

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 10/28/21 for the period of 10/17/21 – 10/23/21

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

- COVID-19 case counts increased among Whatcom County residents for the reporting week ending 10/23.
- School-age children make up 26% of the total cases for the current reporting week. The case rate among 5 – 17-year-olds is increasing and remains higher than other age groups.
- The 7-day weekly case rate among unvaccinated residents in Whatcom County is four times greater than the equivalent rate among fully vaccinated residents.
- Hospitalizations due to COVID-19 remain high among Whatcom County residents, and are most frequent among unvaccinated individuals and among those 65 years and older.

For the period of 10/17-10/23

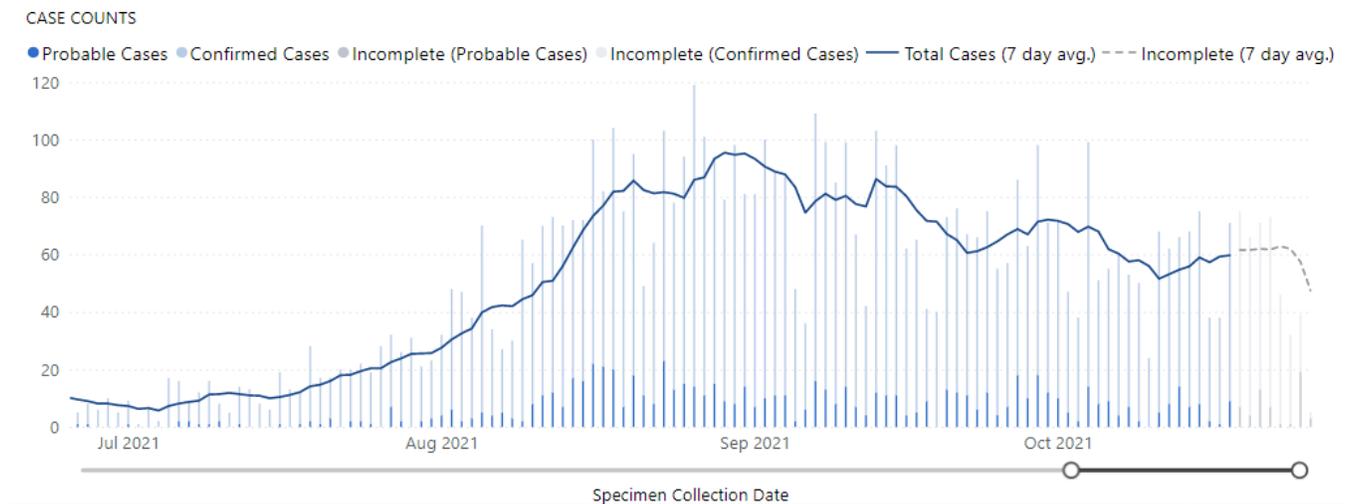
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
189	13.2

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 471 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 10/17 – 10/23. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is 189 cases per 100,000 residents. This represents an increasing trend in the case rate corresponding to the increasing cases. Cases among school-age children continue to make up 26% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard

through 10/25, the 14-day case rate for Whatcom County (334 per 100,000) is below the state average of 387 cases per 100,000 population.

