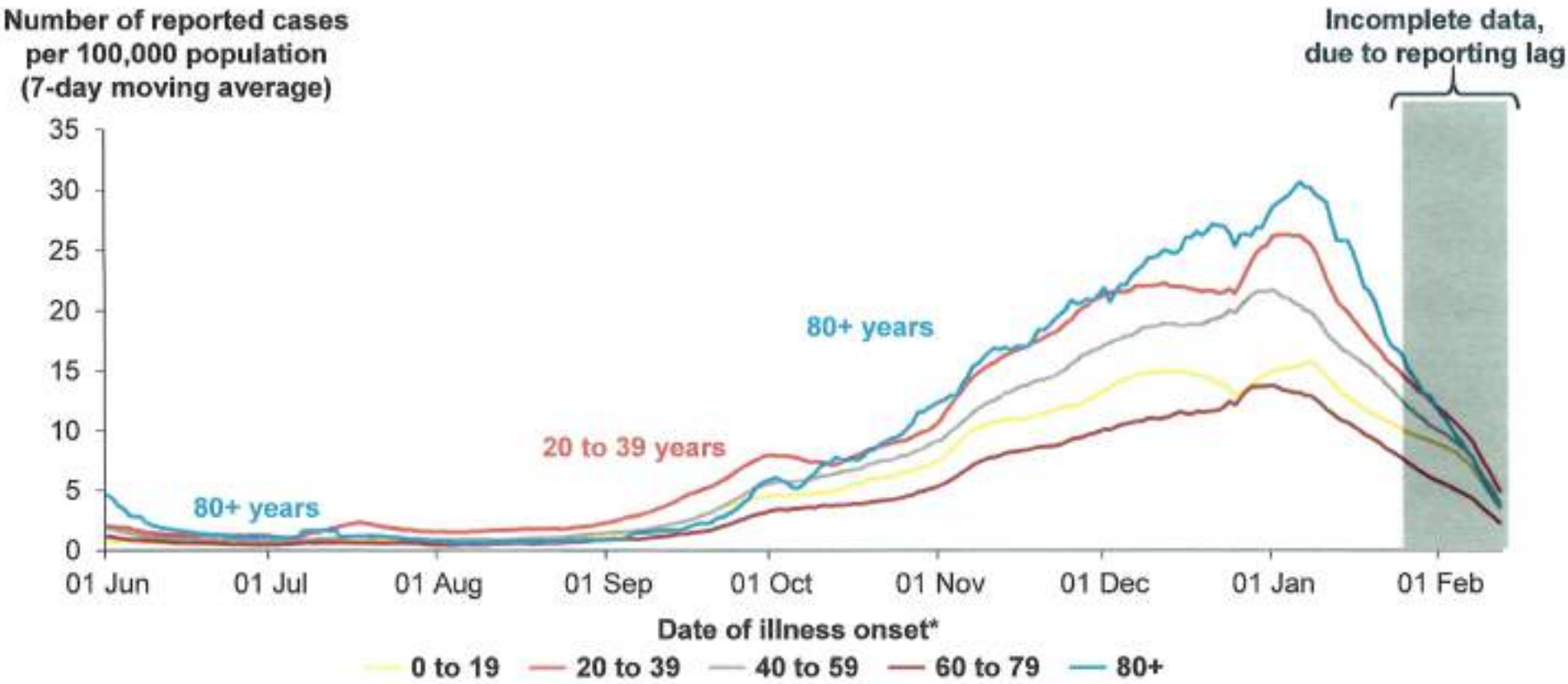
Fewer health regions reporting high rates of COVID-19 infection



