AppHealthCare
Caring for our Community

COVID-19 Situation Update for Watauga County
November 13, 2020

This document is intended to provide a regular update on the local response to COVID-19 in our communities and timely, trended data related to COVID-19. This report will be published on Fridays.

Situation Update

For the week of November 1-7 (graphs below) and looking over the past few weeks, we have continued to see a decrease in trends for active cases and those who are in quarantine. However, we have seen another increase this week in the number of people hospitalized locally for COVID-19. Our case trends have continued to increase with the largest percentage of cases in the 18-24 old age group. However, the trend of new cases among this age group has declined.

Governor Cooper's new Executive Order will go into effect Friday, November 13th at 5pm to extend Phase 3 to December 4th and it also lowers the indoor gathering limit to 10 people.

In order to avoid a spike in cases, we urge everyone to not let up on the actions we can take to continue to slow the spread in our community. This will be particularly important with the Holiday season approaching and the importance of remaining vigilant, even in smaller gatherings with people living outside of your household.

The same trend continues with most cases exposed due to close contact with others through living or working closely with others or attending social gatherings. Small gatherings with people outside of immediate household members has contributed to additional exposures. As we get closer to the Thanksgiving and Holiday season, we encourage everyone to be mindful of the fact that this virus is still with us and there are actions we can all take to avoid and lessen our exposure and a potential spike that could overwhelm our healthcare system. If you will be hosting or attending an event, NC DHHS has compiled some tips for gathering safely and some guidance for private social gatherings.
Some of those tips include:
- Stay home if you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19,
- Keep the gathering small,
- Stay outdoors if you can,
- Avoid self-serve food,
- Consider asking guests to self-quarantine for 14 days before the event, and if you cannot, at least minimize your exposure to others prior to attending, and
- Maintain a safe distance of at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands and wear a face covering.

For college students returning home for the holidays, we encourage you to be tested close to your departure time and self-quarantine for 14 days when returning home to prevent spreading the virus to your loved ones. App State has published a [Holiday and Winter Break Departure and Return Plan](#) for all of campus, which includes faculty, staff and students, that also encourages individuals to get tested and self-quarantine.

"Most of our new cases have been exposed to COVID-19 by being in close contact with others through living or working closely with others or attending social gatherings. Even small gatherings can lead to additional exposures so we urge everyone to practice prevention measures like the 3Ws when you are around anyone who you do not live with. We must keep up the commitment to ensure our metrics continue going in the right direction," stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.

Key Points
- **Free COVID-19 Testing at AppHealthCare:** We offer free COVID-19 testing Monday through Friday beginning at 9:30am. Please do not just show up for testing. We request that you schedule an appointment through our [website](#) or by calling our COVID-19 Call Center at (828) 795-1970.
- **We continue case investigation and contact tracing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you receive a call from a member of our case investigation or contact tracing team, we urge you to cooperate and provide information that will help us conduct response efforts.** You may receive a call from (844) 628-7223 or (828) 264-4995. It may also show up as "NC Outreach" or "Contact Tracing." Your cell phone carrier may flag the call as spam. It is so important to answer the call of a contact tracer. It is a key tool in slowing the spread of this virus.
- **Hospitalizations:** In the past week, we have seen a slight increase from the prior week in the number of people who require hospitalization due to complications of COVID-19. We must remain focused on prevention because it could change quickly back toward the wrong direction.
- We continue to work closely with App State and Watauga County Schools to provide public health guidance and recommendations to inform their decisions about operations. [App State has a dedicated website](#) that highlights guidance, regular updates and data for the university community.
- PPE (personal protective equipment) levels remain stable in most areas.
- Turnaround times are around 2-4 days. NC DHHS provides data on testing turnaround times. This data is updated daily and can be found [here](#).
- We continue to add positions and capacity to respond to the demand in this response effort. More information about those positions can be found [here](#).
- Outreach continues to be an important part of our collective community strategy to address COVID-19. Regular meetings take place with community partners to discuss the current situation in the county, strategize areas for growth and improvement and provide a time for questions and answers.

