

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 11/11/21 for the period of 10/31/21 – 11/6/21

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

- Daily case counts in Whatcom County have declined slightly since the previous reporting week.
- The case rate for 5 – 17 year-olds is increasing in Nooksack Valley. The same case rate in Lynden is trending downward following several weeks of elevated rates.
- The case rate for unvaccinated residents in Whatcom County is still 4x the case rate for vaccinated residents.
- The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom residents is falling from a peak at the end of October.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations have decreased significantly among residents 65+ years.

For the period of 10/31-11/6

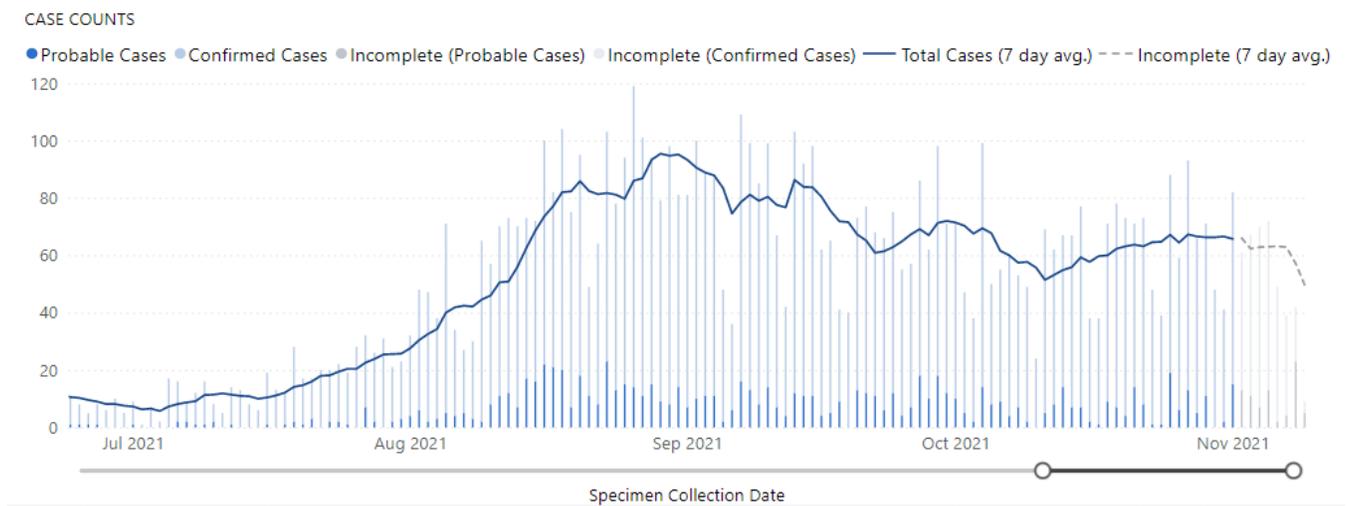
7-Day Case Rate / 100,000	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
190	10.2

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County saw a total of 440 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 10/31 – 11/6. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week is 190 cases per 100,000 residents. The number of cases remains similar to the previous reporting week and this translates to continued high rates of transmission. The percentage of cases accounted for by school-age children increased and is now 29% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County.

According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard through 11/9, the 7-day case rate for Whatcom County is above the state average.