Data as of February 16, 2021



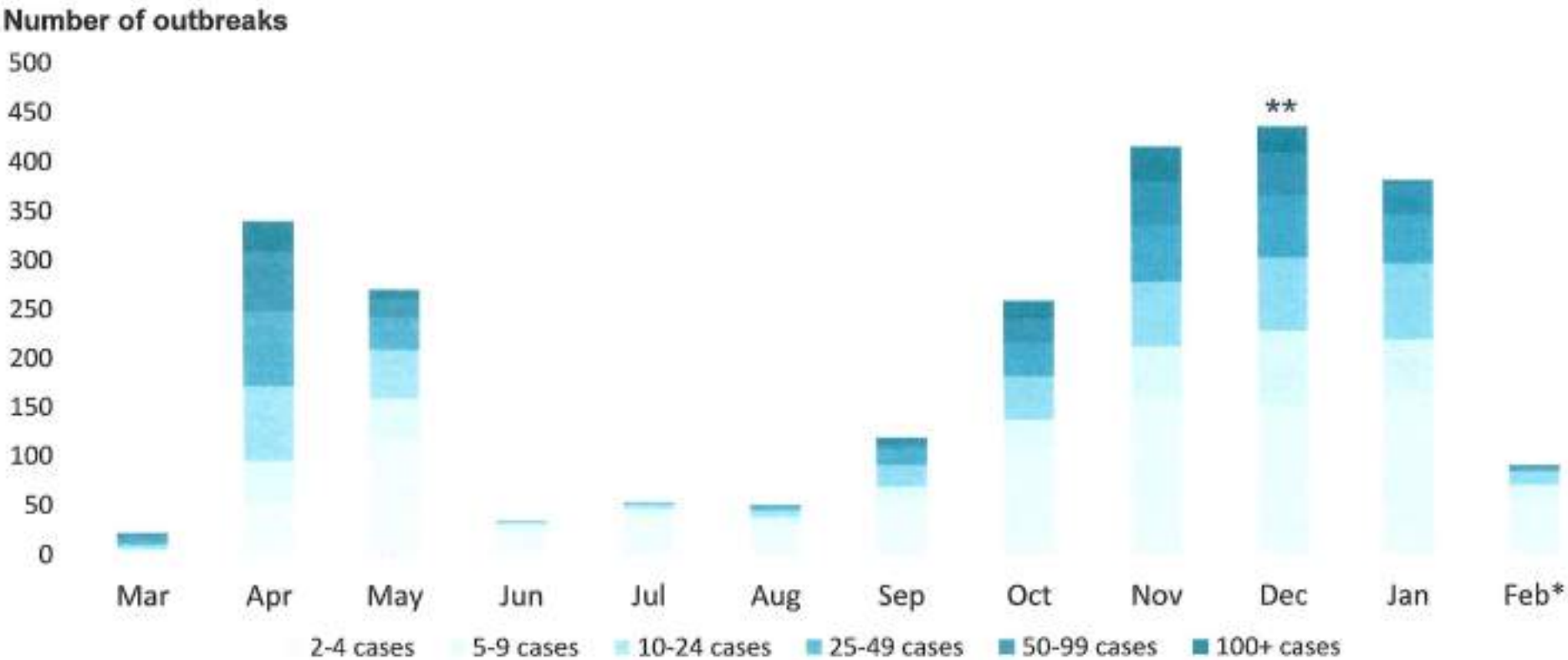
Incidence rates declining across all age groups



Data as of February 16, 2021
*Note: First available of illness onset, specimen collection, laboratory test date



Number of outbreaks in long term care homes* appears to be declining



Data as of February 10, 2021

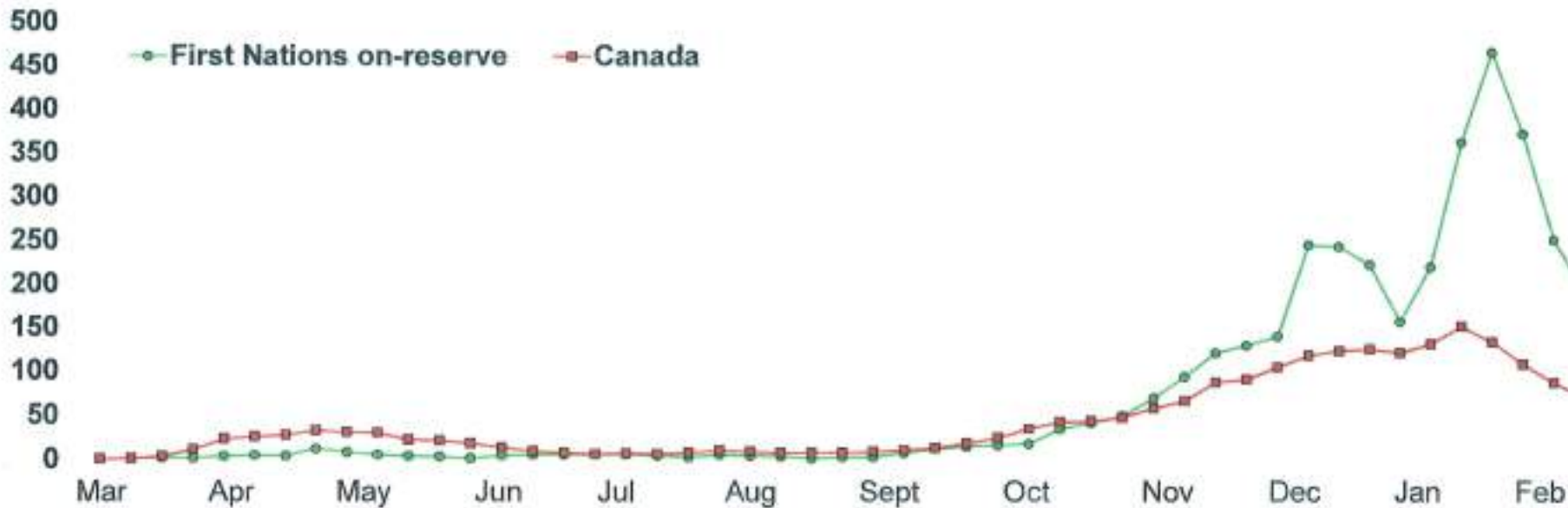
*Note: By date outbreak was first reported publicly. Including retirement residences. Data for the month of February is incomplete.