Outbreaks & Clusters
Data is provided for outbreaks and clusters that are active and ongoing. The number of cases for outbreaks and clusters are current as of each Thursday at 9:00am. The case counts vary day by day as

new cases are identified and as cases are moved in and out of isolation. This data may not match other reported data since this is a point in time. As we conduct outbreak and case investigations, the data included in this report are subject to change. For a current case count, visit the AppHealthCare data dashboard, which is updated daily by noon.

Based on additional clarification from NC DHHS of documenting and reporting clusters, we have identified and added clusters in off-campus apartments to the cluster report after clarifying cluster linkages among Appalachian State students with NC DHHS.

An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory confirmed cases. A cluster is defined as a minimum of five cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period and plausible epidemiologic linkage between cases. An outbreak or cluster is considered over if 28 days have passed after the latest date of symptom onset in a symptomatic person or first date of specimen collection from the most recent asymptomatic person, whichever is later. Additional information on the definitions of outbreaks and clusters is provided by the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services.

NC DHHS also provides regularly updated information on outbreaks and clusters. A newly added "COVID-19 Clusters in North Carolina" report includes aggregate data of settings where clusters are occurring. These settings include workplaces, shopping services, community events, etc. This report will be updated each Monday.

Active Outbreaks & Clusters Data is current as of Thursday, November 12, 9:00am				
Facility or Setting Type	**Facility or Setting Name**	**Active Cases**	**Cumulative Cases**	**Last Positive Result**
Long Term Care Facility	Foley Center	1 resident	3 staff 3 residents 1 death	11/7/2020
Residential Care Facility	Mountain Care Center	0	1 staff 5 residents	10/28/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Thunder Hill Residence Hall	3	33	11/09/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Raven Rocks Residence Hall	0	17	10/29/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Eggers Residence Hall	1	10	11/04/2020

Institute of Higher Education	App State Summit Residence Hall	0	11	11/10/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Volleyball Team	0	7	10/29/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Gardner Residence Hall	1	7	11/03/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Coltrane Residence Hall	0	6	10/31/2020
Institute of Higher Education	Doughton Hall	0	7	11/10/2020
Institute of Higher Education	East Hall	0	10	11/05/2020
Institute of Higher Education	Mountaineer Hall	0	9	11/06/2020
Residential Complex	Cottages of Boone	1	61	11/10/2020
Residential Complex	University Highlands	3	28	11/12/2020
Residential Complex	Highland Crossing	0	9	10/26/2020
Residential Complex	Standard at Boone	0	21	10/26/2020

Routine testing continues through App State Athletics to continue identifying early any positive cases. In addition, App State Student Health Service provides testing for students each weekday. The university is offering free COVID-19 tests for App State students, faculty and staff at "pop-up" testing events every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. All events take place from noon - 5 p.m. at the Rivers Street Parking Deck. No appointments required but you will be asked for your App State ID and other identifying information. App State has a dedicated website that has guidance, regular updates and data for the Appalachian community.

Mitigation and Response Efforts
- Ongoing testing continues to monitor the health of residents in skilled nursing facilities

- Educational outreach on COVID-19 prevention with these facilities
- Positive cases are separated from others to allow for safe isolation
- Ongoing daily health monitoring is occurring at the facilities
- Monitoring of positive cases continues with public health staff
- App State and AppHealthCare review cases daily to ensure that staff and students get the support they need to safely isolate or quarantine and to support contact tracing efforts by public health staff
- Ongoing messaging continues from App State to campus about prevention measures and enforcement
- App State is offering on-campus students the ability to voluntarily opt-out of their housing contracts if they want to return to their hometowns, and is implementing mandatory, large-scale testing in residence halls with active clusters.

