

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 2/11/22 for the period of 1/30/22 – 2/05/22

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.

Due to an overwhelming number of confirmed COVID-19 test results during the recent surge, data processing is requiring greater amounts of time to ensure completeness and accuracy. The recent data processing errors reported by DOH at the end of January continue to add replicate records for confirmed cases. Separately, at-home testing with over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 tests continues to be a practical option for individuals across the county; however, results from these OTC tests remain largely unreported. As a result of these factors, WCHD will be introducing changes to the reporting interval and measures in upcoming reports. Further details will be available as they are confirmed in the coming weeks.

Key Findings

- DOH continues to investigate a data processing error. As a result of the error, WCHD continues to detect a significant number of duplicate records in COVID case data.
- The average daily case count is 200 cases per day, a decrease from 320 cases per day from the previous week.
- COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom residents are at 56 for the week 1/30 – 2/05.
- The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by specimen date among Whatcom County residents climbed to 31.6 per 100k during the 7-day period through 1/27.
- The number of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County that initiated vaccination reached 6,523 children (37%).

For the period of 1/30 - 2/05	7-Day Case Rate / 100,000
	626
For the period of 1/21 - 1/27*	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
	31.6

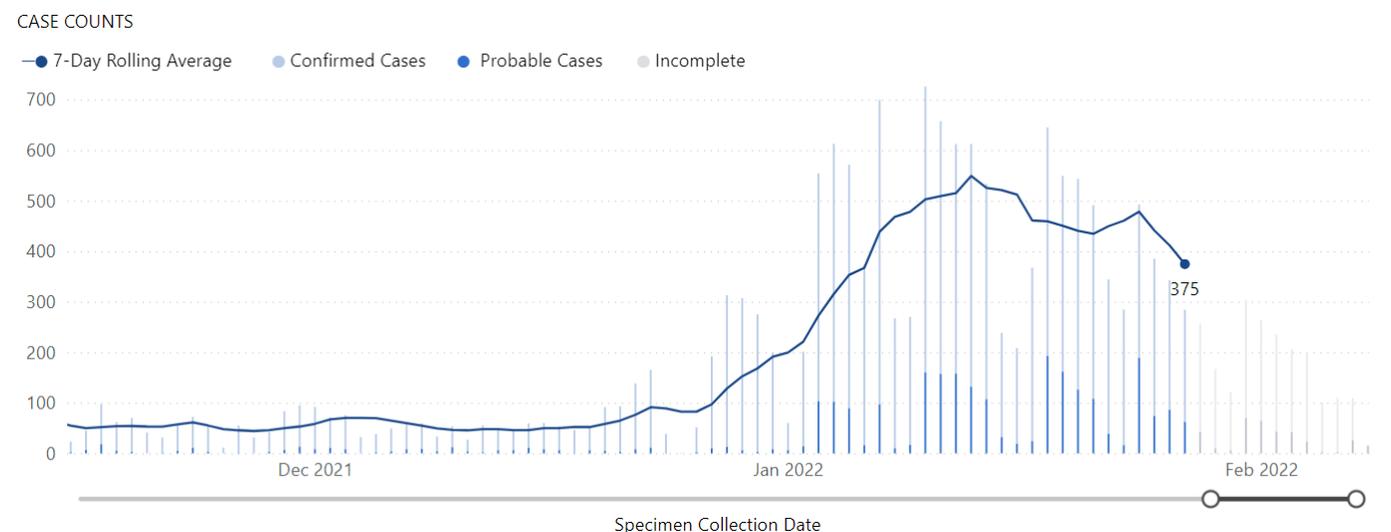
*To align with changes on the DOH Dashboard, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate is delayed to allow for completeness of the data.

Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Whatcom County continues to experience a decline in confirmed and probable cases in the most recent reporting week ending 02/05. A total of 1,426 confirmed and probable cases were collected during the reporting week 1/30 – 2/05. The 7-day case rate in Whatcom County for this reporting week declined to 626 cases per 100,000. 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.

The proportion of confirmed cases for the most recent reporting week remains higher among the unvaccinated population in Whatcom County (Table 1). If exposure to COVID-19 remains the same, and the vaccinated population continues to increase, then a greater proportion of cases will be among vaccinated individuals. Likewise, the proportion of cases among unvaccinated individuals will decrease as this population becomes smaller. It is important to bear in mind the proportion of the underlying population when considering counts.