**Underestimated due to reduced reporting in December.



Impact of COVID-19 is higher among Indigenous populations

Rate of reported cases
per 100,000 population



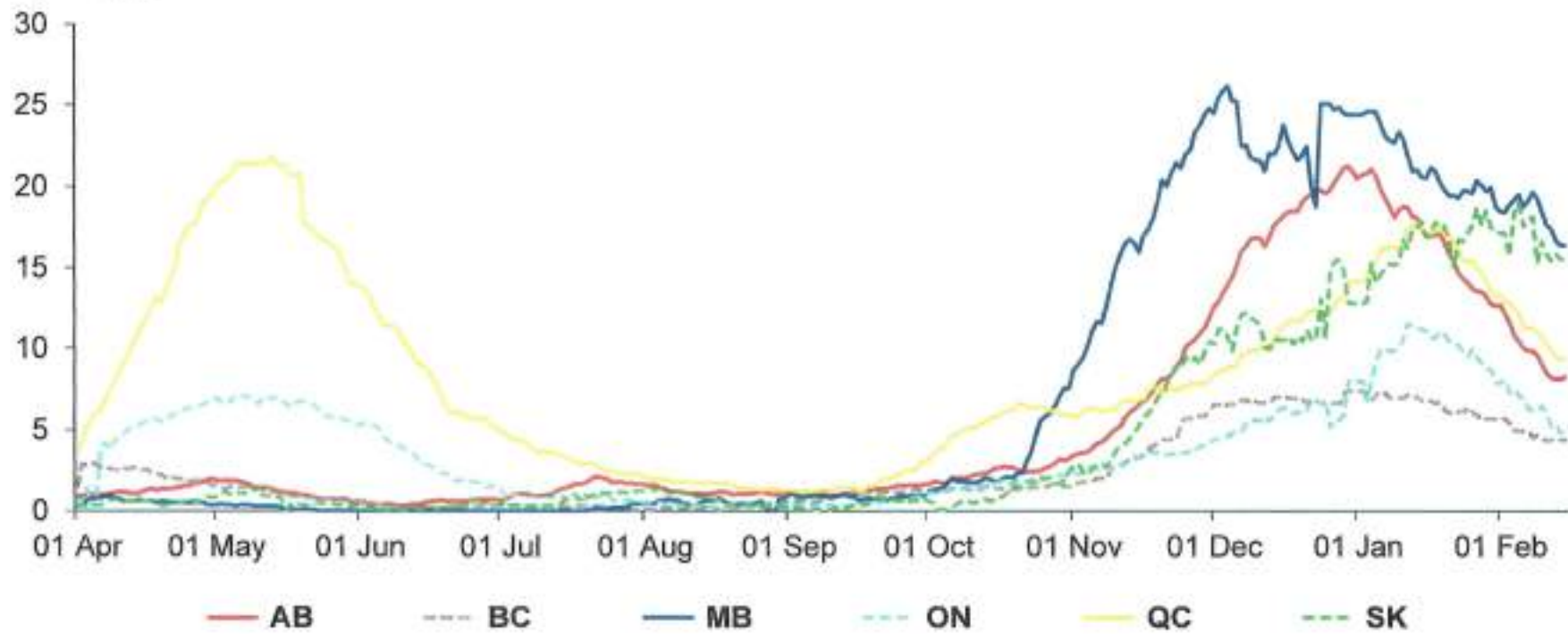
COVID-19 incidence in First Nations on reserve and general Canadian population

