

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 10/21/21 for the period of 10/10/21 - 10/16/21

Overview

This report is currently published weekly to provide a narrative of current COVID-19 trends, data not available elsewhere online, and a more in-depth analysis of COVID-19-related topics of interest. This report references data obtained from the [Washington State Department of Health's COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#), [DOH Sequencing and Variants Report](#), [DOH Breakthrough Surveillance Report](#), as well as the [WCHD's Data Dashboard](#) and other COVID-related data. Note that information on these topics is rapidly evolving, and the data are always changing. This report uses the most up-to-date data available, and measures may change over time.

Key findings

- The total case count and corresponding case rate among all Whatcom County residents for the reporting week ending 10/16 remain relatively unchanged from the week before.
- School-age children make up about 21% of the total cases for the current reporting week. The case rate per 100,000 among 5 – 17-year-olds has flattened and remains higher than other age groups.
- Hospitalizations due to COVID-19 are declining, but continue to be more frequent among residents 65 years and older.

For the period of 10/10-10/16

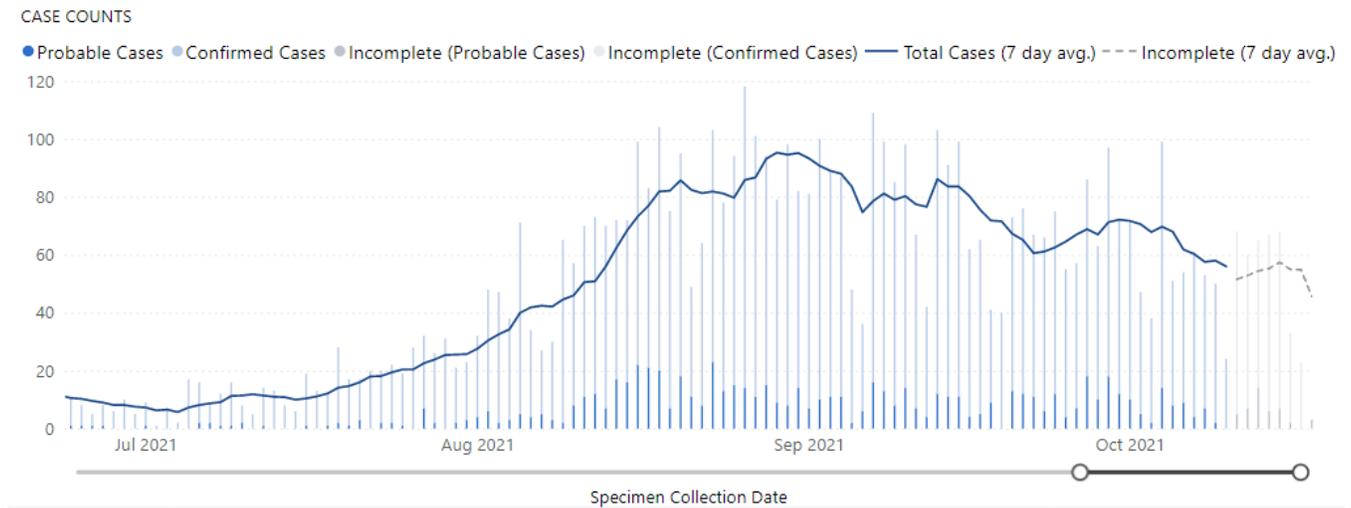
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
171	7

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 389 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the current reporting week 10/10 – 10/16. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is approximately 171 cases per 100,000 residents. The case rate at the end of this reporting week remains at a level similar to the previous reporting week. Cases among school-age children continue to make up about 21% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard through 10/18, Whatcom County continues to

have one of the lowest 14-day case rates in the state (298 per 100,000), with a ranking of 10th out of 39 counties.