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



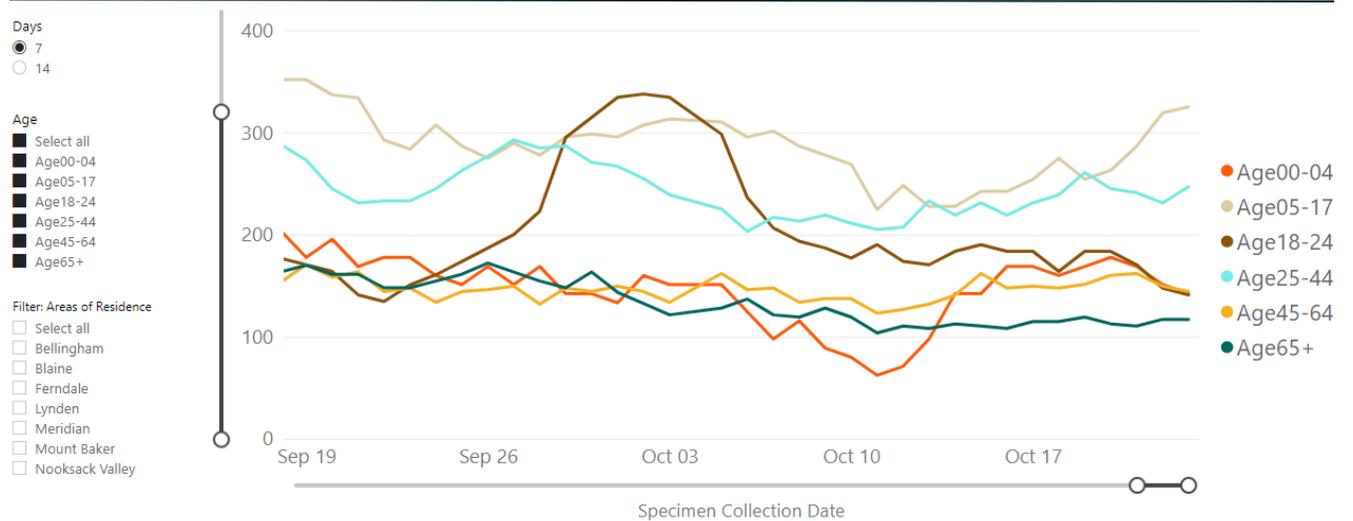
COVID-19 Cases in Age Groups & Sub-County Areas

The case rate among school-age children (343 per 100,000) increased during the recent reporting week and is trending higher than other age groups (Figure 2). Cases among 25 – 44-year-olds are also rising. The case rates for other age groups are trending down. The case rates for older adults above 65 years remains relatively unchanged and continues to be the lowest rate among the age groups monitored in Whatcom County.

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

Case Rates by Age Groups

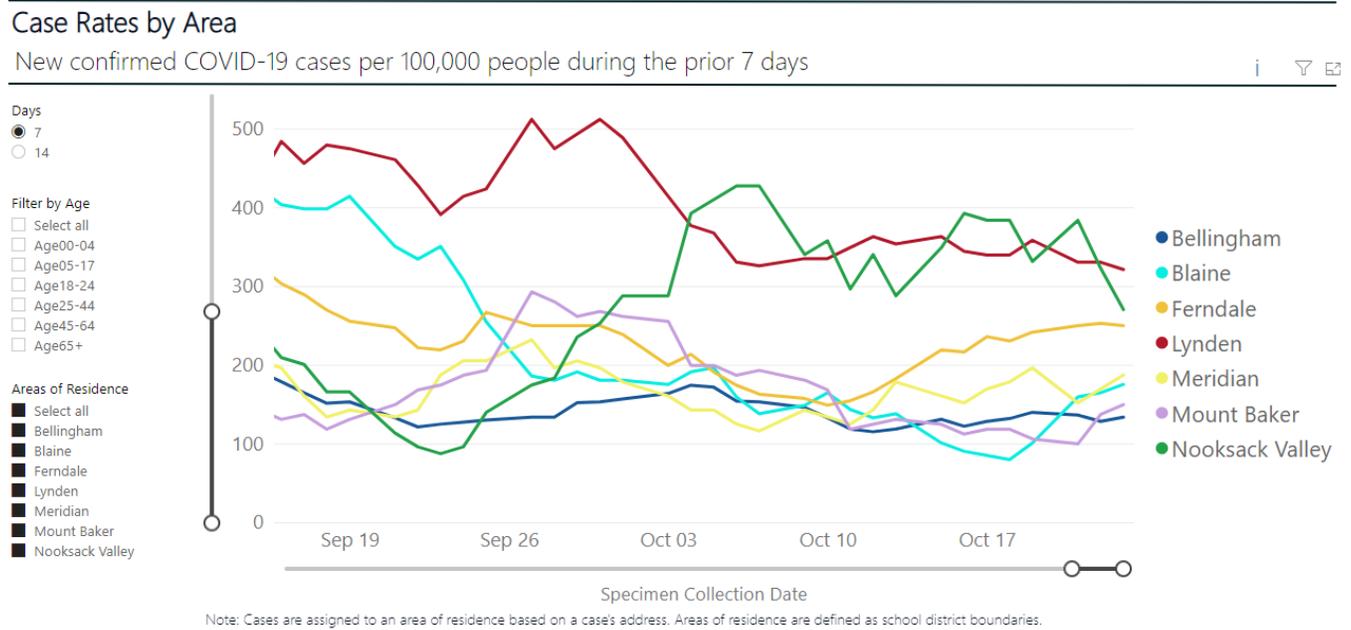
New confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people during the prior 7 days



