

Whatcom County COVID-19 Data Report

Whatcom County Health Department

Updated 2/18/22 for the period of 2/06/22 – 2/12/22

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.

WCHD continues to find evidence of data processing errors in the form of duplicate records for confirmed cases reported by DOH. An investigation by DOH is underway to resolve this issue. Separately, COVID-19 testing patterns are changing as many individuals are choosing over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 tests across the county. The results from these OTC tests remain largely unreported, and therefore estimates of confirmed case counts and rates should be interpreted with caution. **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. Next week there will not be a report due to the President's Day Holiday.

Key Findings

- The data processing error is still not resolved and we continue to find duplicate records created in data from the DOH disease reporting system. Duplicate records have been removed from weekly hospitalizations and deaths, but not case data.
- The average daily case count is 200 cases per day, with no significant change from the previous week.
- New COVID-19 hospitalizations among Whatcom residents are at 47 for the week ending 2/12.
- The 7-day rate for COVID-19 hospitalizations by specimen date among Whatcom County residents is trending below 20 per 100k during the most recent reporting week.
- The portion of 5 – 11 year olds in Whatcom County that initiated vaccination reached 6,773 children (38%).

For the period of 2/06 - 2/12	7-Day Case Rate / 100,000
	563.5
For the period of 1/28 - 2/03*	7-Day Hospitalization Rate / 100,000
	20.2

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

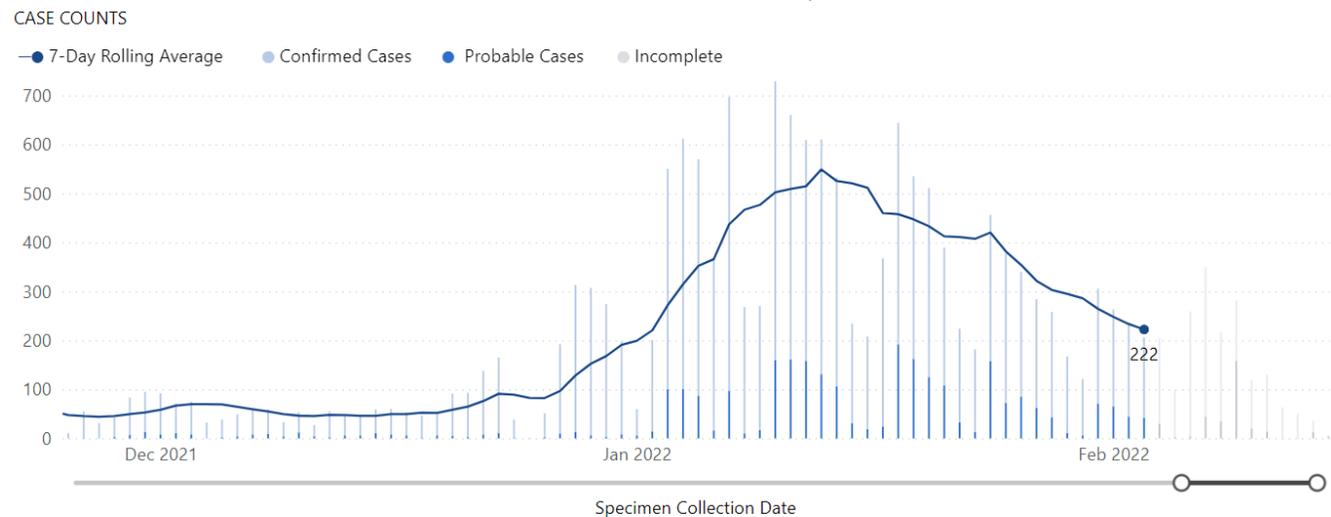
Overview of COVID-19 Cases

Despite the changing testing landscape with more and more OTC tests conducted throughout the community, the total number of confirmed and probable cases indicate a declining trend in Whatcom County. The total number of new confirmed and probable cases for the week ending 2/12 was 1,285. With an average case count per day of 184, there was a small decrease in this measure from the previous week. Figure 1 shows the confirmed and probable case counts for Whatcom County through 2/03 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.