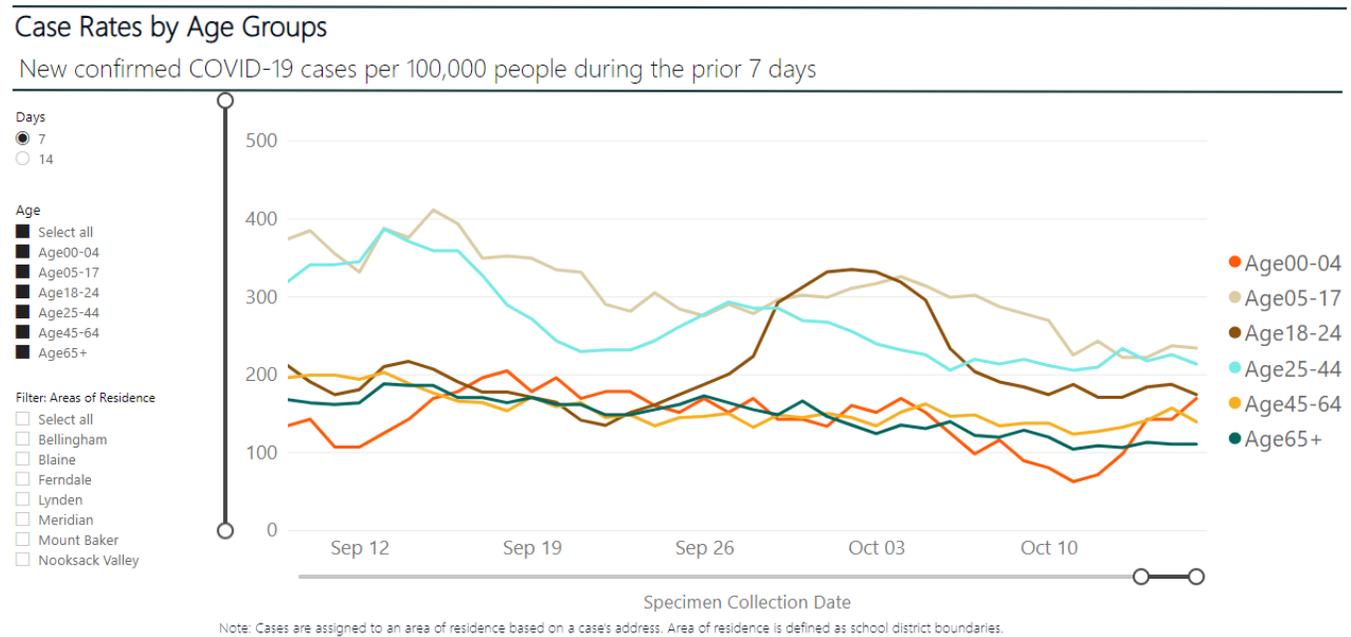
Figure 1: Daily COVID-19 case counts and 7-day average for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



COVID-19 Cases in Age Groups & Sub-County Areas

The case rate among school-age children (234 per 100,000) leveled off during the recent reporting week and still remains higher than other age groups (Figure 2). Cases among 18 – 44-year-olds also remain level after declining earlier in October. The case rate for younger children (0 – 4 years) increased and is trending upward, but for now is lower than the county average case rate. The case rates for older adults above 44 years remains relatively unchanged.