Figure 1. COVID-19 Daily Case Counts and 7-Day Average for Whatcom County Confirmed through 1/27. Source: DOH



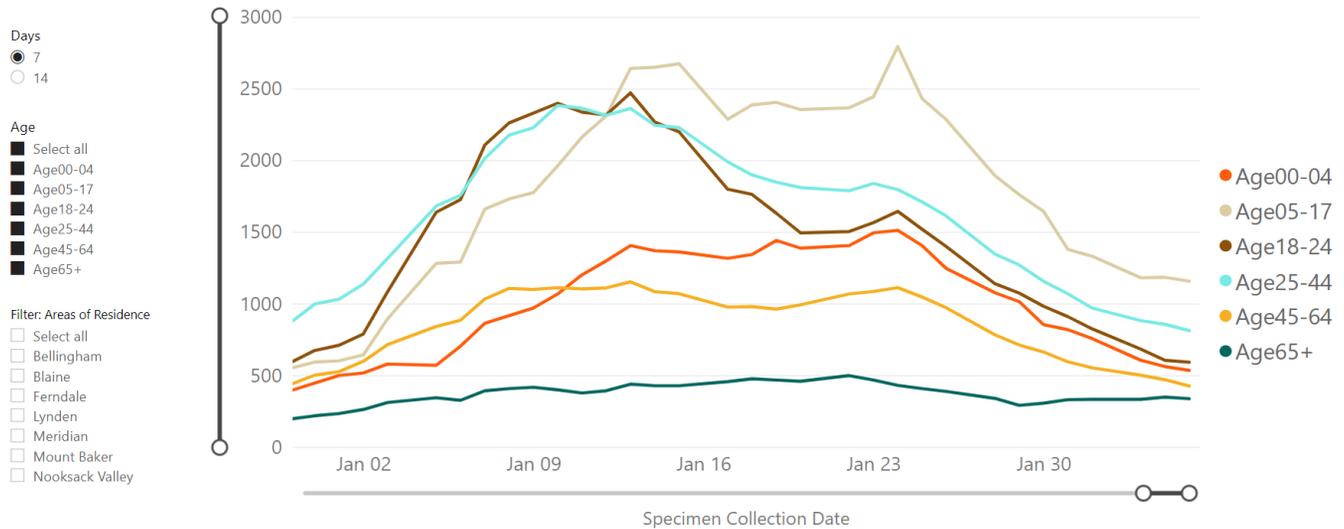
COVID-19 Cases in Age Groups & Sub-County Areas

The 7-day case rates for all age groups continue to trend downward. The case rates range from 336 per 100,000 for 65 years and older up to 1,156 per 100,000 for 5 – 17 year olds (Figure 2). The case rate for 5 – 17 year-olds remains elevated compared to other age groups in the county. In contrast, older adults 65+ years continue to experience the lowest rate in the 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



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

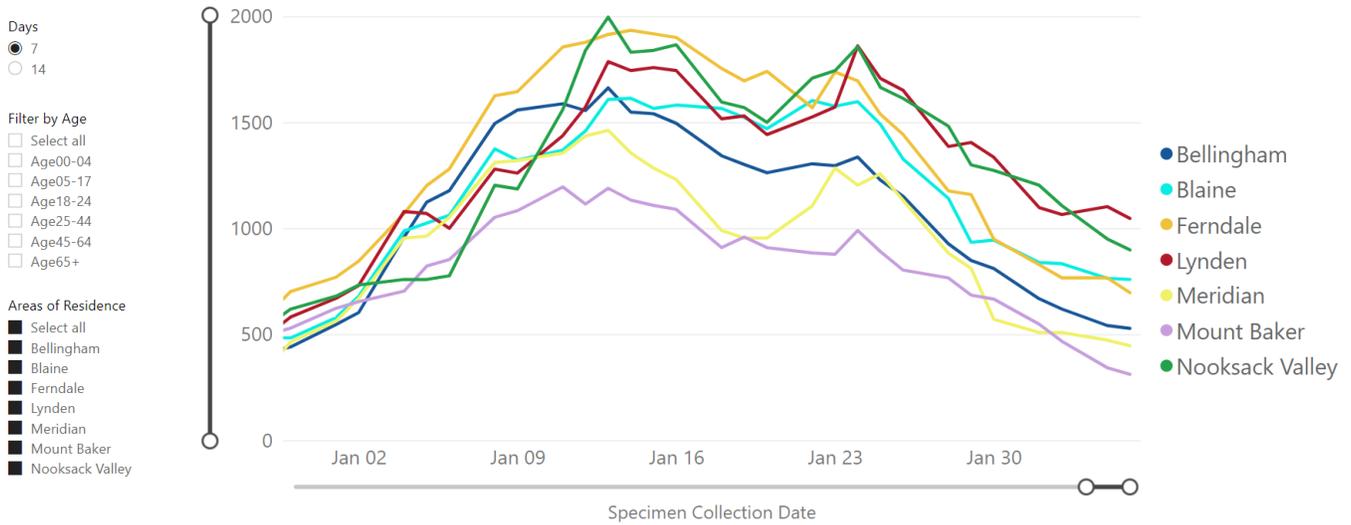
Among the sub-county areas in Whatcom County, the 7-day case rates range from 311 per 100,000 in the Mount Baker area to 1,046 per 100,000 in the Lynden area (Figure 3). Relative case rates are showing downward trends across all areas in the most recent reporting week. The extent of the decline in new 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