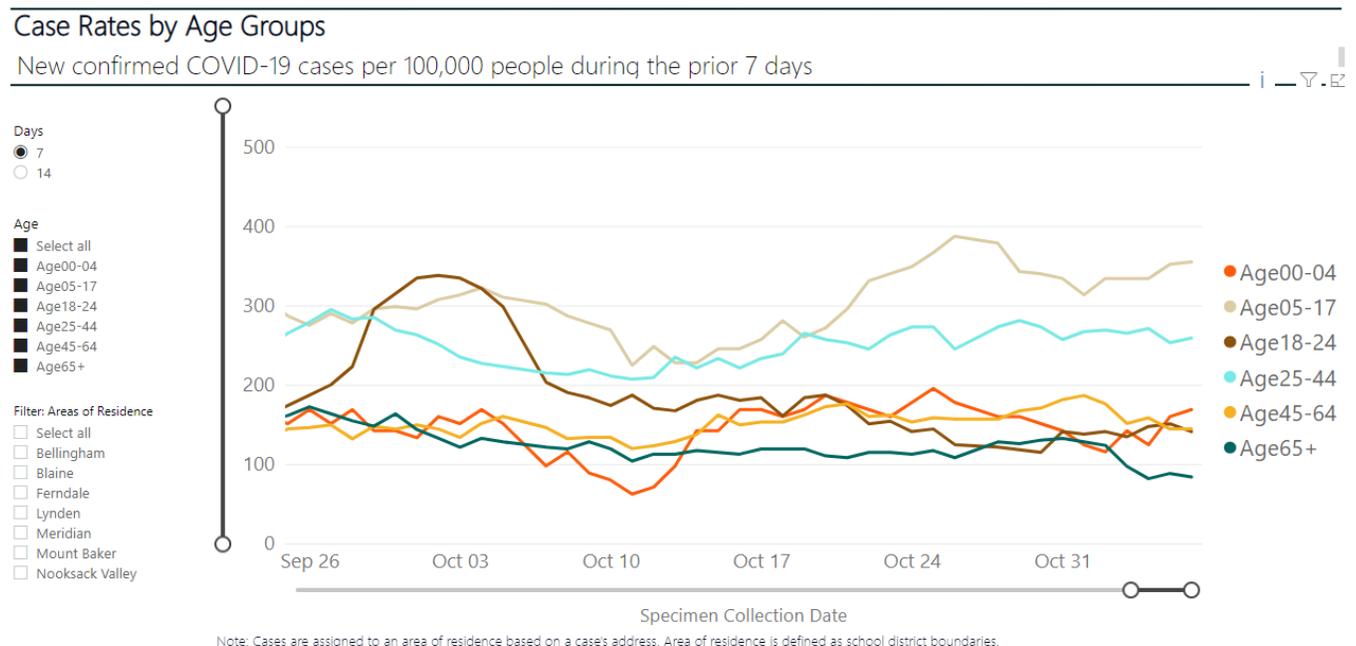
Figure 1: Daily COVID-19 case counts and 7-day average for Whatcom County (Source: DOH)



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

The 7-day case rate among school-age children (5 – 17 years) climbed again during the most recent reporting week to 355 per 100,000. The rate for this age group is trending upward and is more than 2-fold higher than the combined average of the other age groups in the county (163 per 100,000). The case rates for other age groups remain on a level trend with little change from the previous reporting week. The case rate for those 65 years and older further declined to its lowest level since the beginning of August.

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



Note: Cases are assigned to an area of residence based on a case's address. Area of residence is defined as school district boundaries.

COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas, the range of 7-day case rates spans from 126 per 100,000 in the Bellingham area to 392 per 100,000 in the Nooksack Valley area (Figure 3). The relatively high case rate in the Lynden area decreased to 367 per 100,000 during the most recent reporting week. The Nooksack Valley area saw an increased number of cases relative to its smaller population. This translates to an upward trend and the relatively high case rate. The 7-day case rates in the other regions remain at a level of 200 per 100,000 or below for the recent reporting week.