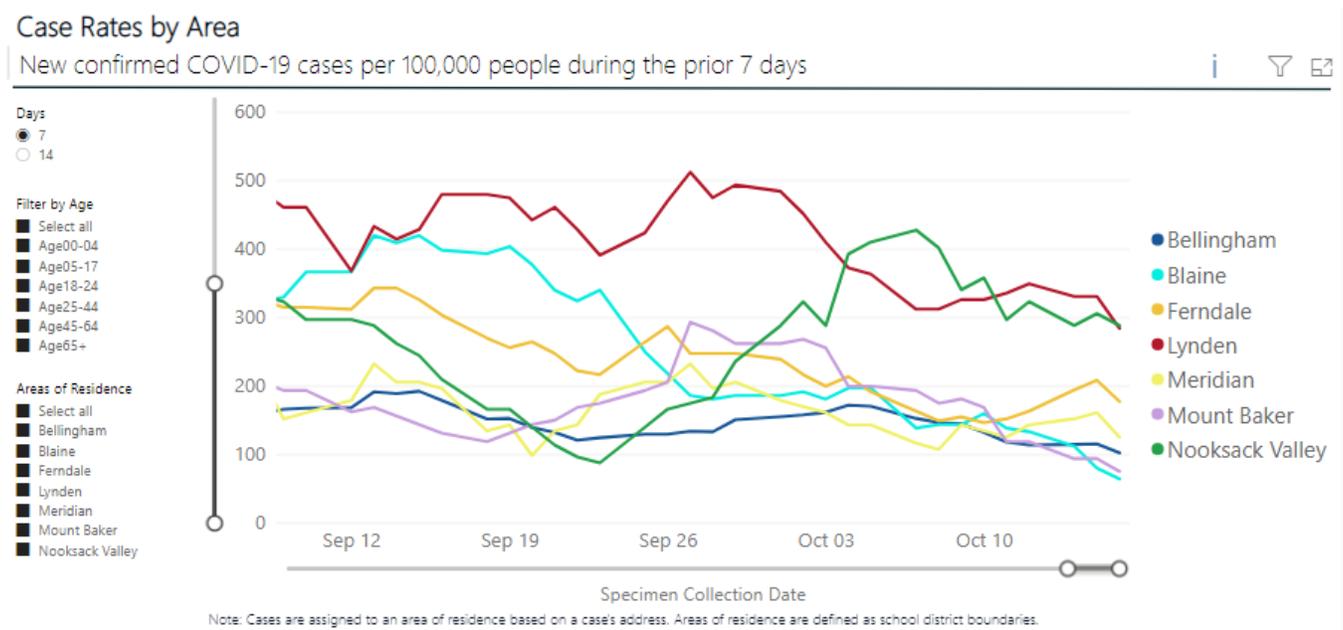
Figure 2: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by age groups in Whatcom County



COVID-19 Cases in Areas

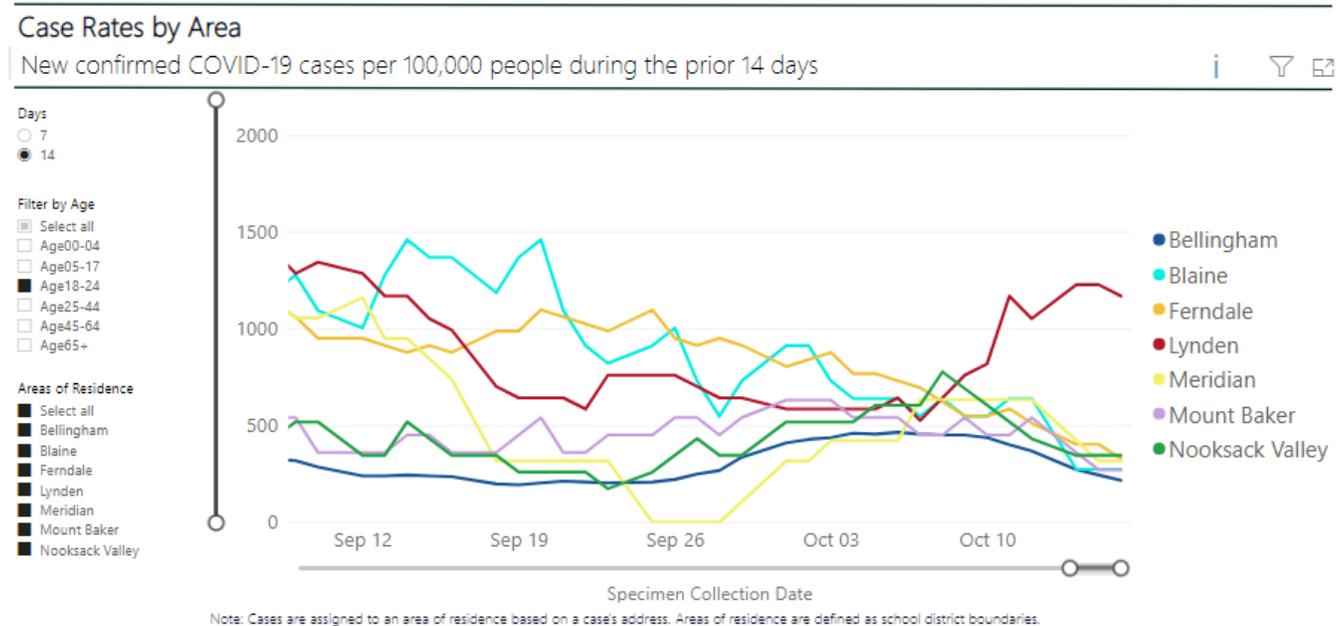
Several of the case rates across areas in Whatcom County show encouraging downward trends. The case rate in the Ferndale area is an exception with a relatively small increasing trend (Figure 3). Case rates in the Nooksack Valley (288 per 100,000) and Lynden (284 per 100,000) continue to be higher than other areas of the county as of 10/16.

