![AppHealthCare - Caring for our Community]

COVID-19 Situation Update for Watauga County
December 4, 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.

"We are at a critical point in our response efforts, and we don't want to see a spike in cases that will strain our healthcare system. We have the tools to slow the spread and protect our healthcare capacity. We urge everyone to show your love and wear a face covering, wash your hands and wait 6 feet from others," stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.

Key Points

Cases Remain Steady Over Past Three Weeks
For the week of November 22-28 (graphs below), there was a small decrease in active cases and those who are in quarantine. When looking at the trended data, cases have remained steady over the past three weeks. There was an increase in testing for the county the week of November 15-21 which likely represents individuals seeking testing before the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Hospitalizations are Increasing
This trend is concerning and this week we have seen the highest numbers of individuals being hospitalized due to COVID-19. Watauga Medical Center is preparing to open a third COVID-19 unit to respond to the increased need. We want to monitor this data point very closely because it is important we have hospital capacity for those who may need hospital care for things like a heart attack, stroke, car accident, etc.

NC DHHS County Alert System Notes Significant Community Spread for Watauga County
Watauga County is **YELLOW** which notes significant community spread. This system outlines actions we can take to lessen the impact and spread in our community. You can read more about the County Alert System on NC DHHS's website.
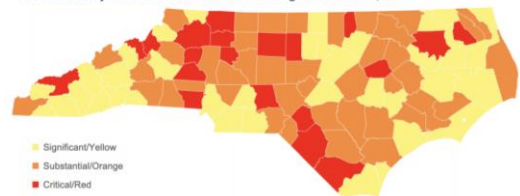
We continue case investigation and contact tracing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you receive a call from a member of our case investigation or contact tracing team, we urge you to cooperate and provide information that will help us conduct response efforts. You may receive a call from (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.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) levels remain stable in most areas.

Testing

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, we recommend you be tested. You can check your symptoms and determine if testing is needed. To find a testing site near you, visit NC DHHS's Find My Testing Place.

Turnaround Times for Testing remains between 2 and 4 days. NC DHHS provides data on testing turnaround times. This data is updated daily and can be found here.

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.

Additional Free Testing Opportunities
We have partnered with Watauga County Schools to offer free testing for families, students, employees and staff. Details provided in graphic to the right.


WATAUGA COUNTY SCHOOLS FREE COVID-19 TESTING EVENTS

In partnership with Watauga County Schools, free COVID-19 testing will be offered the next three Wednesdays for families, students and employees/staff. The testing events will each be from 1-4pm.

Wednesday, December 2nd at the Watauga High School bus parking lot

Wednesday, December 9th at the Blowing Rock School front entrance parking lot

Wednesday, December 16th at the Cove Creek School bus parking lot
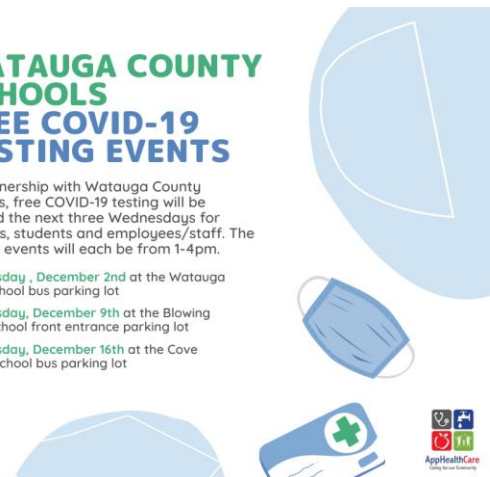
Testing is also offered by appointment at Appalachian Regional Healthcare System, High Country Community Health Watauga Medical, CVS Pharmacy in Boone, Boone Drug and other local healthcare providers may offer testing as well.

Guidance Documents to Prevent & Slow the Spread

Tips for Holiday & Private Social Gatherings
As we continue through the 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](#).

NC DHHS Guidance for Ski Lodges
As we see the start of ski season, guidance has been developed by NC DHHS to decrease the spread of COVID-19. [This guidance](#) includes requirements and recommendations for Ski Lodges.

Active Outbreaks and 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.