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

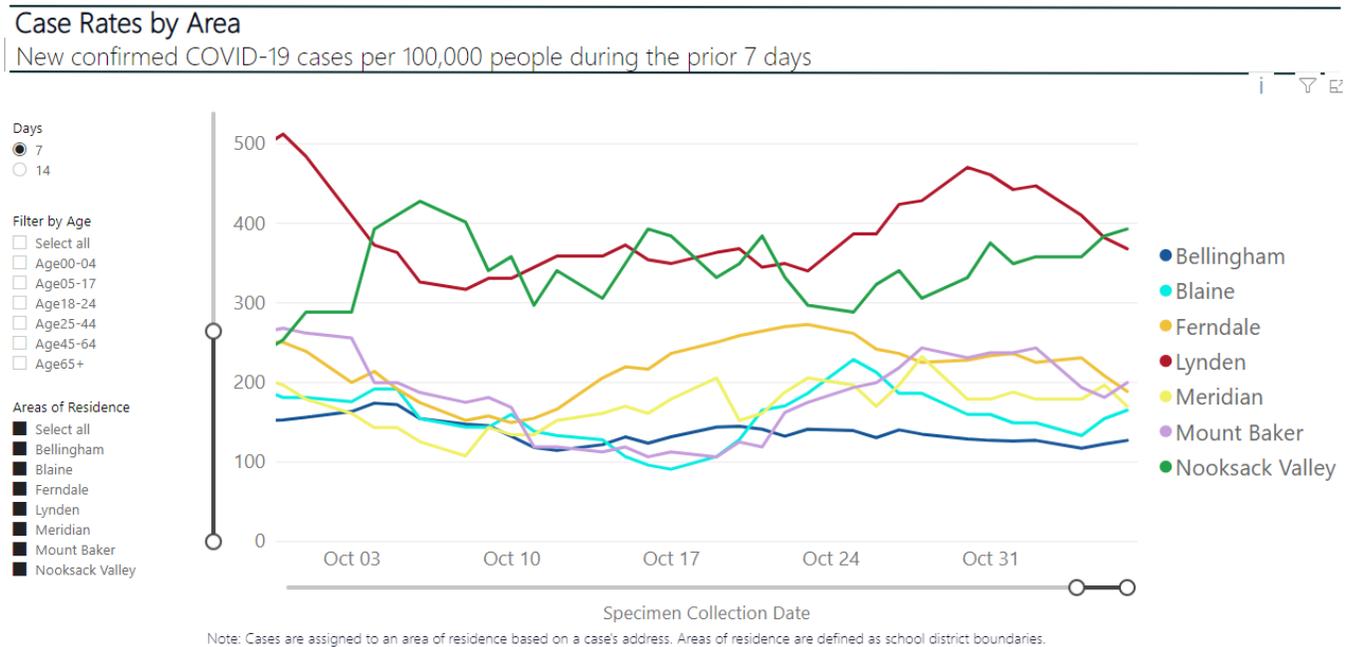


Figure 4: 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 in sub-county areas for 5 – 17-year olds

