

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 1/28/22 for the period of 1/16/22 – 1/22/22

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](#), and 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

- Please note: DOH has notified us that due to a processing error, cases for this reporting week include a significant number of duplicates. They are working to correct the data.
- Whatcom County saw overall lower case counts during the most recent reporting week; however, 638 cases were reported with specimen collection date of Tuesday 1/18.
- The average daily case count is 425 cases per day for the week ending 1/22, a decrease from 516 cases per day from the previous reporting week.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom residents are at 51 for the week ending 1/22.
- The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by specimen date among Whatcom County residents is trending downward during the most recent reporting week through 01/22 after reaching a pandemic-high of 28.9 per 100,000 on 1/13.
- The portion of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County that initiated vaccination reached 6,129 children (34.4%).

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| For the period of 1/16 – 1/22 | 7-Day Case Rate / 100,000 |
| | 1,305 |
| For the period of 1/7 – 1/13* | 7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000 |
| | 28.9 |

*To align with changes on the DOH Dashboard, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate is delayed to allow for completeness of the data.

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

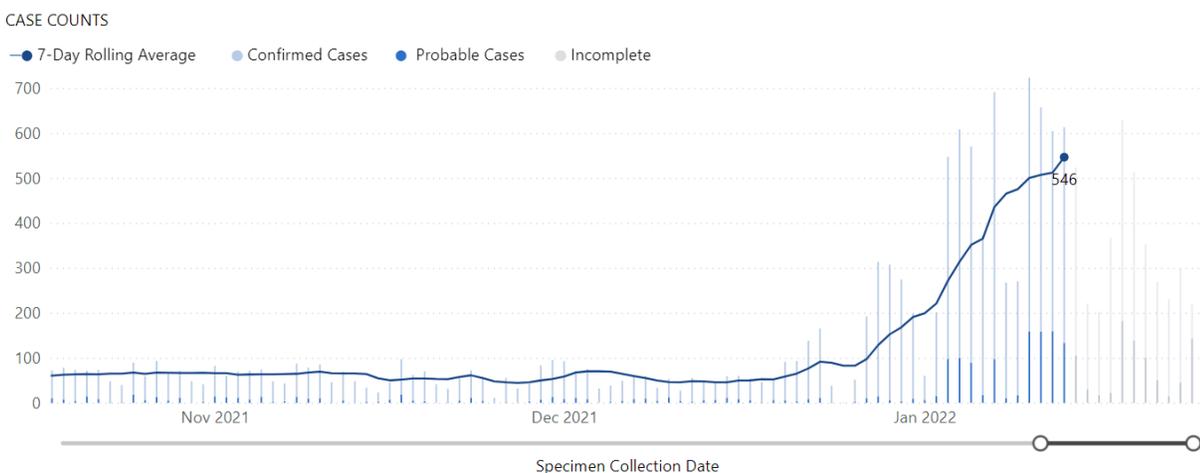
Whatcom County began to see a decline in confirmed and probable cases in the most recent reporting week ending 1/22 after cresting around Jan 13. Despite a decline in new case counts, another high mark was observed following the recent holiday where a single day case count reached 638 on Jan18. This underscores that detected infections are still at a higher level than any previous surge during the pandemic.

Testing resources and locations continue to be stretched through out the county. At-home testing continues to be a common alternative, but it is assumed that these results are not reported. As a result of these factors, the actual case levels are likely higher than reported here. In addition, testing labs and reporting processes are overwhelmed with the high number of cases, causing some delays and even errors in data reporting. Current trends should be interpreted with caution as these are subject to change.

Whatcom County saw a total of 2,974 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 1/16 – 1/22. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week declined to 1,305 cases per 100,000 resident. The recent crest in the case rate for Whatcom County is consistent with other counties in the region. Downward trends are now being observed across the region, but how long these trends last will be determined over the coming days and weeks. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard updated through 1/13, the estimated 7-day case rate for Whatcom County is slightly below the overall rate for WA State. Figure 1 shows the confirmed and probable case counts for Whatcom County according to the DOH Dashboard. Calculated rates and averages based on incomplete data will no longer appear on this dashboard in order to focus on the most complete COVID-19 information.