Data as of February 16, 2021
Note: By episode date



Hospitalization rates declining in most provinces across the country

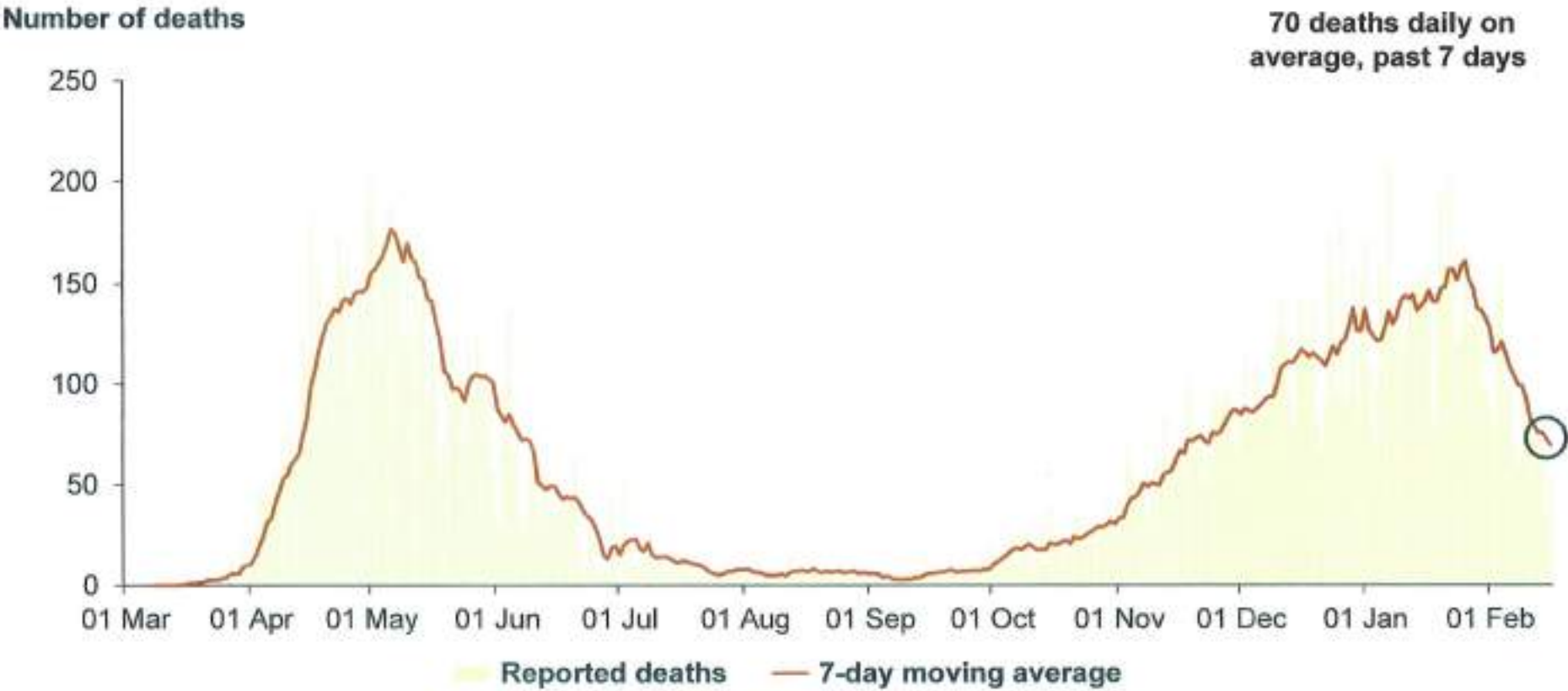
Number of cases in
hospital per
100,000 population



Data as of February 16, 2021
Note: 7-day moving average



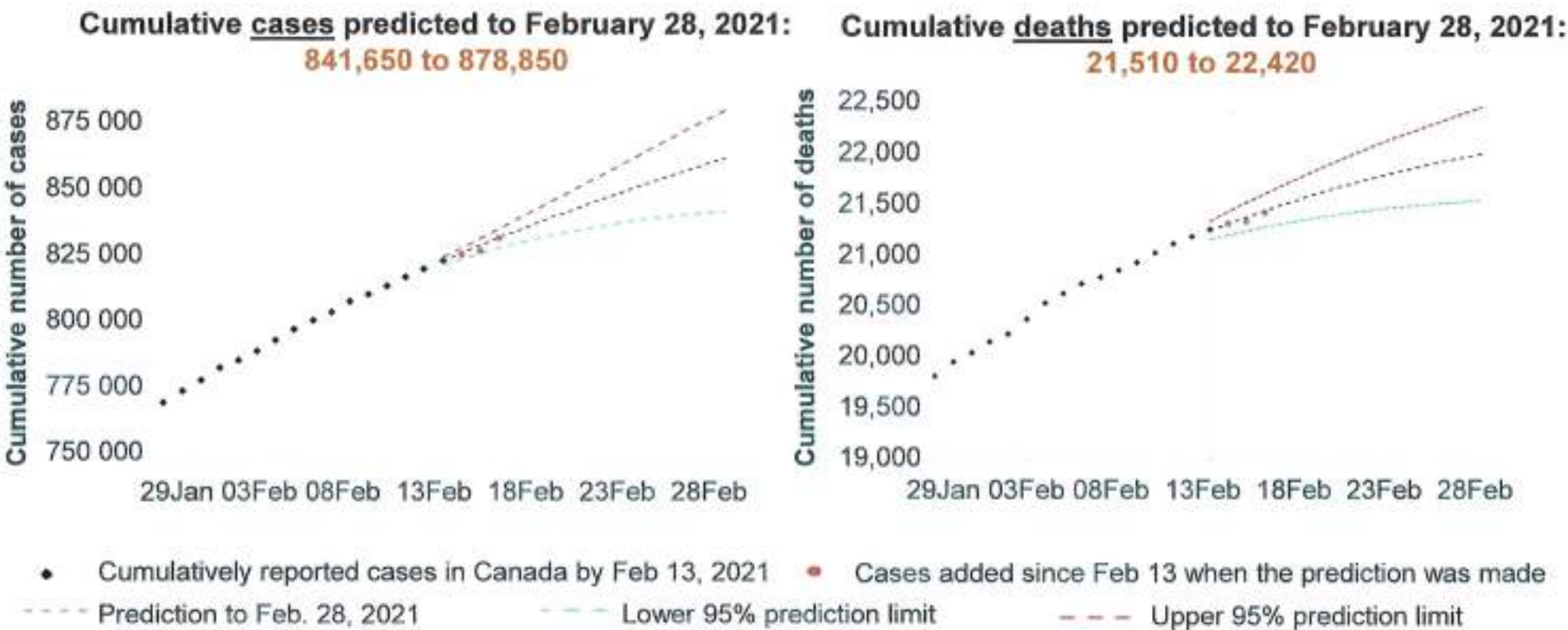
Daily COVID-related deaths continuing to decline nationally