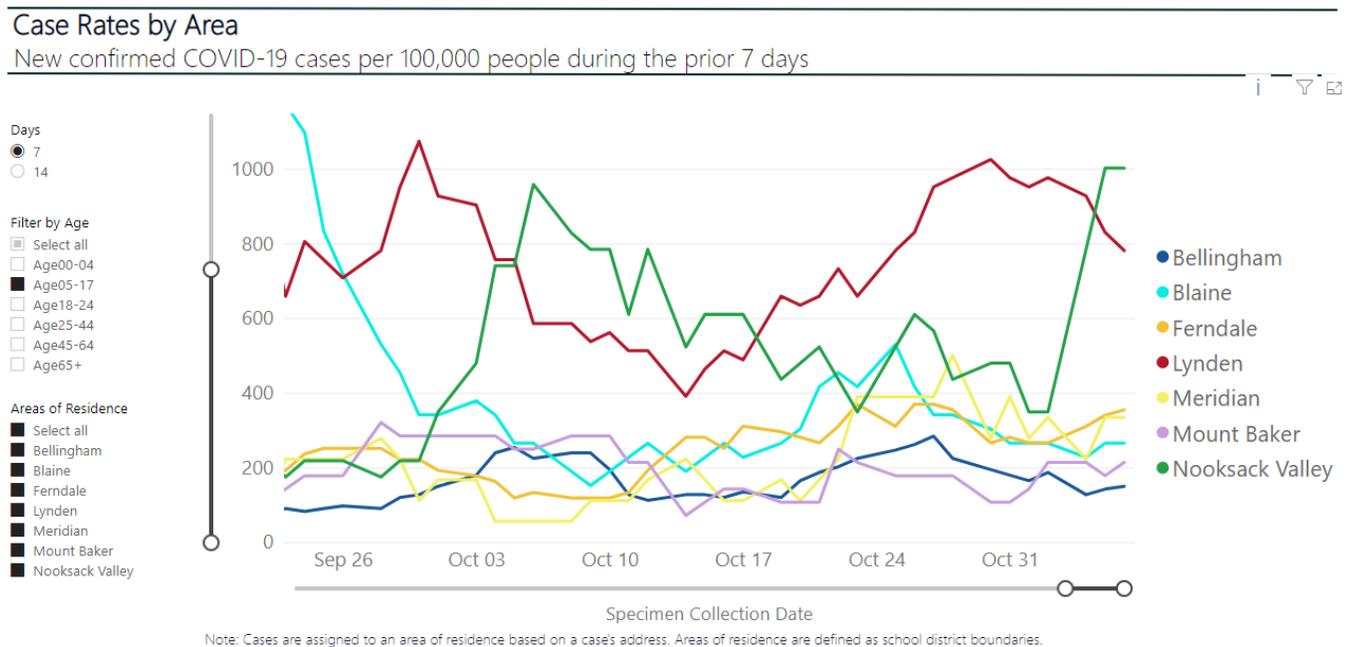


Figure 4 shows the 7-day case rates per 100,000 for 5 – 17-year-olds across the different regions of Whatcom County. An increase in the Nooksack Valley region created an upward trend and significantly higher case rate per 100,000 for the reporting week ending 11/6. By comparison, the high case rate observed in Lynden over previous weeks is trending downward, though this rate is still significantly higher than other areas of the county. The case rates among 5 – 17 year-olds for the remaining areas range from 354 per 100,000 in Ferndale down to 149 per 100,000 in Bellingham.

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 5 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 November 10 provides findings by smaller age groups for the period of 10/6 – 11/2. 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 higher than their vaccinated counterparts.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 10/31 – 11/6

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	440	124	316

COVID-19 Hospitalizations

