

# Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 2/4/22 for the period of 1/23/22 - 1/29/22

## 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

- DOH has notified us that due to a processing error, cases for this reporting week include a significant number of duplicates.
- The average daily case count is 329 cases per day, a decrease from 464 cases per day from the previous week.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom residents are at 56 for the week 1/23 – 1/29.
- The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by specimen date among Whatcom County residents is plateauing at a level near 25 per 100k during the most recent 7-day period through 1/20.
- The number of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County that initiated vaccination reached 6,427 children (36.1%).

<b>For the period of 1/23 – 1/29</b>	7-Day Case Rate / 100,000
	1,012
<b>For the period of 1/14 – 1/20*</b>	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
	25.0

\*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 continues to experience a decline in confirmed and probable cases in the most recent reporting week ending 1/29. Another high mark was observed on 1/24 with a single day case

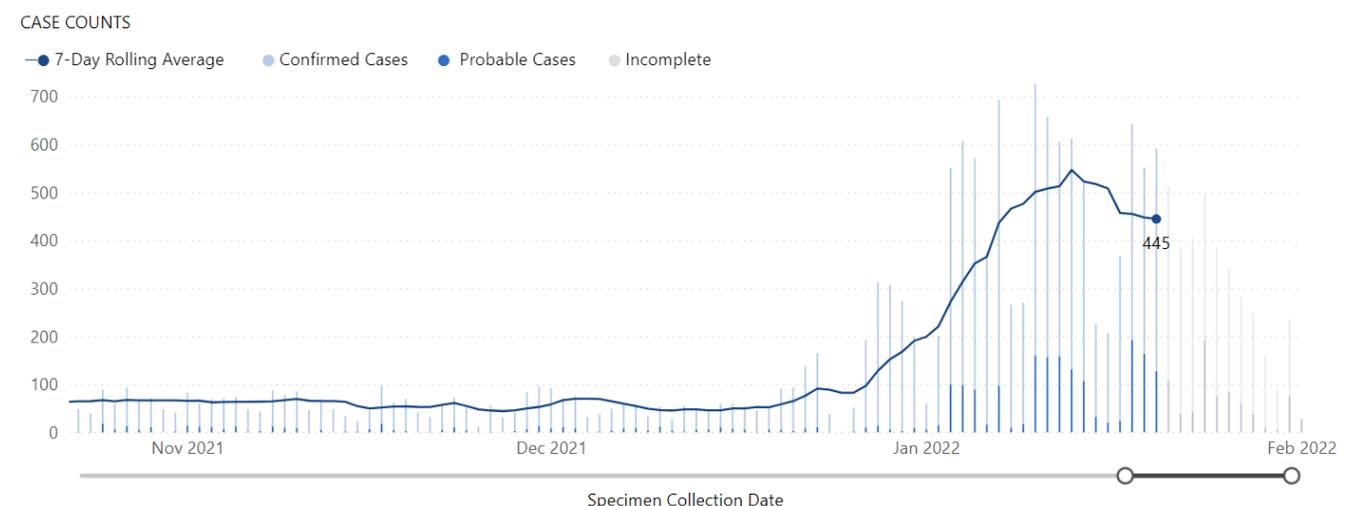
count of 506; however, daily case counts decreased each day thereafter. A processing error causing several duplicate case records is likely responsible for a portion of the high level of counts during this reporting week. DOH is still working to correct the data.

Testing resources and locations continue to be stretched throughout the county. At-home testing continues to be a common alternative, and 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 2,305 confirmed and probable cases from specimens collected during the reporting week 1/23 – 1/29. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week declined to 1,012 cases per 100,000. A small peak was observed during the most recent week in Whatcom County as well as other counties in the region that may be attributable to the data processing error. Downward trends are continuing across the county and the region. According to data published on the Washington State DOH Dashboard updated through 1/20, the estimated 7-day case rate per 100,000 for Whatcom County remains below the overall rate for Washington. 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.

Please note: DOH has notified us that due to a processing error, cases for this reporting week includes a significant number of duplicates. They are working to correct the data.