Data as of February 16, 2021



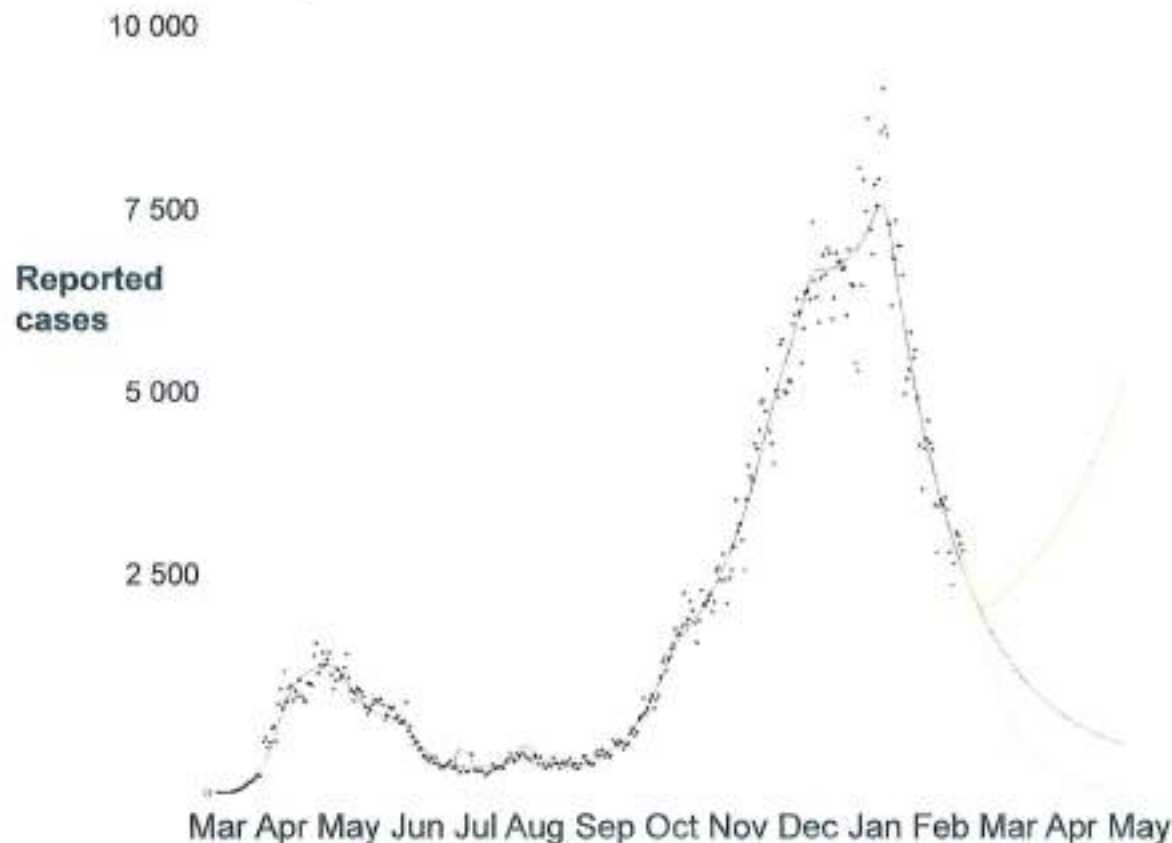
Short-term forecast predicts a flattening of the trajectory, reflecting the slowdown in the rate of epidemic growth



Data as of February 16, 2021
Note: Extrapolation based on recent trends using a forecasting model (with ranges of uncertainty).



Longer-range forecast based only on non-variant COVID-19 indicates Canada's epidemic is on track to come under control



If we **maintain** the current number of people we contact each day – the epidemic is on track to come under control: **Grey line**



If we **increase** the current number of people we contact each day, e.g. by easing restrictions – the epidemic is forecast to resurge faster and stronger: **Orange line**



If we **reduce** the current number of people we contact each day **to only essential activities** through **combined individual precautions and public health measures** – the epidemic is forecast to come under control in most locations: **Blue line**

