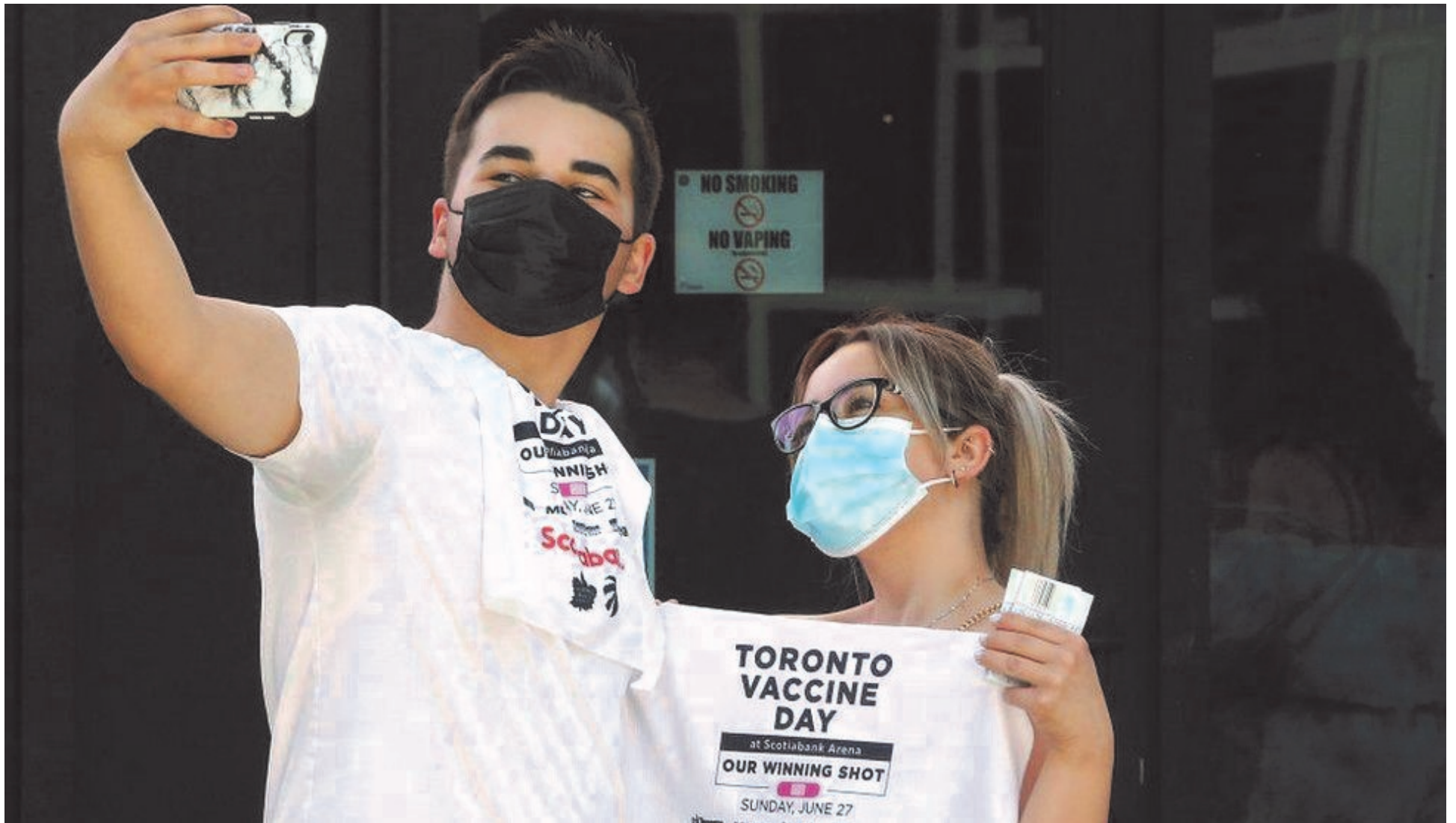


CORONAVIRUS Update

US lagging behind Canada on vaccination rate



Canada has overtaken the US in second dose vaccination rates, after months of lagging behind its southern neighbour.

As of 16 July, 48.45% of Canadians are fully vaccinated against Covid-19, compared with 48.05% of Americans.

If Canada's vaccine progress continues it may open its border to US travellers after a 16-month closure, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said this week.

In the US, a levelling-off of vaccine rates comes amid a concerning increase in Covid-19 cases.

President Joe Biden failed to meet a self-set target of 70% of adults vaccinated by the 4 July holiday weekend. About 68% of Americans aged 18 and older have received at least one shot.

The White House and local governments have turned to both creative solutions and celebrity guest stars in an effort to counter vaccine hesitancy.

Michigan, Ohio and California are among the states offering cash lotteries for residents who get the jab.

Pop superstar Olivia Rodrigo made an appearance at the White House this week to promote vaccinations among young people, and Nascar will host a vaccine drive this weekend.

Ontario daily Covid-19 cases continue to dip below 200

Posted July 17, 2021

Health officials in Ontario are reporting fewer than 200 new cases of COVID-19 for the ninth day in a row.

The 176 cases logged Saturday mark a slight increase over Friday's total when 159 were added.

This brings Ontario's lab-confirmed COVID-19 case total to 548,040, including 537,379 recoveries and 9,288 deaths—three of which were recorded in the last 24 hours. At least 21,392 tests were processed in the previous day, yielding a positivity rate of 0.6 per cent, according to the Ministry of Health.

The seven-day average for the number of new cases reported across the province is 151. A week ago, that number was 188.

Right now, there are 143 patients in hos-

pital with COVID-19 and 149 patients are receiving treatment in intensive care. The hospitalization data presented by the province has been consistently skewed over the last several weeks, which may be explained by a delay in reporting.

Where are the new COVID-19 cases? Most of the cases reported by the province Saturday were found in Toronto (37), Peel Region (20), and Waterloo (20).

Other regions that reported case numbers in the double digits include Grey Bruce (15), York Region (11), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (10), Halton (10).

Ontario entered Step 3 of its reopening plan on Friday, which allows for indoor dining, as well as gyms and movie theatres, to reopen with capacity limits in place.

The province will remain in this stage for at least 21 days. Labs confirmed another 132 cases of the Delta variant B.1.617.2 in the last 24 hours, bringing the strain's case total to 3,282.

Additionally, 11 other cases of the Alpha variant B.1.1.7 were found. At least 144,792 cases of that variant have been reported since the province began tracking its spread in February.

There was one other case of the Gamma variant P.1 reported. There are 4,951 confirmed cases of that variant in Ontario.