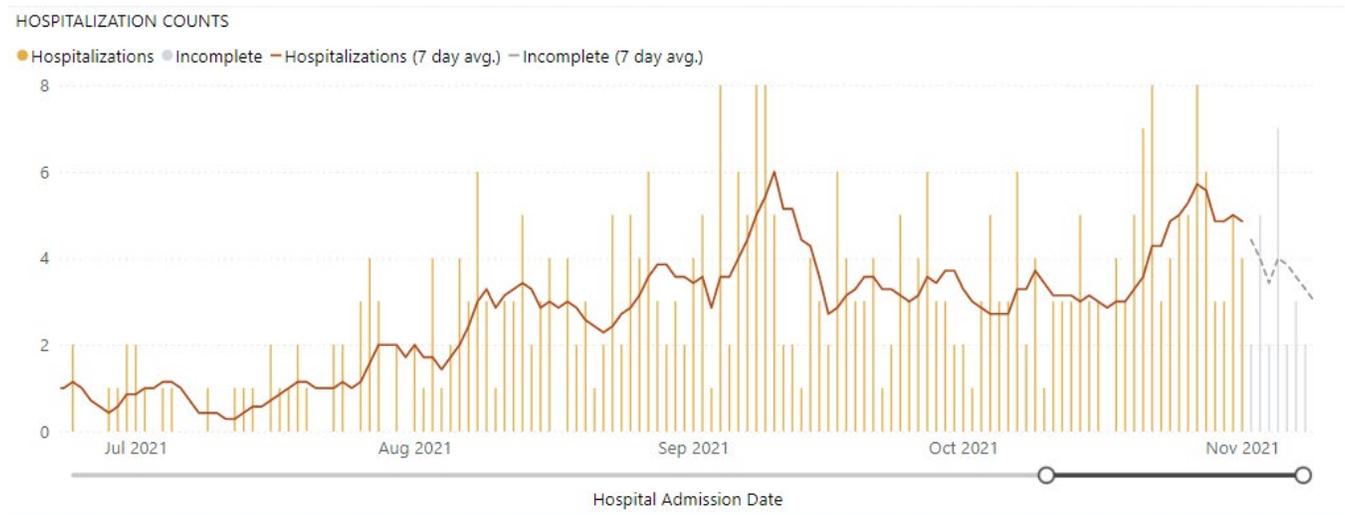
A “COVID-19 hospitalization” is a Washington resident identified using case investigation data in the Washington Disease Reporting System (WDRS) or linkage with Rapid Health Information Network (RHINO) records as hospitalized with confirmed or probable COVID-19. The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations 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 is approximately 10.2 per 100,000 residents as of 11/6. The number of new hospitalizations is trending downward with a total of 27 Whatcom residents hospitalized due to COVID-19 illness during the seven days ending on 11/6. This is down from 35 hospitalizations during the previous week. 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). The number of hospitalizations also declined significantly among older residents 65 years and above. According to the DOH Dashboard, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate for Whatcom County is above the state average of 8.2 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).