Data as of February 16, 2021

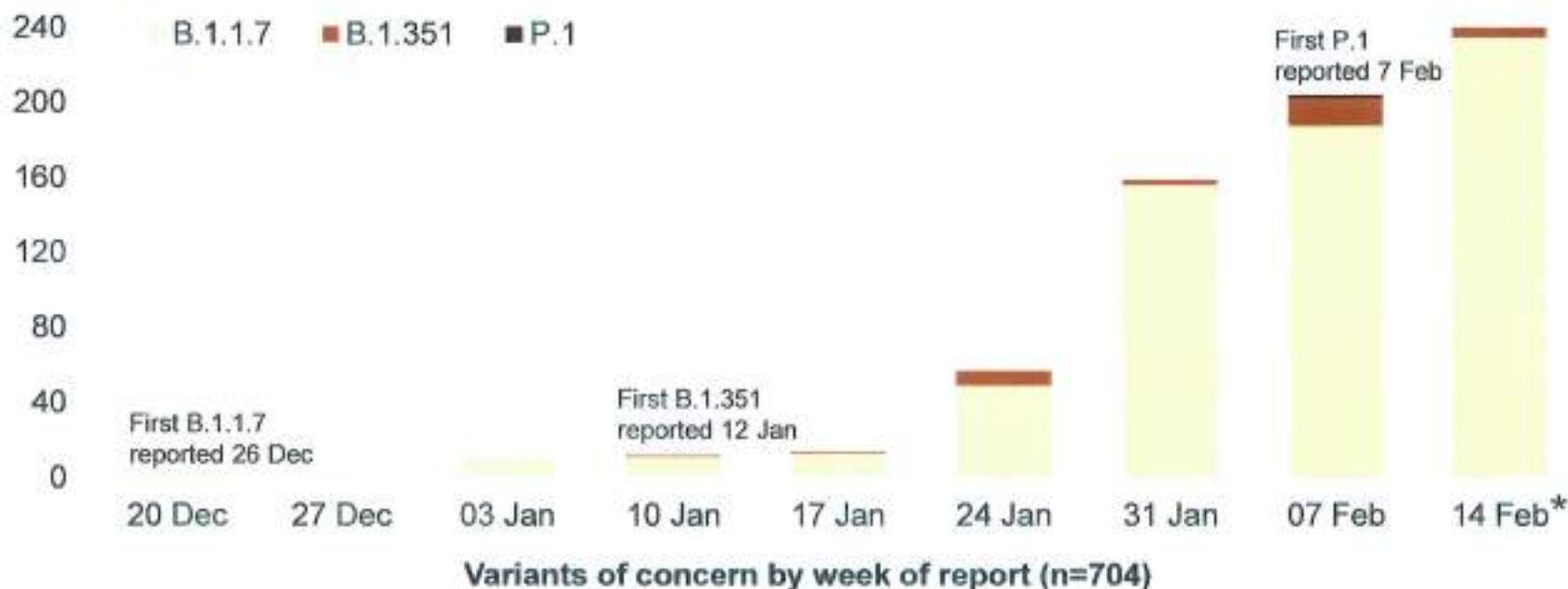
Methods: Anderson SC et al. 2020. Estimating the impact of COVID-19 control measures using a Bayesian model of physical distancing.
<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.17.20070086v1>



More contagious SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern detected in all provinces, with increasing prevalence and spread

	B.1.1.7 (first identified in UK)	B.1.351 (first identified in South Africa)	P.1 (first identified in Brazil)
Canada	664	39	1