Figure 3: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by sub-county area in Whatcom County



The figure below shows the case rates per 100,000 for only 18 – 24-year-olds across the different areas of Whatcom County (Figure 4). This time the 14-day rate is selected to make the trends more visible and reduce the variation in each line. While the case rate for this age group declined across all

Figure 4. 14-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 in sub-county areas for 18- 24-year olds



areas throughout most of September, there is a recent increasing trend in Lynden that stands out during the recent reporting week.

Across the county, confirmed cases continue to be much more common among unvaccinated residents (Table 1). The 7-day weekly case rate among unvaccinated residents in Whatcom County is roughly five times higher than the equivalent rate among fully vaccinated residents (excluding those under 12 years of age who are not eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine).

The most recent [DOH Report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status from October 13 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 9/8 – 10/5. Case rates per 100,000 among Washington residents 12 – 34 year olds are six times higher in unvaccinated residents. Among residents 35 – 64 years, the unvaccinated case rate is five times higher. Unvaccinated residents 65 years and above have a case rate four times than their vaccinated counterparts.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 10/10 – 10/16

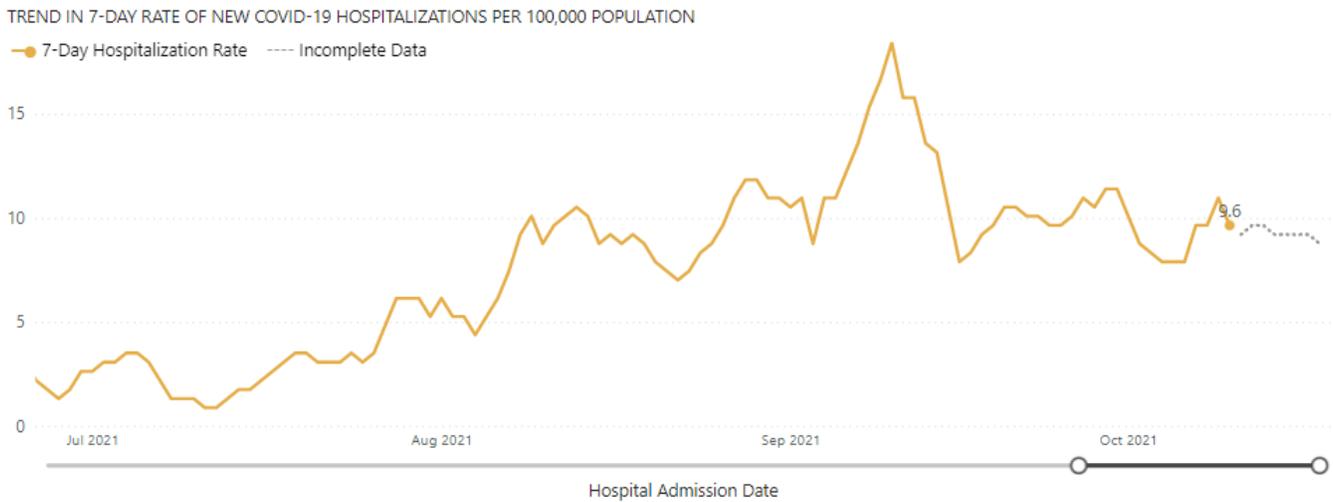
	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	389	101	288

COVID-19 Hospitalizations

A “COVID-19 hospitalization” is a Washington resident identified using case investigation data in the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) or linkage with Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) records as hospitalized with confirmed or probable COVID-19. The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations in this report describes the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom County residents in a seven day period divided by the county population.