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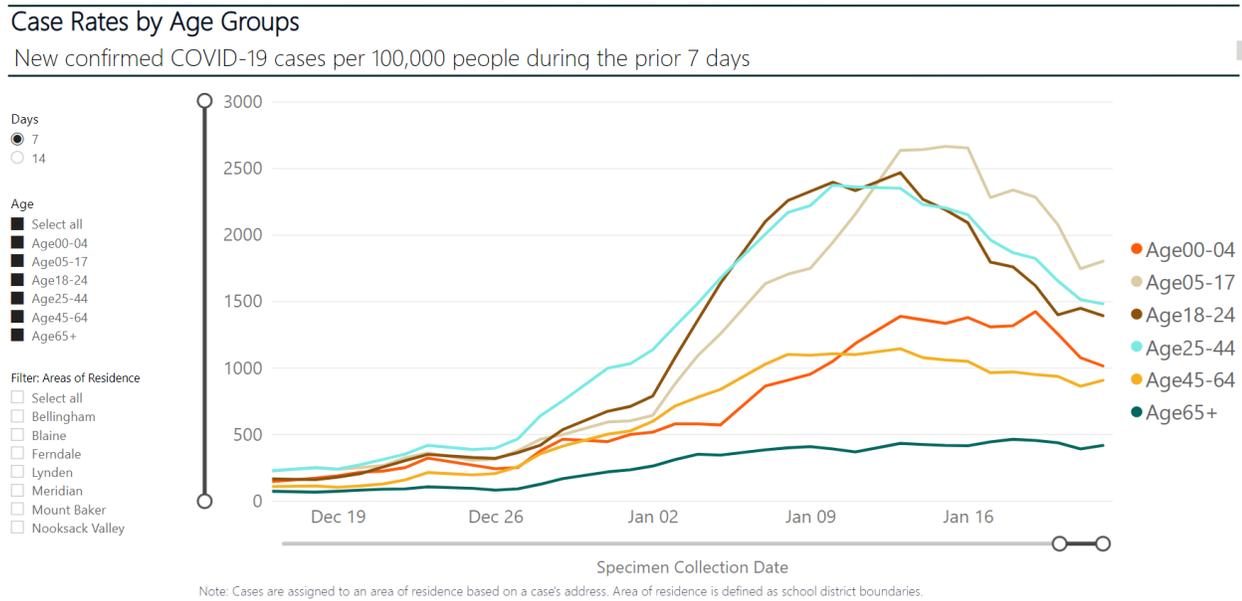
Figure 1. COVID-19 Daily Case Counts and 7-Day Average for Whatcom County. Source: DOH.



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

The 7-day case rates for all age groups crested during the most recent reporting week. The case rates range from 415 per 100,000 for 65 years and older up to 1,800 per 100,000 for 5 – 17 year olds (Figure 2). Downward trends are observed in all of the relative case rates except for adults 65 and older where the rate is plateauing. The age groups between 5 and 44 years are still experiencing case rates above the county average (1,305 per 100,000). In contrast, the case rate for older adults 65+ years continues to be one of the lowest rates in the county. The percentage of cases accounted for by school-age children (5 – 17 years) is 26% of all confirmed cases in Whatcom County.

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



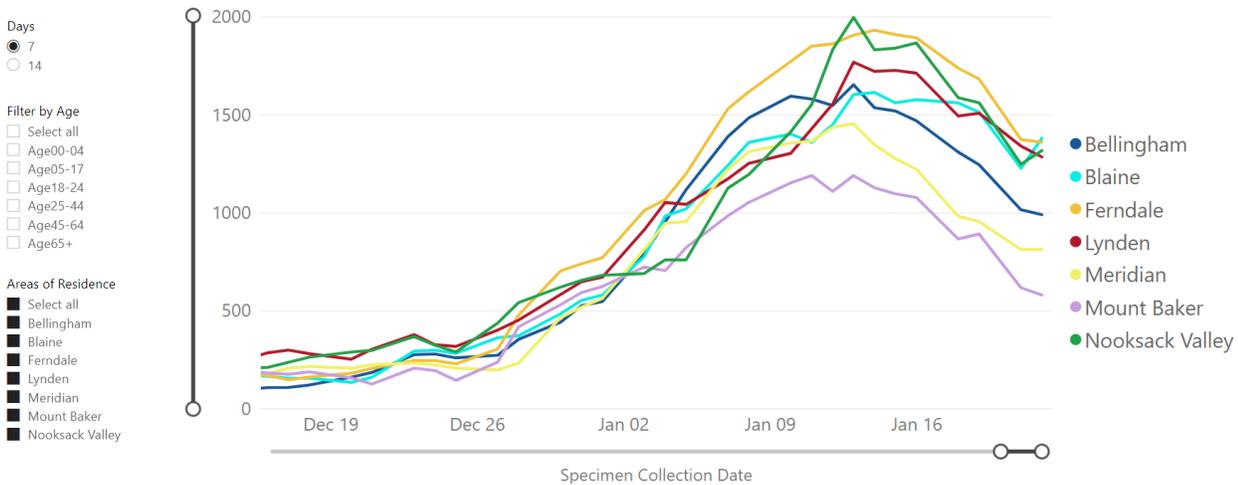
COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 579 per 100,000 in the Mount Baker area to 1,379 per 100,000 in the Blaine area (Figure 3). Relative case rates continue to reflect the highest levels reported during the pandemic in all areas, but downward trends are now observed across all areas. The extent of the decline in new cases will be determined over the coming days and weeks.

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

Case Rates by Area

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



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

Across the county, confirmed cases continue to be more common among unvaccinated residents (Table 1). According to the January 26 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/22 to 1/18 suggests that unvaccinated individuals are at a higher risk of becoming infected with COVID-19.