Due to potential duplicates in confirmed case counts resulting from processing errors, the vaccination status of new cases is temporarily removed from this report. WCHD is working on measures of

Figure 1. COVID-19 Daily Case Counts and 7-Day Average for Whatcom County Confirmed through 2/03. Source: DOH

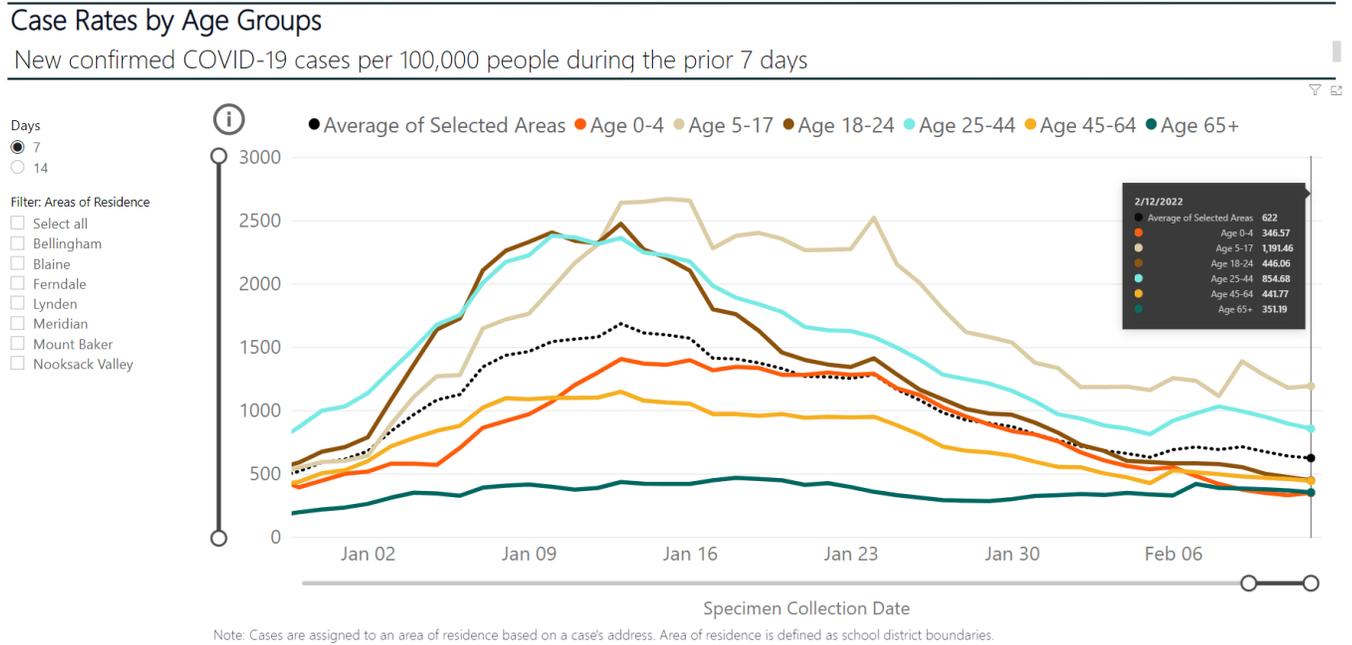
infection related to vaccination status to include in future reports.



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

The COVID-19 case rates across many age groups in Whatcom County continue to trend downward. However, the case rate for 5 – 17 year olds and the rate for 25 – 44 year olds have plateaued during the most recent reporting week and are at 1,191 per 100,000 and 855 per 100,000, respectively. At the lower end, the case rate for 0 – 4 year-olds declined and is nearly even even with that of 65 years and older.