Whatcom County reported a 7-day hospitalization rate of approximately 7 per 100,000 residents as of 10/16. The gradual decrease in the number of Whatcom County residents requiring hospitalization continues to follow the declining case counts. A total of 19 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 10/16. Consistent with the breakdown of confirmed cases in the county, more unvaccinated residents continue to need hospitalization for COVID-19 symptoms than vaccinated residents (Table 2). According to the DOH Dashboard the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is still below the state average and is among the lowest fifteen county rates (out of 39 counties). COVID-19 hospitalization data available on the DOH Dashboard is shown in Figure 5. Caution should be taken when interpreting hospitalization rates within the most recent eight days because of the incompleteness of the data (noted with a dashed line).

Figure 5: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through October 12 (Source: DOH)



Note: PeaceHealth reports the number of COVID-19 positive patients, a measure of the number of people who are hospitalized for any reason/diagnosis and who have also tested positive for COVID-19. Their care requires COVID-19 protocols to prevent infection of others in the hospital, regardless of the severity of their illness. This number is helpful in understanding changes in our hospital's COVID unit capacity, as caring for COVID-positive patients is resource-intensive.

A breakdown of the 7-day rate per 100,000 residents requiring hospitalization due to COVID-19 by age group in Whatcom County is shown below (Figure 6). This data suggests that residents who are 65 and older continue to require hospitalization due to COVID-19 symptoms more frequently than those from other age groups.

Figure 6: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rates by age group for Whatcom County (as of 10/16)