Number of cases

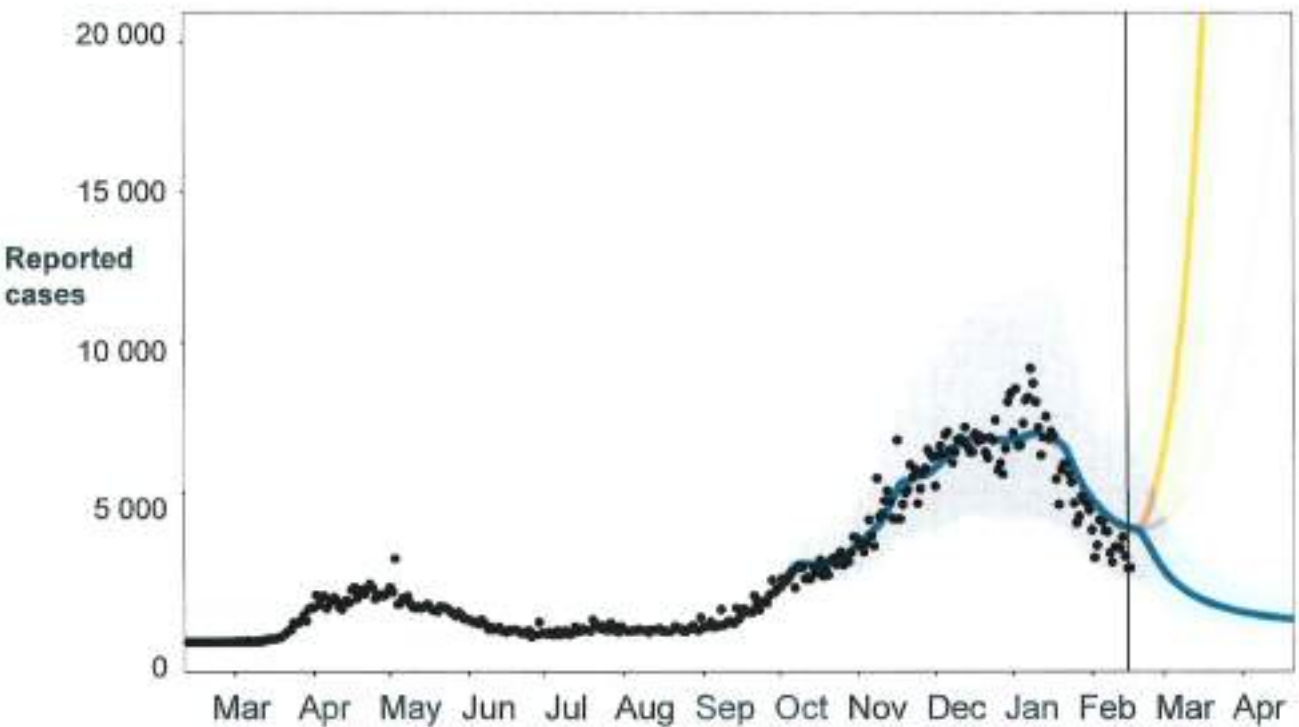


Data as of February 18, 2021

Data sources: Official provincial and territorial press releases *Week of February 14th includes data from February 14-18, 2021.



New longer-range forecast that includes Variants of Concern indicates a strong resurgence unless we have stringent measures and strict adherence



With spread of VOC and further lifting of public health measures, the epidemic is forecast to resurge rapidly - **Orange line**



With spread of VOC, current public health measures will be insufficient, and epidemic resurgence is forecast – **Grey line**

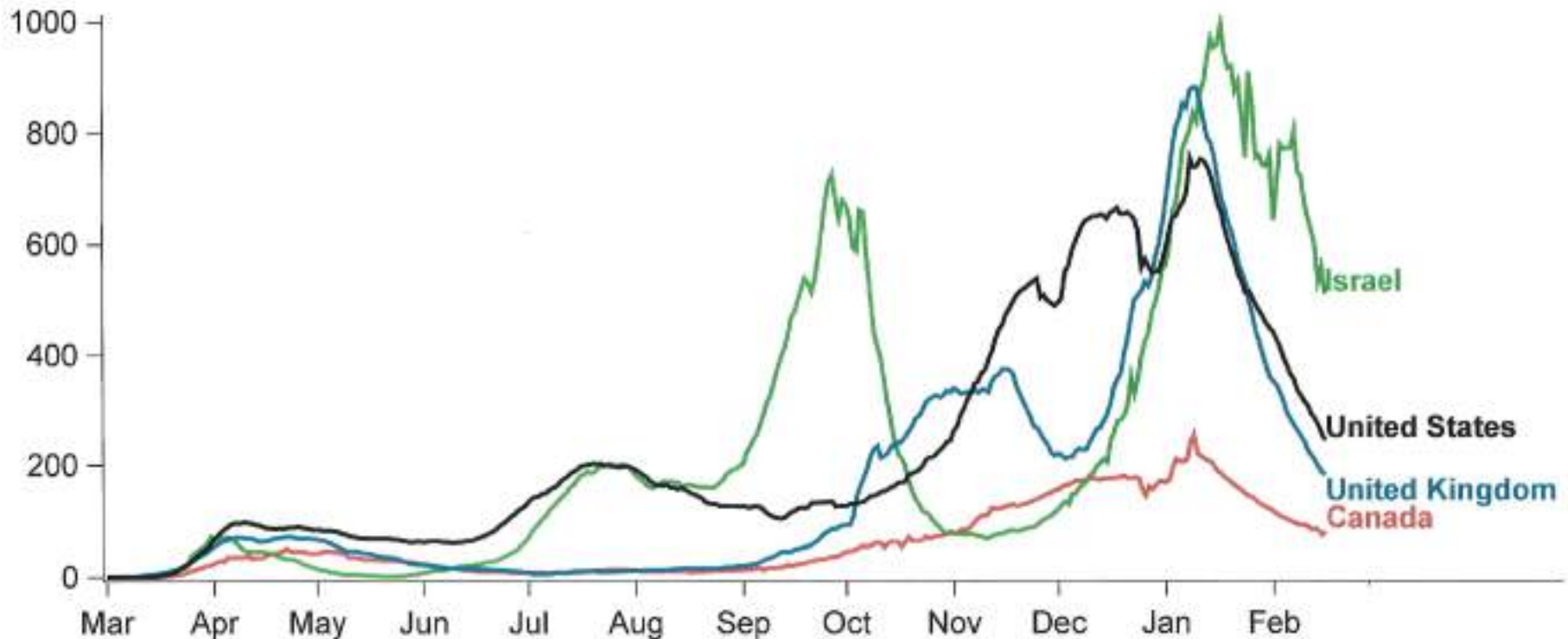


With spread of VOC and if enhanced, combined public health measures and individual precautions are implemented, epidemic control is forecast – **Blue line**

Data as of February 16, 2021
Notes: Variants of concern introduced in mid-Dec (~1 week prior to first detected case in Canada) at very low prevalence. Variants of concern assumed to be 50% more transmissible compared to wildtype. The growth rates AND replacement rate are negatively correlated with the strength of public health measures in place.