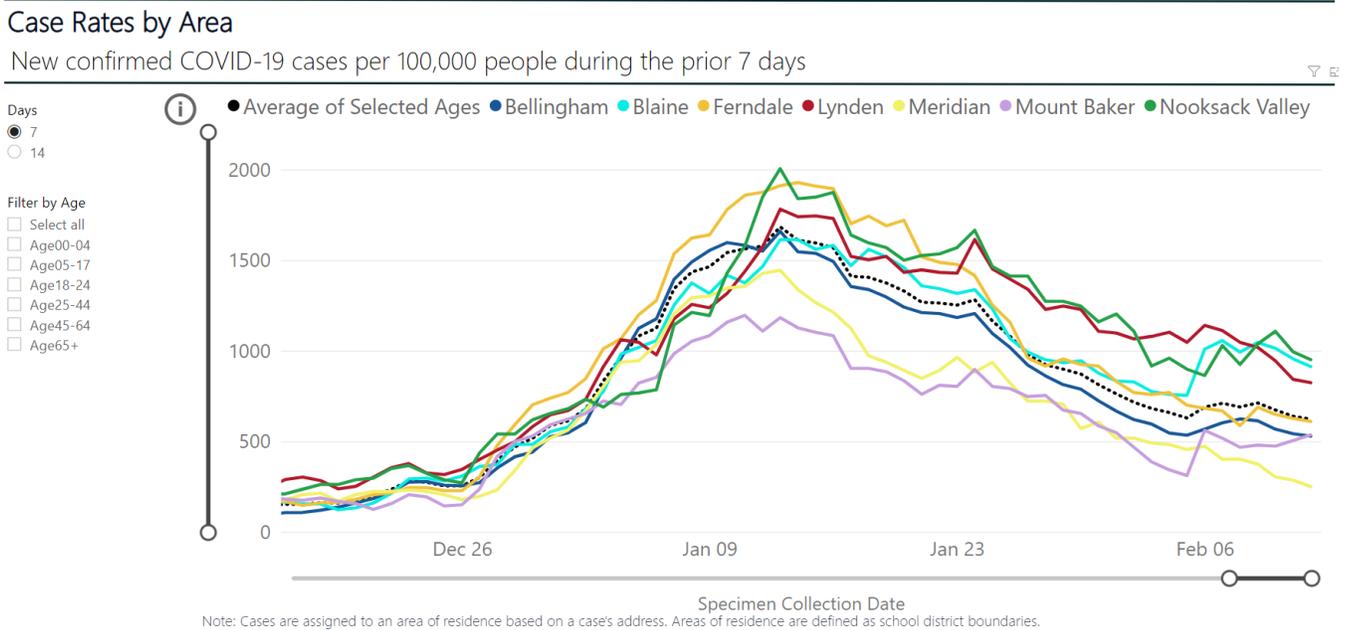
Figure 2. 7-day COVID-19 case rates per 100,000 by age groups in Whatcom County



COVID-19 Cases in Areas

The COVID-19 case rates among sub-county areas range from 950 per 100,000 in Nooksack Valley down to 250 per 100,000 in the Meridian area. Some upward movement was observed in the case rates in the Blaine, Nooksack Valley, and Mount Baker areas. These changes may be due to duplicate records however, and it will be important to observe the continued trend over the coming days.

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



According to the February 16 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 1/12 to 2/08 suggests that unvaccinated individuals are at a higher risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 across all age groups.