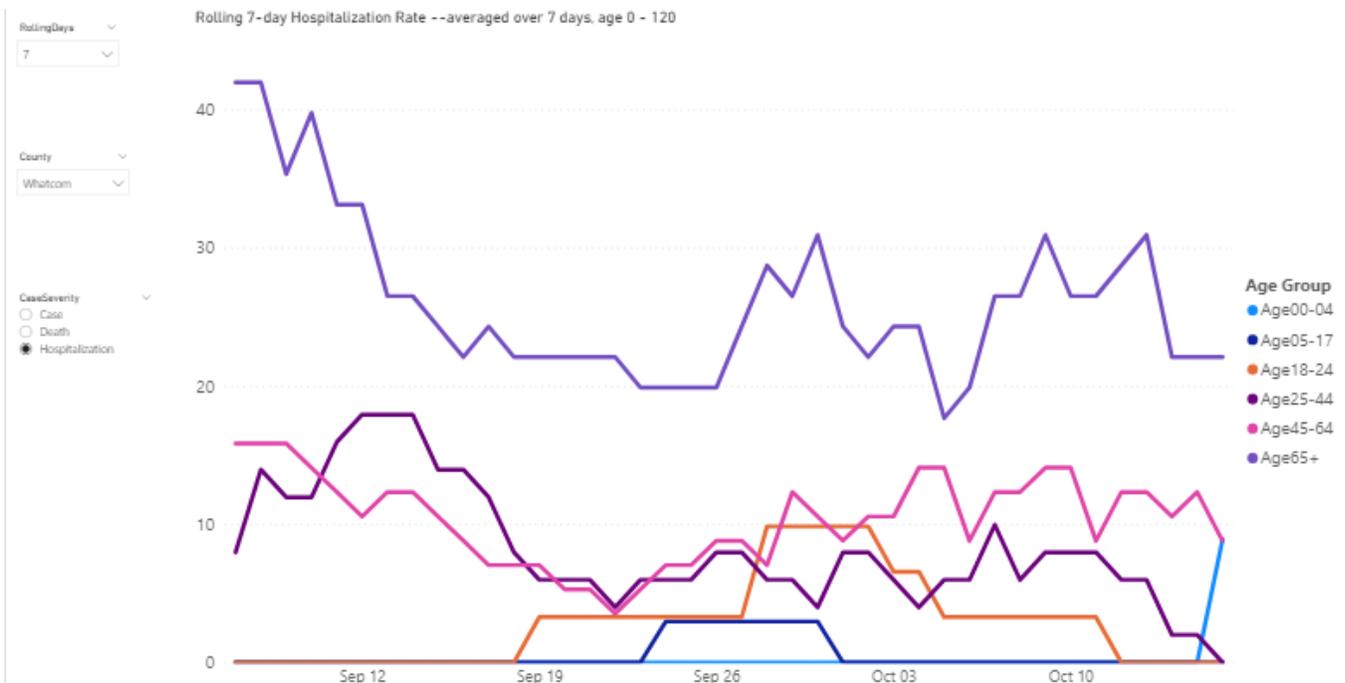


Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 10/10 – 10/16

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	19	4	15

According to the October 13 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, hospitalization rates are many times higher among unvaccinated residents. For Washington residents 12 – 34 years old, the hospitalization rate per 100,000 is 19 times higher for unvaccinated residents. A similar impact (19 times higher) was found for unvaccinated 35 – 64 year olds. For those 65 years and older, the hospitalization rate was nine times higher among unvaccinated residents.

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County had three deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 10/16 (Table 3):

- one unvaccinated male, 30-39 years
- one unvaccinated female, 70-79 years
- one vaccinated female, 80-89 years

These numbers are preliminary; WCHD may not yet have been notified of other deaths for this reporting week. The cumulative count for COVID-19 deaths for vaccinated Whatcom County residents is 20.

According to the October 13 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, unvaccinated individuals 65 and older are nine times more likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals 65 and older.

Table 3: COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status for 10/10 – 10/16

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Week 10/10 – 10/16	3	1	2

COVID-19 Vaccinations

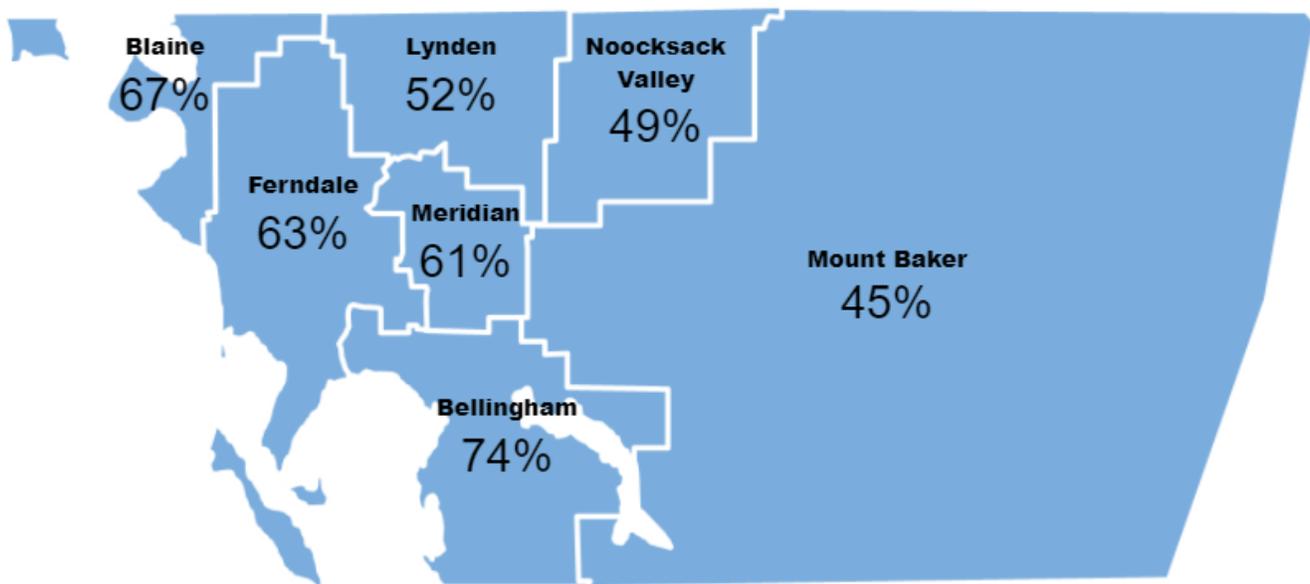
As of 10/17, 61% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 66% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 70% are fully vaccinated, and 76% have initiated vaccination (source: DOH Dashboard).

Of the eligible population, there are still 47,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of 10/17, vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (49%) and Mt. Baker (45%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (43%).

Figure 7. Percent of population who have initiated COVID-19 vaccination by sub-county area for Whatcom County



Whatcom County
HEALTH
Department



For more information about this report, contact Health_Data@co.whatcom.wa.us.