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of November 13

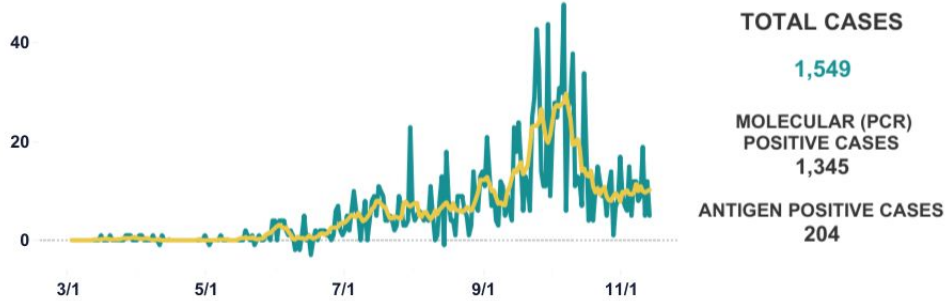NC DHHS updates this data daily and can be found on NC DHHS's website.

Daily Cases

Top Graph - Select By:
- ◉ CASES by Date Reported
- ○ CASES by Date of Specimen Collection
- ○ DEATHS by Date of Death

Is Watauga County seeing a downward trajectory over 14 days, or sustained leveling in new cases?

TOTAL CASES

1,549

MOLECULAR (PCR) POSITIVE CASES
1,345

ANTIGEN POSITIVE CASES
204

Molecular (PCR) positive cases represent confirmed cases, and antigen positive cases represent probable cases of COVID-19, in accordance with CDC case classification guidelines. The terms "confirmed" and "probable" are used nationally to standardize case classifications for public health surveillance but should not be used to interpret the utility or validity of any laboratory test type.

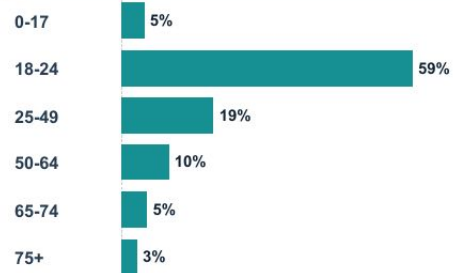## Demographic Data - Cases

Select county:
Watauga County

Watauga County Cases

1,549

Select demographic metric:
- ◉ CASES
- ○ DEATHS

For demographic groups where the county has fewer than five cases and the county has a population of fewer than 500 for that demographic, then that data is suppressed for privacy and the graph for that demographic won't appear. For example, if a county has fewer than five cases in people 18-24 years old and the county population has less than 500 people who are 18-24 years old based on census data, then the age graph will not appear for that county. Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