COVID-19 Cases in Areas

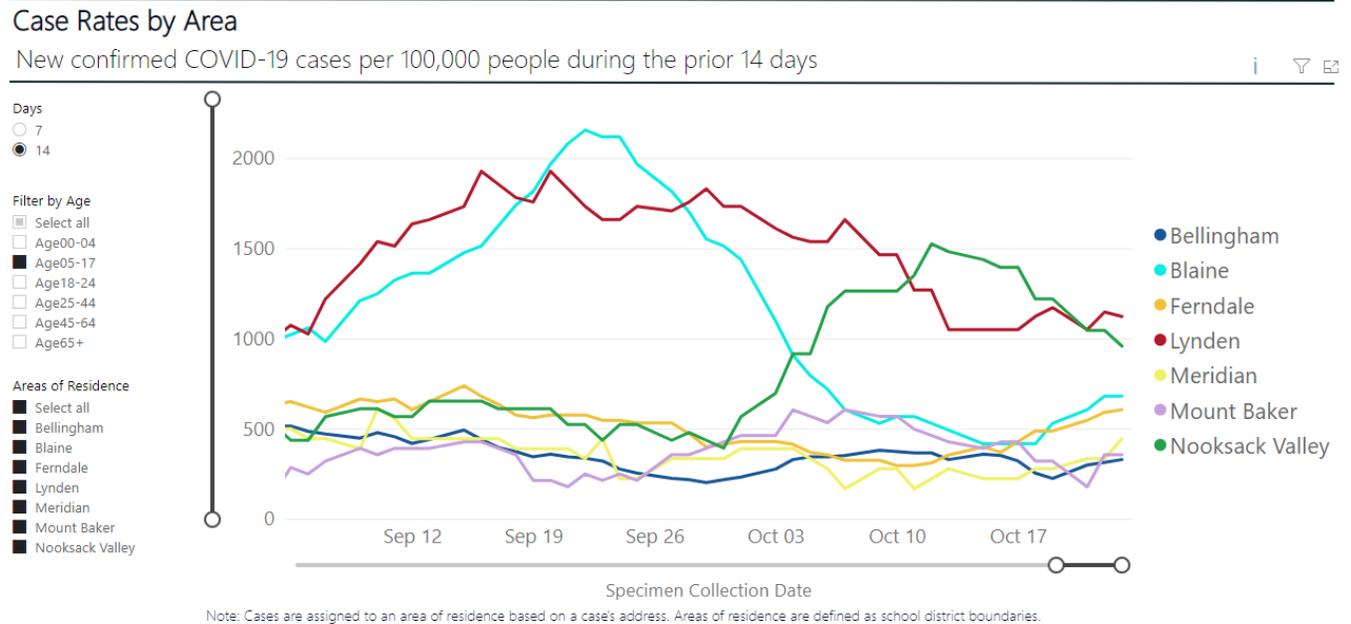
The case rate in the Ferndale region continued to increase during the reporting week (Figure 3). Cases in the Lynden region remained steady and higher than other areas since the beginning of October, as reflected in the case rate (325 per 100,000). The case rate in Nooksack Valley (270 per 100,000) is on a downward trend. This follows a brief period where Nooksack Valley experienced the highest case rate in the county.

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 5 – 17-year-olds across the different regions of Whatcom County (Figure 4). The 14-day rate is used to identify trends more easily and reduce the

Figure 4. 14-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 in sub-county areas for 5 – 17-year olds



variation in each line. The case rates for this age group remain high in both Lynden and Nooksack Valley, though there is a decreasing trend in the Nooksack Valley. The case rate for Blaine decreased from the highest point in mid-September, but now the rate is increasing again. The case rate for Ferndale is also showing an increasing trend.