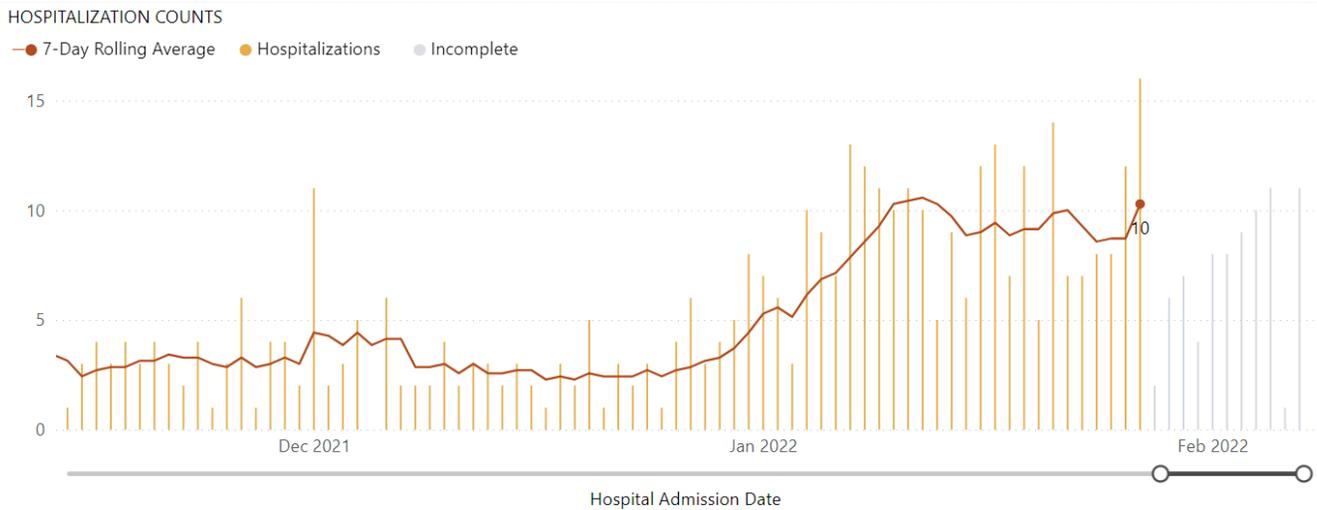
COVID-19 Hospitalizations

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). As noted above, calculated rates and averages are no longer included on these graphs.

For the week ending 2/12, there were 47 new COVID-19 hospitalizations reported among Whatcom County residents. This represents a decline from the previous week where 57 new COVID-19 hospitalizations were reported. Vaccination status is unavailable for those hospitalized due to COVID-19 because of the ongoing data processing error. Among the new COVID-19 hospitalizations for the most recent reporting week, 55% were 65 years and older, 23% were between 45 and 64 years, 17% were between 25 and 44 years, and less than 5% were under 25 years.

Figure 4: COVID-19 hospitalization counts for Whatcom County residents with confirmed data through 1/27 (Source: DOH)



According to the February 16 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 1/05 to 2/01 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 vaccination status of Whatcom County residents who died due to COVID-19 is removed temporarily due to the DOH data processing issue and duplicate records. WCHD is investigating other measures to report deaths that better represent the distribution of these events across the population and consider the additional vaccinations that are now common. Further details will be available as they are confirmed in the coming weeks.

Whatcom County saw six deaths due to COVID-19 during the period 2/06 – 2/12 (Table 2):

- Female, 60-69 years
- Female, 90-99 years
- Female, 80-89 years
- Male, 40-49 years
- Male, 70-79 years
- Male, 80-89 years

The total number of deaths due to COVID-19 among Whatcom County residents reached 259 as of 2/12. These numbers are preliminary; WCHD may not yet have been notified of other deaths for this reporting week.

According to the February 16 [DOH report](#) on COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths by Vaccination Status, data collected from 12/22 to 1/18 suggests that for individuals 65 and older, unvaccinated individuals are 7 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 12. Of the eligible population (5+ years), there are 48,000 Whatcom County residents who have not initiated vaccination.

Table 1: Percent of population who are initiating vaccination and fully vaccinated in Whatcom County.

	Initiating (%)	Fully Vaccinated (%)
Total Population	74.1	67.6
Population 5+	77.5	70.3

As of February 12, the number of pediatric (5 – 11 years) vaccinations initiated in Whatcom County is 6,773, accounting for 38% of the eligible population. The total number of booster doses administered to Whatcom residents is 82,772. Of those, 26,765 have been to residents 65+.



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