By Race

By Age

Age	
0-17	5%
18-24	59%
25-49	19%
50-64	10%
65-74	5%
75+	3%

By Ethnicity

Hispanic	13%
Non-Hispanic	87%

By Gender

Male	50%
Female	50%

Missing Demographic Data

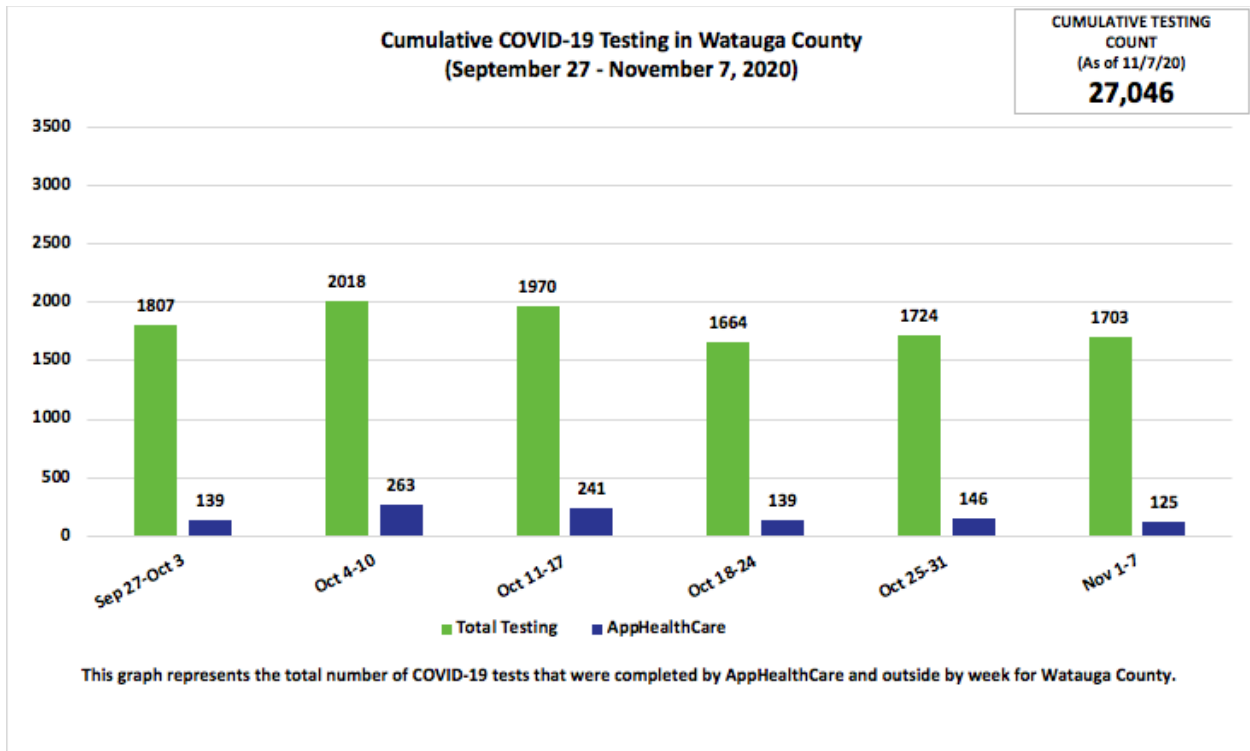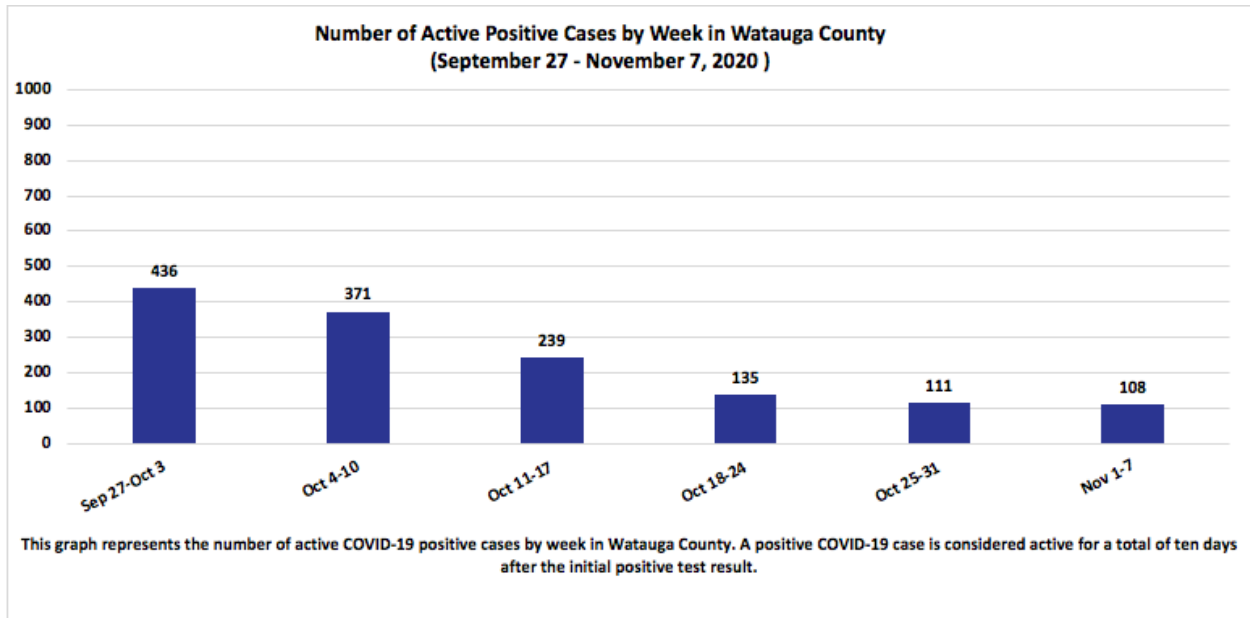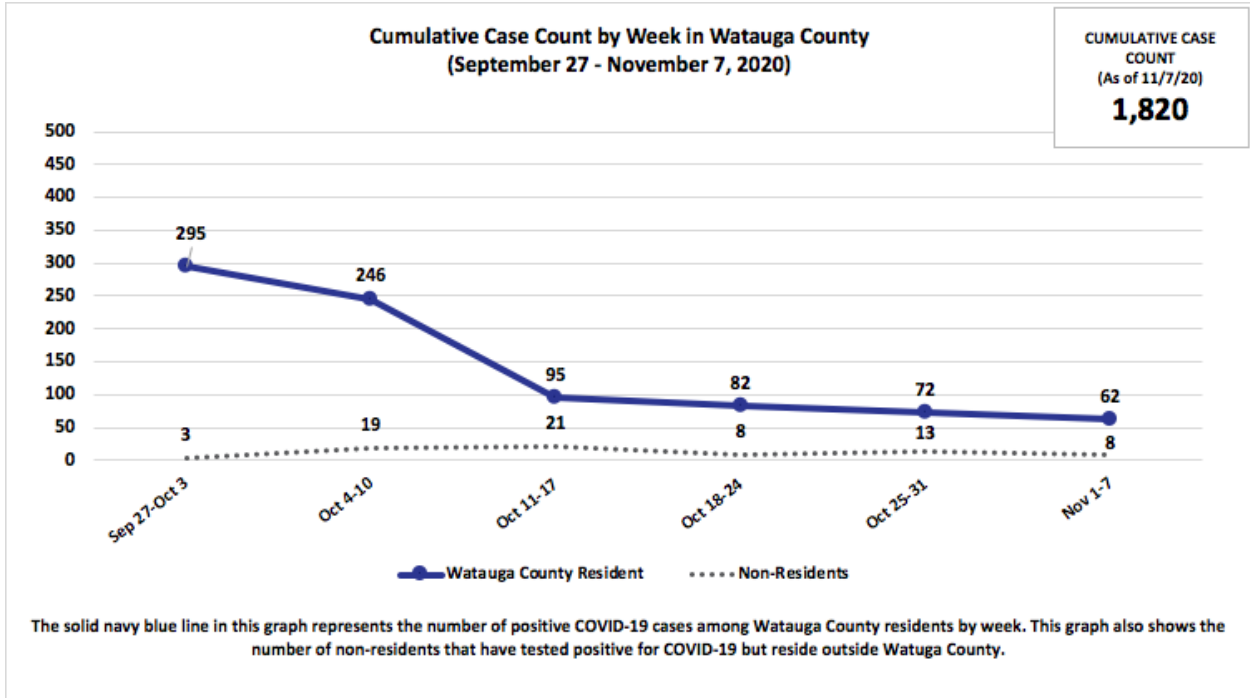|	
Race	317
Ethnicity	632
Age	1
Gender	25