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 four times greater 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 27 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 9/22 – 10/19. Case rates per 100,000 among Washington residents 12 – 64 year olds are five times higher in unvaccinated residents. 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 10/17 – 10/23

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	471	121	350

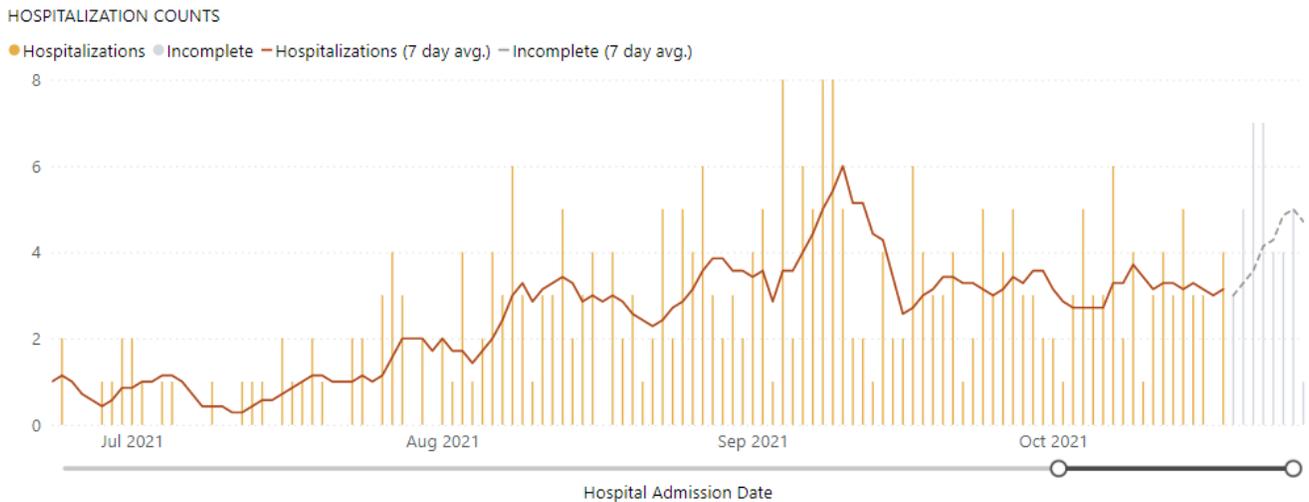
COVID-19 Hospitalizations

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.

The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County residents is approximately 13.2 per 100,000 residents as of 10/23. The number of hospitalizations remains relatively high for the county and is likely to remain at a high level until COVID-19 cases fall. A total of 26 Whatcom residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 10/23. 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 above the state average of 10.3 hospitalizations per 100,000 population.

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: COVID-19 hospitalization counts for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through October 18 (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 COVID-19 hospitalization rate per 100,000 residents by age group and specimen collection date in Whatcom County is shown below (Figure 6). The county continues to see a higher rate of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 symptoms among residents who are 65 and older than for other age groups.

Figure 6: 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rates by age group for Whatcom County