Table 1: Confirmed cases by vaccination status in Whatcom County for 1/16– 1/22

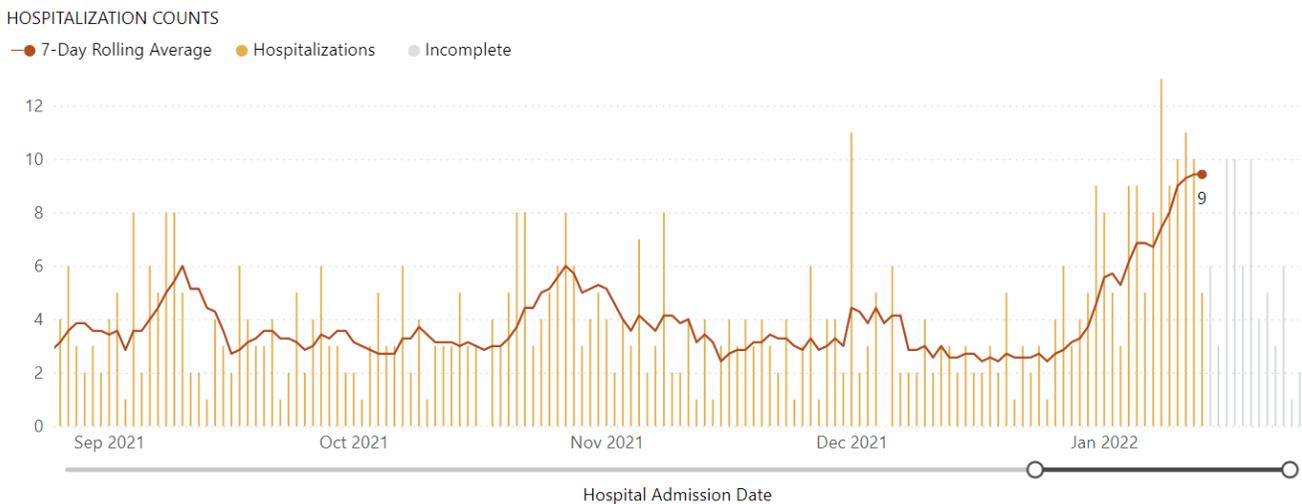
| | Week Total | Vaccinated | Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated |
|----------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| COVID-19 Cases | 2,974 | 969 | 2,005 |

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.

COVID-19 hospitalization data available on the DOH Dashboard is shown in Figure 4. Caution should be taken when interpreting hospitalization rates within the most recent eight days because of the incompleteness of the data (noted with grey bars).

Figure 4: COVID-19 hospitalization counts for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through 1/13 (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.

COVID-19 hospitalizations were fewer for the period 1/16 – 1/22 among Whatcom County residents than in the previous week. The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate per 100,000 Whatcom County residents based on data confirmed through 1/13 reached a pandemic-high of 28.9, but is projected to decline in the coming 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). Among the reported COVID-19 hospitalizations, older residents 65 years and above accounted for 50% during the current reporting period. According to the DOH Dashboard with data confirmed through 1/13, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate by admission date for Whatcom County is slightly above the overall state rate (25.7).

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by age and vaccination status from 1/16 – 1/22

| | Week Total | Vaccinated | Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| COVID-19 Hospitalizations | 51 | 17 | 34 |

According to the January 26 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/15 to 1/11 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 (12 – 34 years) are 5 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the fully vaccinated population. The difference in rates is 7 times higher for unvaccinated 35 – 64 year olds. For the oldest cohort 65 years and above, the rate of COVID-19 hospitalization is 7 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the vaccinated population.

COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw six deaths due to COVID-19 during the period 1/16 – 1/22 (Table 3):

- Two unvaccinated females, 70-79 years
- Unvaccinated female, 80-89 years
- Unvaccinated female, 90-99 years
- Vaccinated female, 70-79 years
- Vaccinated male, 70-79 years

Table 3. Summary of COVID-19 deaths among Whatcom County residents by vaccination status

| COVID-19 Deaths | Total | Vaccinated | Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated |
|------------------|-------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Week ending 1/22 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Total | 231 | 47 | 184 |

These numbers are preliminary; WCHD may not yet have been notified of other deaths for this reporting week.

According to the January 26 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/01 to 12/28 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are 11 times more likely to die of COVID-19 than vaccinated individuals.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

The percent coverage for COVID-19 vaccinations among the population is displayed in Table 4 as of 1/22. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 49,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination. The eligible population of 5+ years in Whatcom County includes an additional 17,807 individuals compared to the population 12+.

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

| | Initiating (%) | Fully Vaccinated (%) |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Total Population | 72.8 | 65.9 |
| Population 5+ | 76.6 | 69.4 |
| Population 12+ | 81.5 | 74.3 |

As of January 22, the number of pediatric vaccinations received in Whatcom County is 6,129, accounting for 34.4% of the eligible population in the 5 – 11 year-old age group. The total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 75,185. Of those, 25,724 have been to residents 65+.



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