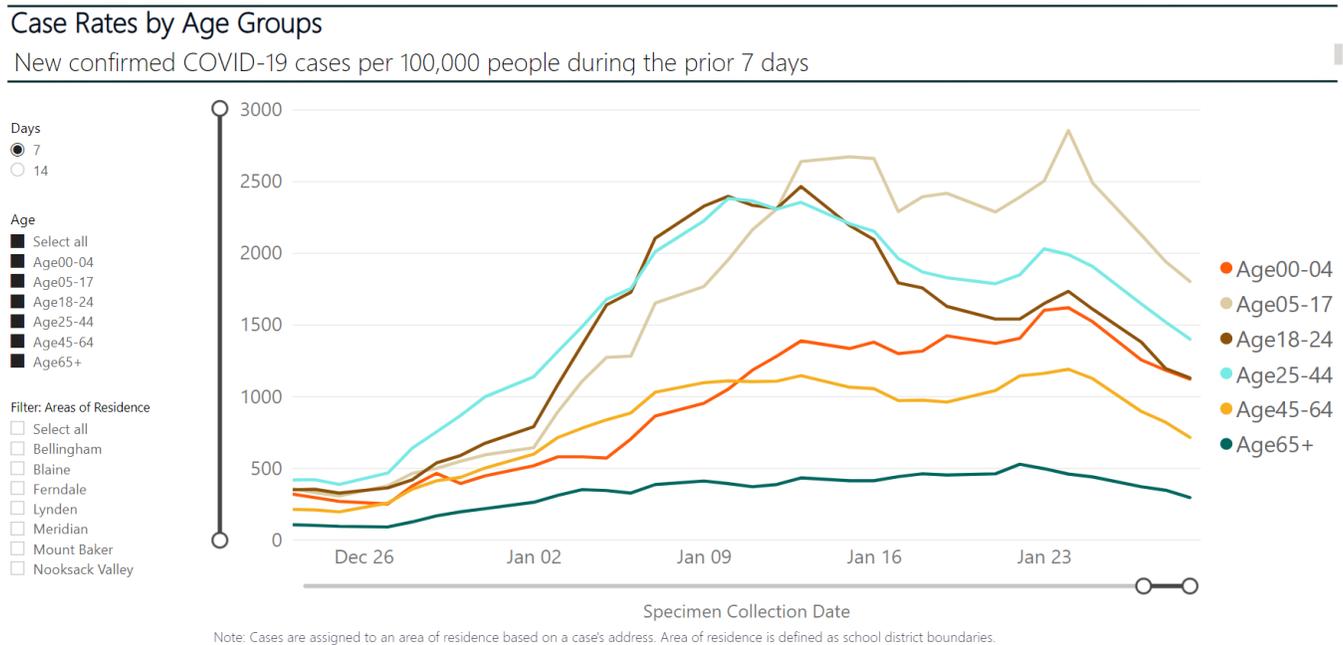
Figure 1. COVID-19 Daily Case Counts and 7-Day Average for Whatcom County Confirmed Through 1/20. Source: DOH



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

The 7-day case rates for all age groups experienced a brief peak followed by a downward trend during the most recent reporting week. The case rates range from 294 per 100,000 for 65 years and older up to 1,800 per 100,000 for 5 – 17 year olds (Figure 2). The age groups between 0 and 44 years are still experiencing case rates above the county average (1,012 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



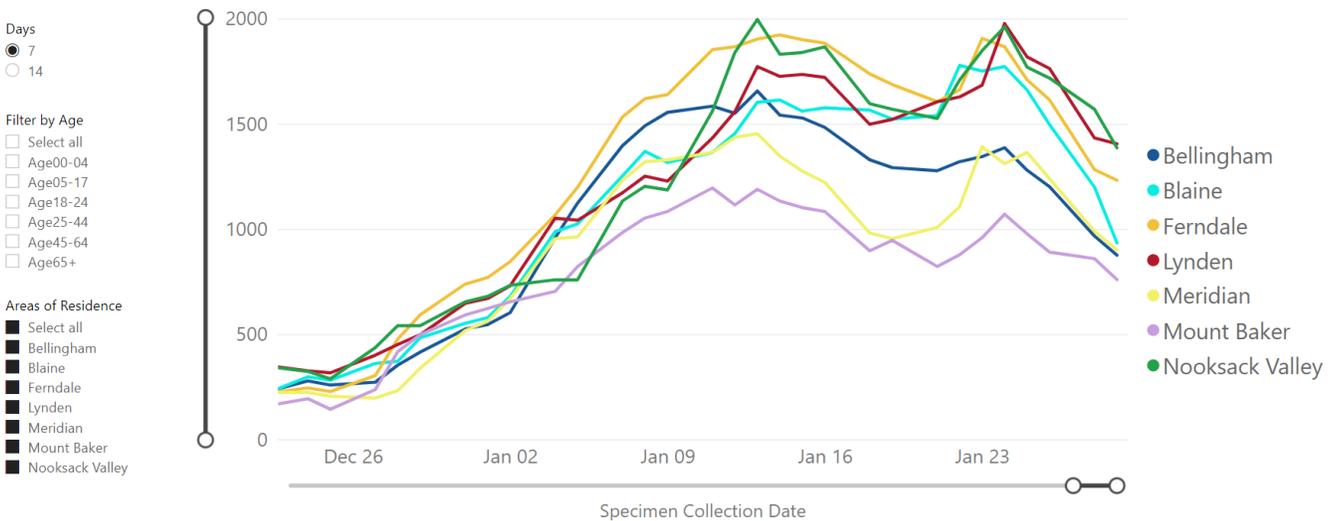
## COVID-19 Cases in Areas

Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 759 per 100,000 in the Mount Baker area to 1,404 per 100,000 in the Lynden area (Figure 3). Relative case rates are showing downward trends all areas following a small peak earlier in the reporting week. 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