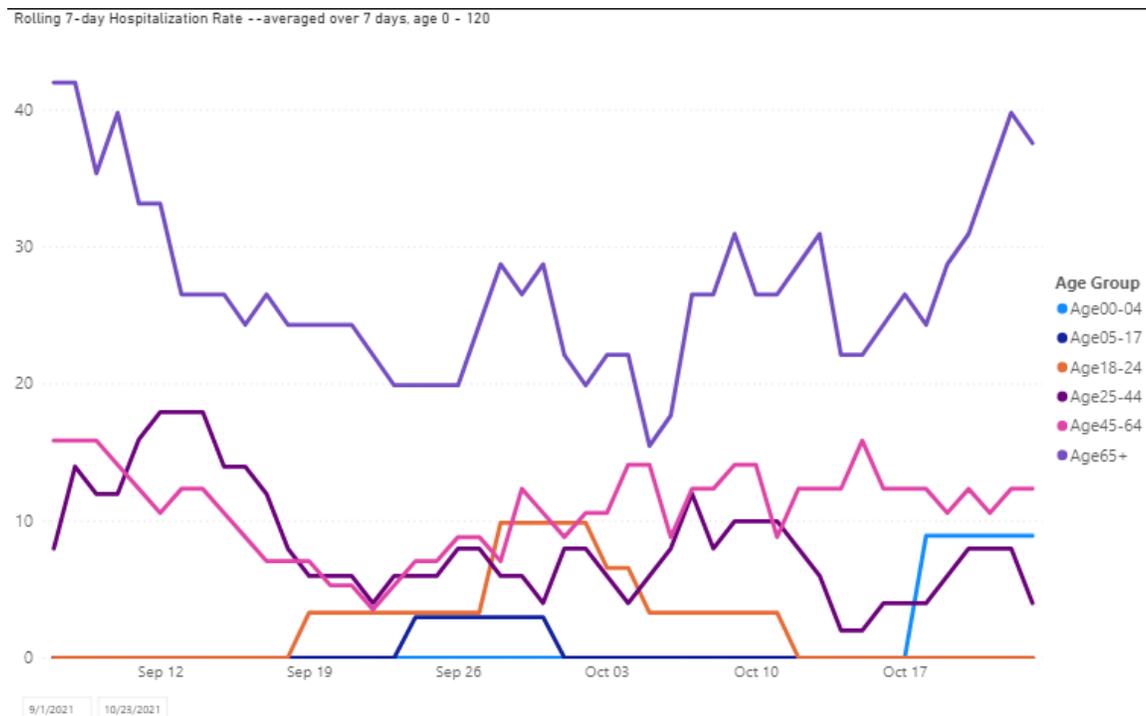


Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 10/17 – 10/23

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	26	4	22

According to the October 27 [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 – 64 years old, the hospitalization rate per 100,000 is 16 to 18 times higher for unvaccinated residents. For those 65 years and older, the hospitalization rate was nine times higher among unvaccinated residents.

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County had two deaths due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 10/23 (Table 3):

- one unvaccinated male, 70-79 years
- one unvaccinated female, 90-99 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 27 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 9/1 to 9/28 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are nine times more likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals.

Table 3: COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status for 10/17 – 10/23

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Week 10/17 – 10/23	2	0	2

COVID-19 Vaccinations

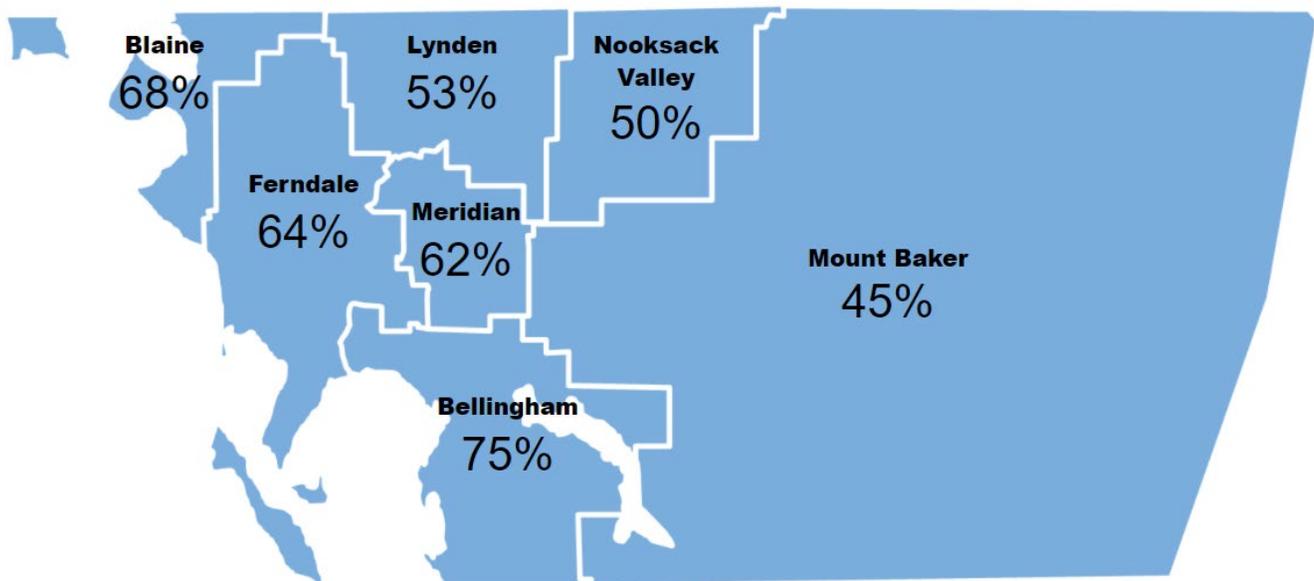
As of 10/25, 61.6% of Whatcom County residents are fully vaccinated, and 66.7% have initiated vaccination. Of the 12 and older eligible population, 70.6% are fully vaccinated, and 76.4% have initiated vaccination.

Of the eligible population, there are still 46,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of 10/25, vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (50%) and Mt. Baker (45%) sub-county areas and among our Hispanic population (44%).

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.