International experience shows that stringent measures and strict adherence can control spread of variants of concern while vaccine programs expand

Rate per 1 million population



Data as of February 16, 2021
Note: 7-day moving average



Variants of Concern increase the threat for a spring resurgence, but a strong collective effort can see us through

- With a combination of strong **public health measures** AND strict adherence to **individual precautions**, we can prevent a resurgence.
- For individual Canadians, this means following public health advice and doing our personal best by aiming to have:
 - the FEWEST interactions,
 - with the FEWEST people,
 - for the SHORTEST time,
 - at GREATEST distance possible,
 - while wearing the best-fitting face-mask.



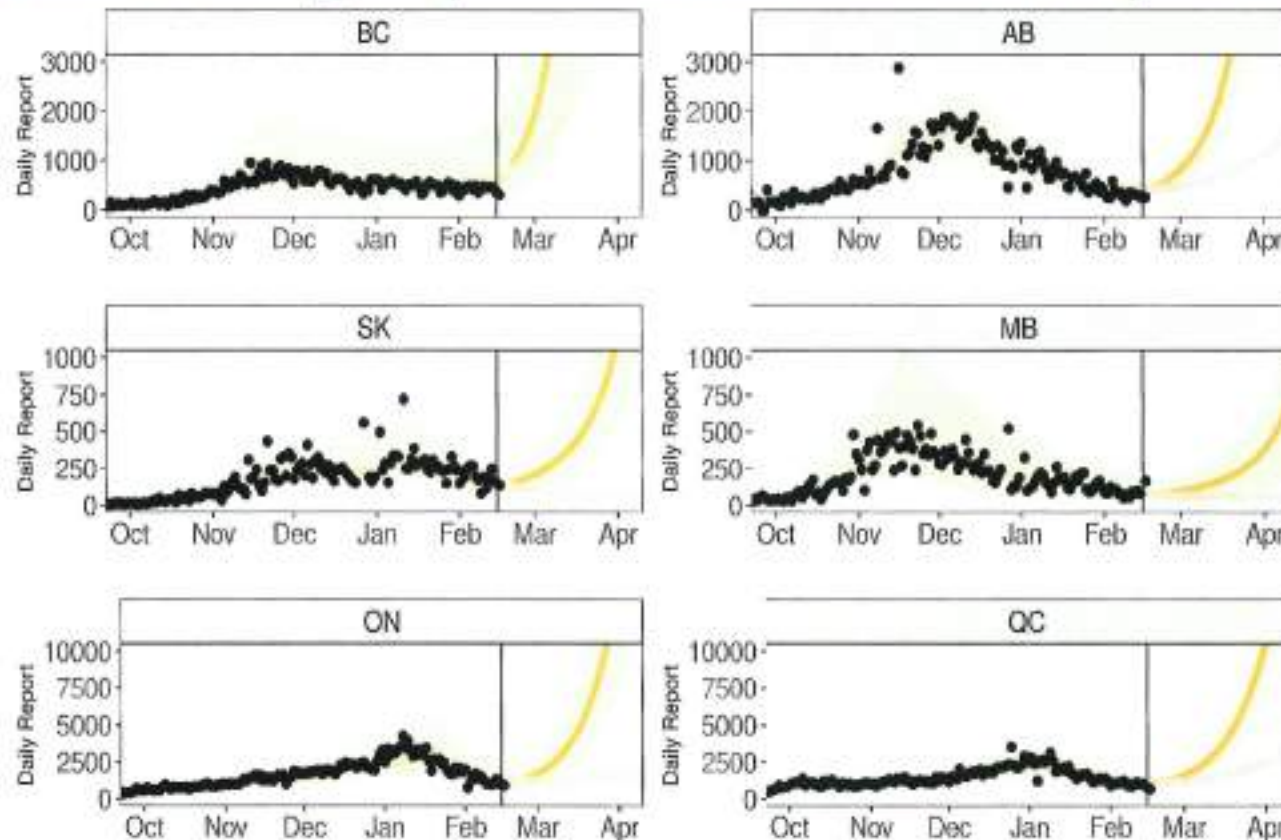
The path to control COVID-19 may not be easy, but WE are stronger!



Appendix



Longer-range forecasts predict strong resurgence with Variants of Concern unless stringent public health measures in place and sustained



- In all provinces current controls may not be sufficient to fully control the variants of concern
- The early lifting of public health measures could lead to a resurgence of the epidemic, including the community transmission of variants of concern

— With lifting of public health measures
— With current public health measures

Data as of February 16, 2021

Notes: Variants of concern introduced in mid-Dec (~1 week prior to first detected case in Canada) at very low prevalence. Variants of concern assumed to be 50% more transmissible compared to wildtype. The growth rates AND replacement rate are negatively correlated with the strength of public health measures in place.