Across the county, confirmed cases continue to be more common among unvaccinated residents (Table 1). According to the February 2 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/29 to 1/25 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 1/23 – 1/29

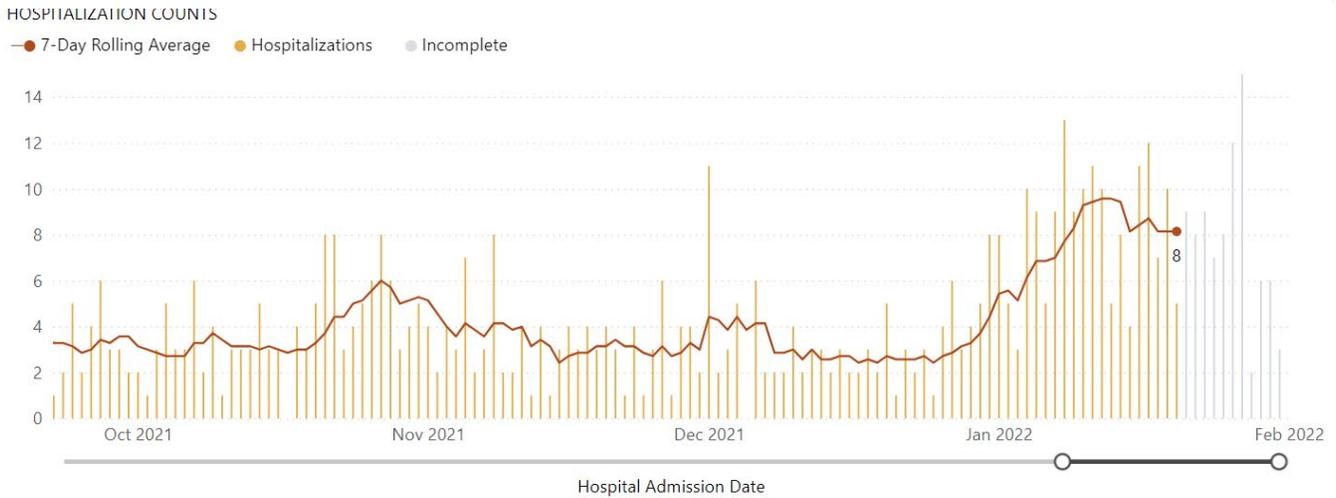
	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	2,305	941	1364

## 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 1/20 (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 increased slightly for the period 1/23 – 1/29 among Whatcom County residents to 56 during the most recent reporting week. The 7-day COVID-19 hospitalization rate per 100,000 Whatcom County residents based on data confirmed through 1/20 declined to 25.0. The vaccination status among COVID-19 hospitalizations is unavailable due to data processing errors. Among the reported COVID-19 hospitalizations, older residents 65 years and above accounted for 43% during the current reporting period. According to the DOH Dashboard with data confirmed through 1/20, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate by admission date for Whatcom County is below the overall Washington state rate (28.4 per 100,000).

Table 2: COVID-19 hospitalizations in Whatcom County by age and vaccination status from 1/23 – 1/29

	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Hospitalizations	56	--	--

According to the February 2 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/22 to 1/18 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 8 times higher in the unvaccinated population than in the vaccinated population.

## COVID-19 Deaths

Whatcom County saw seven deaths due to COVID-19 during the period 1/23 – 1/29 (Table 3):

- Two unvaccinated males, 70-79 years
- Unvaccinated male, 80-89 years
- Vaccinated female, 90-99 years
- Three vaccinated males, 90-99 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 1/29	7	4	3
Total (as of 1/29)	242	54	188

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

According to the February 2 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/08 to 1/04 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are 9 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 January 31. 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	73.6	67.0
Population 5+	77.5	70.5

As of January 31, the number of pediatric (5 – 11 years) vaccinations initiated in Whatcom County is 6,427, accounting for 36.1% of the eligible population. The total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 78,508. Of those, 26,202 have been to residents 65+.