November 13, 2020

Data for Watauga County

An important note about data context: The graphs below show the available data. Please carefully read the descriptions below the graph to understand the data limitations. The most current data is available on the [AppHealthCare dashboard](), as the data below is past data trended.
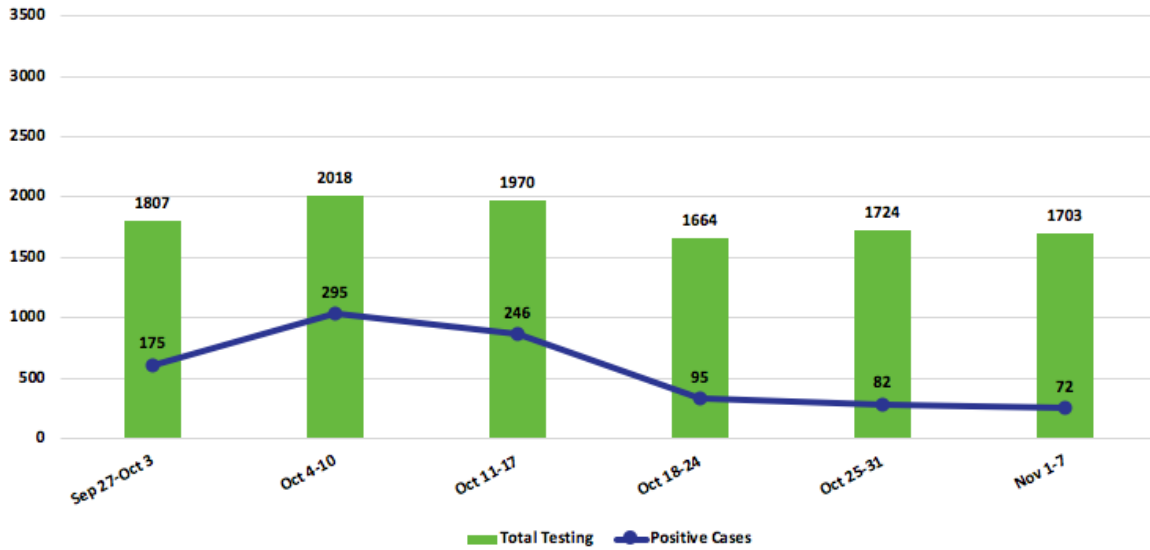
Important Disclaimer About Data
*It is imperative that this report and the data contained within is understood in the appropriate context. Please, if you use this report, please be certain that the information included within is shared within the appropriate context. Doing otherwise may be damaging to the public health response efforts. There are multiple factors involved in addressing this virus, including compliance with public health control measures implemented by the local health director and referenced in NC GS 130A. These measures are imperative for limiting the spread of COVID-19. **AppHealthCare strongly advises that when data is shared for the purposes of educating the public or informing policy decisions, it should come directly from NC DHHS or AppHealthCare as it is presented with appropriate context from those directly involved in public health response.***

Cumulative COVID-19 Testing in Watauga County
(September 27 - November 7, 2020)

CUMULATIVE TESTING COUNT (As of 11/7/20)
27,046

This graph represents the total number of COVID-19 tests that were completed by AppHealthCare and outside by week for Watauga County.

Cumulative Case Count by Week in Watauga County
(September 27 - November 7, 2020)

CUMULATIVE CASE
COUNT
(As of 11/7/20)
1,820

Week	Watauga County Resident	Non-Residents
Sep 27-Oct 3	295	3
Oct 4-10	246	19
Oct 11-17	95	21
Oct 18-24	82	8
Oct 25-31	72	13
Nov 1-7	62	8

━━●━━ Watauga County Resident   ····· Non-Residents

The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Watauga County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside outside Watuga County.

Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Watauga County
(September 27 - November 7, 2020)

Week	Active Cases
Sep 27-Oct 3	436
Oct 4-10	371
Oct 11-17	239
Oct 18-24	135
Oct 25-31	111
Nov 1-7	108

This graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Watauga County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for a total of ten days after the initial positive test result.
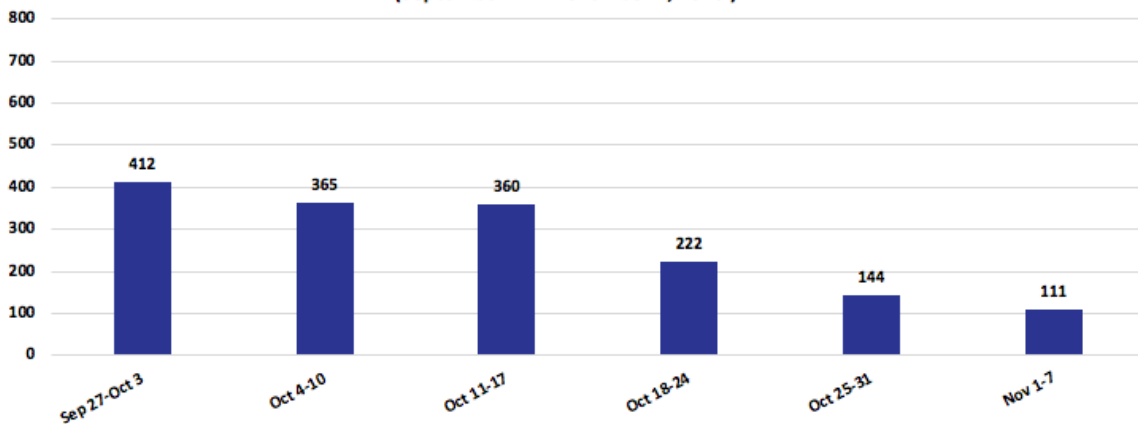
Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Watauga County
(September 27 - November 7, 2020)