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.

Figure 5: COVID-19 hospitalization counts for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through 11/1 (Source: DOH)



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 in Figure 6. The higher rate of hospitalizations among those 65 years and above declined during the recent reporting week. Eleven residents of this age group required hospitalization in the week ending 11/6 compared to 19 during the previous week.

According to the November 10 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 9/15 to 10/12 suggests vaccinated individuals continue to be at much lower risk for hospitalization due to COVID-19 than the unvaccinated population. Hospitalization rates among the youngest age cohort eligible for vaccination (12 – 34 years) are 13 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the fully vaccinated population. The difference in rates increases to 18 times higher for unvaccinated 35 – 64 year olds. For the oldest cohort 65 years and above, the rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is nine times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the vaccinated population.

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

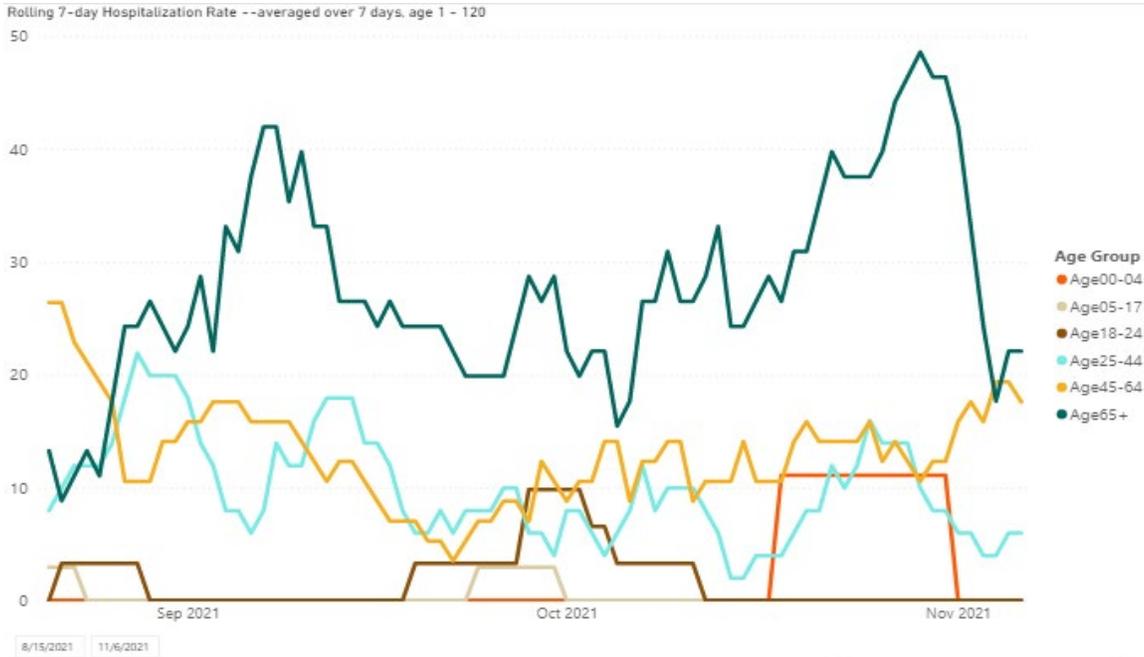


Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by vaccination status from 10/31 – 11/6

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	27	5	22

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County had one death due to COVID-19 during the week ending on 11/6 (Table 3):

- one vaccinated male, 70-79 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 23 and the overall count for COVID-19 deaths is 167.

According to the November 10 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 9/15 to 10/12 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 10/31 – 11/6

COVID-19 Deaths	Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
Week 10/31 – 11/6	1	1	0

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Following the 11/3 authorization of COVID-19 vaccinations for younger children 5 – 11 years old, it is important to note that the eligible population in Whatcom County increased by 17,807. The percent coverage for COVID-19 vaccinations among the population is displayed in Table 4. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 63,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Table 4. Percent of population who are initiating vaccination and fully vaccinated in Whatcom County.

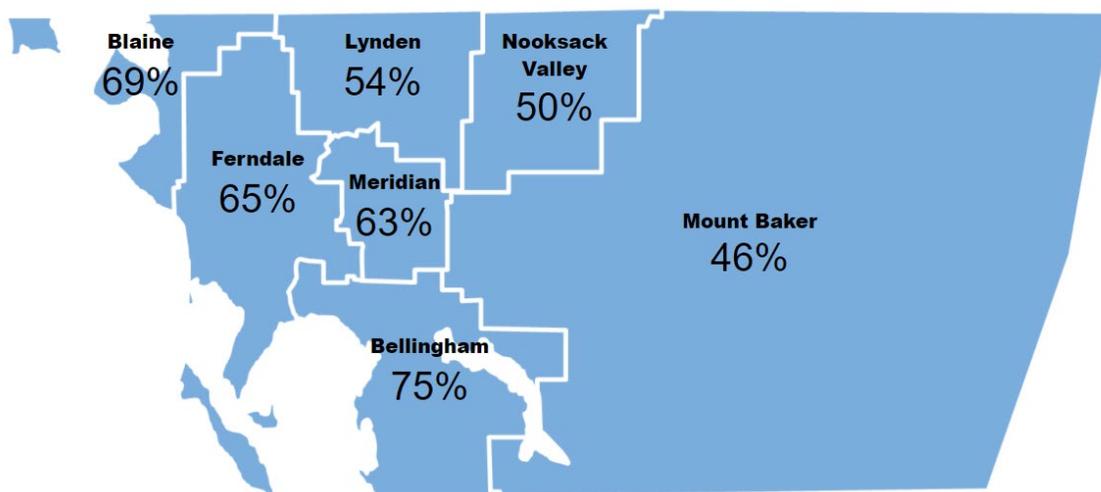
	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	67.3	62.2
Population 5+	71	64
Population 12+	77.2	71.3

As of 11/6, the total number of additional doses administered to Whatcom residents is 22,790. Of those, 14,529 have been for residents 65+, representing 32% of the 65+ population in Whatcom County. An additional dose is defined by the DOH as any dose received after August 13 and in addition to those required to complete the initial vaccination series (two doses for Pfizer and Moderna, one dose for Johnson & Johnson). Additional doses include both third doses and booster doses.

Vaccination in Sub-County Areas

As of 11/8, vaccination rates continue to be the lowest in the Nooksack (50%) and Mt. Baker (46%) 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



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