5

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 9 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 1/05 to 2/01 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 1/30 – 2/05

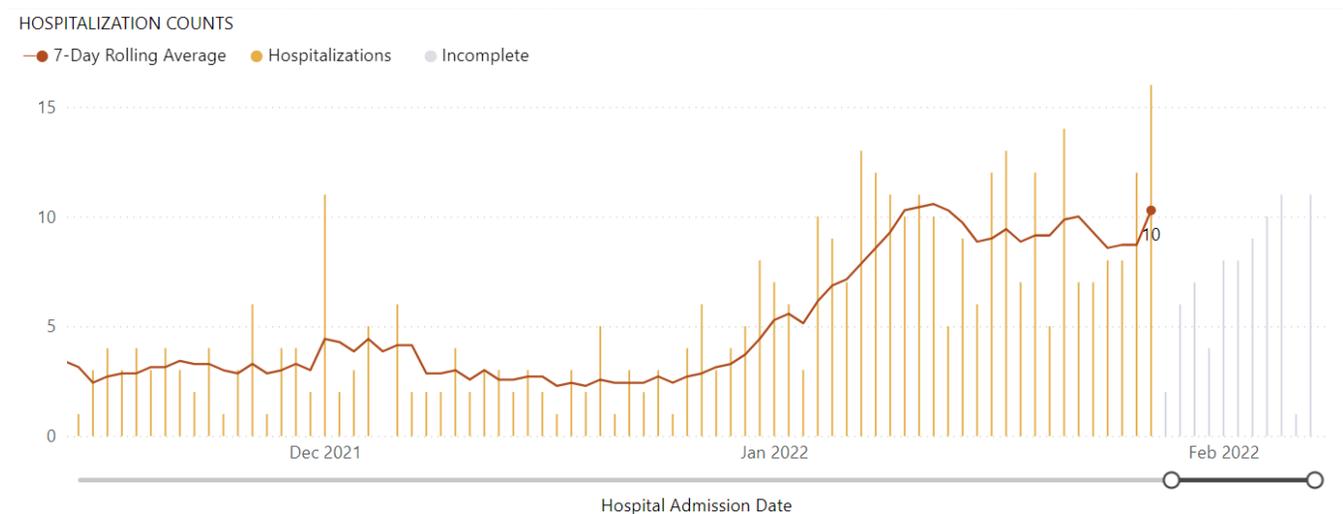
	Week Total	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
COVID-19 Cases	1,431	480	951

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 1/27 (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 1/30 – 2/05 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 1/27 reached a near pandemic-high of 31.6. 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 45% during the current reporting period. According to the DOH Dashboard with data confirmed through 1/27, the estimated COVID-19 hospitalization rate by admission date for Whatcom County climbed above the overall Washington state rate (26.4 per 100,000).

According to the February 9 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/29 to 1/25 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

The vaccinated population in Whatcom County continues to grow and therefore make up a larger proportion of the overall county population. A similar situation results as described with confirmed cases above. As the proportion of vaccinated individuals increases in the population, and the exposure to COVID-19 remains the same, then it is expected that a greater proportion of deaths will occur among the vaccinated population. Fewer and fewer deaths are expected among unvaccinated individuals since this proportion of the population is decreasing. WCHD will be reporting deaths expressed as rates in the future in order to consider the differences in the underlying populations when interpreting vaccination status.

Whatcom County saw four deaths due to COVID-19 during the period 1/30 – 2/05 (Table 2):

- Vaccinated Female, 50-59 years
- Vaccinated Female, 60-69 years
- Vaccinated Female, 80-89 years
- Unvaccinated Male, 60-69 years

Table 2: 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	4	3	1
Total (as of 1/29)	245	57	188

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

According to the February 9 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/15 to 1/11 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are 8 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 February 5. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 48,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Table 2: Percent of population who are initiating vaccination and fully vaccinated in Whatcom County.

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	73.7	67.0
Population 5+	77.5	70.2

As of February 5th, the number of pediatric (5 – 11 years) vaccinations initiated in Whatcom County is 6,643, accounting for 37% of the eligible population. The total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 80,859. Of those, 26,548 have been to residents 65+.



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