This graph represents the number of COVID-19 positive cases by week compared to the total number of reported tests that were completed by AppHealthCare and outside agencies each week.

Number of People Being Actively Monitored by Week in Watauga County
(September 27 - November 7, 2020)

This graph represents the total number of Watauga County residents that AppHealthCare staff have monitored due to being exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Individuals are notified and asked to quarantine and monitor for symptoms for fourteen days.

App State cumulative testing as of week ending November 9, 2020. These totals include tests performed at Student Health Service and from pop-up test events contracted with Mako Medical.

	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
	21,285	739	3.5%

Date ▾ (Week ending)	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
Nov 9, 2020	1,734	31	1.8%
Nov 2, 2020	1,646	15	0.9%
Oct 26, 2020	1,837	12	0.7%
Oct 18, 2020	1,970	45	2.3%
Oct 11, 2020	2,674	112	4.2%
Oct 4, 2020	1,934	163	8.4%

Additional data can be found on AppHealthCare's data dashboard. This data is updated each day around noon.

Additional Data and Information from NC Department of Health & Human Services
- **Zip Code Data** - NC DHHS publishes data for confirmed cases by zip code for the state. The map and data can be found here.
- **Outbreak Data & Information** - This data is broken down by type of congregate setting like a nursing home, residential care facility, correctional facility, or a congregate working setting. The map by county and report can be found here.
- **Hospitalizations** - More detailed data around hospitalizations, ventilators and bed capacity is now available by regions and can be found here. Our district counties are in the Triad Healthcare Preparedness Coalition.

Key Messages
- **Show Your Love!** This multi-county communication campaign focuses on showing your love to yourself, others around you and the community. Posters and social media graphics for the 3Ws are now available on our website in both English and Spanish. Download them here.
- Practice the 3Ws if you have to leave your house - **Wear** a cloth face covering, **Wash** your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer and **Wait** 6 feet from others.
- Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, handles, light switches, countertops, etc.
- If you are sick, please stay home except to receive medical care.
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, we encourage you to stay at home to the greatest extent possible to decrease your chance of infection.

Testing

If you meet any of the criteria listed below, we encourage you to be tested for COVID-19. You can call your healthcare provider or AppHealthCare. You should be tested if:

- You believe you have symptoms of COVID-19,
- You have no symptoms and you are at higher risk for severe illness (you are 65 or older, you have an underlying health condition or chronic condition), or have been in close contact with someone who is known to have a positive result,
- You are someone working in a frontline role or essential business where social distancing is hard to maintain,
- You are a first responder, law enforcement officer, fire department staff member, or healthcare staff member,
- You live in or work in a facility where social distancing is hard to maintain, like congregate living, healthcare facilities or home care.
- You are part of a historically marginalized population who may be at higher risk for exposure.
- You have attended protests, rallies, or other mass gatherings where you could have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or could have exposed others because it may have been difficult to practice social distancing.

What should you do while waiting for test results? What if the test is negative or positive?
Answers for those questions, including prevention measures and home care if someone is sick are included in NC DHHS guidance here.

NC DHHS has tools for the public including a website to Check Symptoms and Find My Testing Place. AppHealthCare does not require someone to have symptoms to be tested.

Alleghany (336) 372-5641 | Ashe (336) 246-9449 | Watauga (828) 264-4995
AppHealthCare COVID-19 Hotline (828) 795-1970
General COVID-19 Questions: preparedness@apphealth.com
Media inquiries: media@apphealth.com
www.AppHealthCare.com and follow us on Facebook & Twitter