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, December 3, 9:00am				
Facility or Setting Type	**Facility or Setting Name**	**Active Cases**	**Cumulative Cases**	**Last Positive Result**
Long Term Care Facility	Foley Center	0	3 staff 3 residents 1 death	11/7/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Thunder Hill Residence Hall	0	34	11/13/2020
Institute of Higher	App State Summit	0	12	11/10/2020

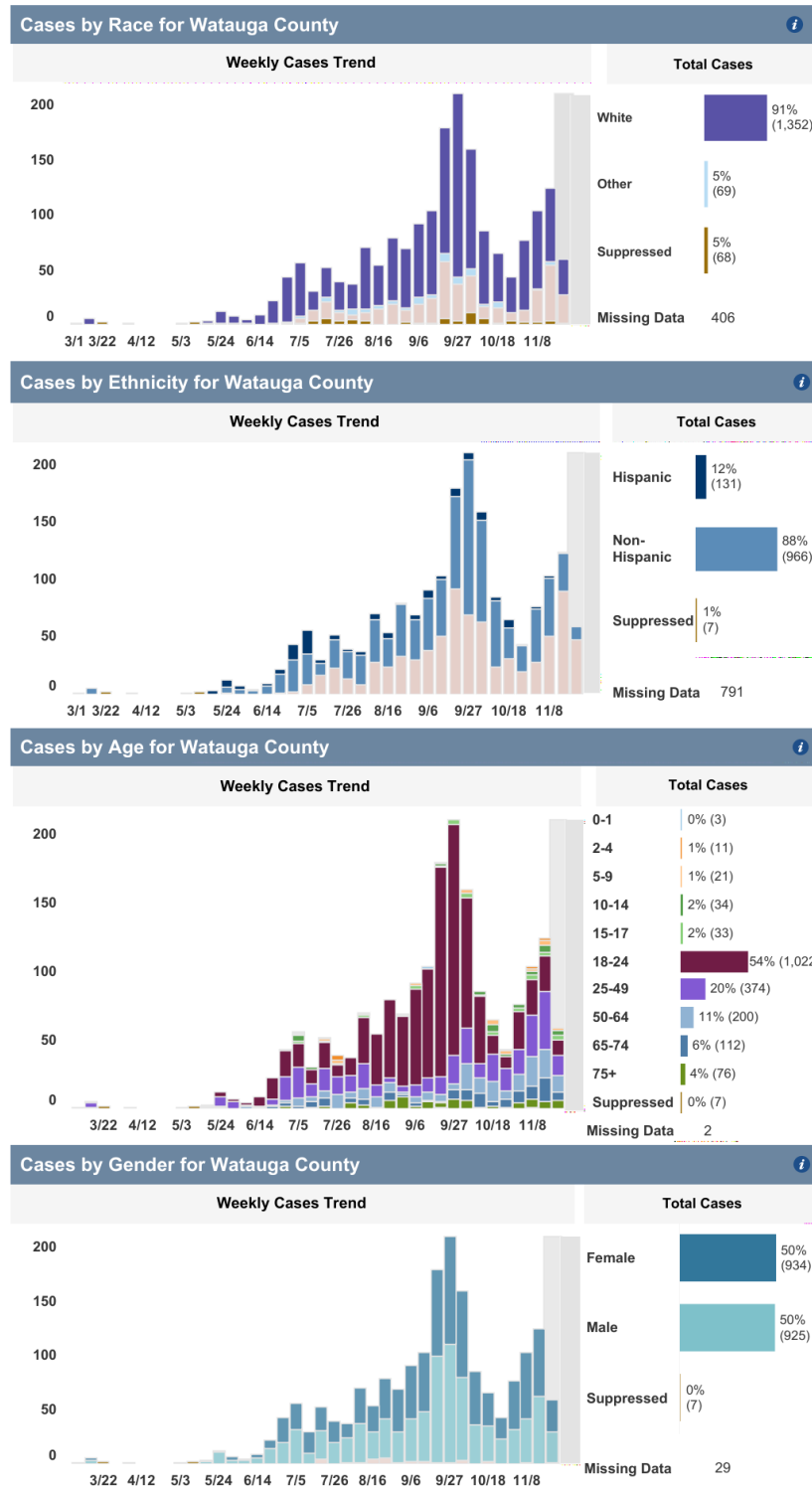|				
Education	Residence Hall			
Institute of Higher Education	App State Coltrane Residence Hall	0	7	11/19/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Doughton Hall	0	8	11/10/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State East Hall	0	10	11/19/2020
Institute of Higher Education	App State Mountaineer Hall	0	10	11/19/2020
Residential Complex	Cottages of Boone	0	65	11/19/2020
Residential Complex	University Highlands	0	36	11/23/2020
Residential Complex	Standard at Boone	0	22	11/19/2020
School	Watauga County Schools - Garage/Auxiliary Services	0	5 staff	11/14/2020

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

Routine surveillance and exit testing continues on the App State campus through Dec. 16. App State Student Health Service also continues providing testing for students each weekday. Surveillance testing-including mandatory entry testing for residence hall students, student athletes and other students as determined necessary- will resume prior to the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester. The university is providing five washable, re-usable face coverings for all students, faculty and staff prior to the start of

the Spring 2021 semester. [App State has a dedicated website](#) that has guidance, testing schedule information, regular updates and data for the Appalachian community. The university's holiday and winter break departure and return plan [may be found here](#).

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of November 30th

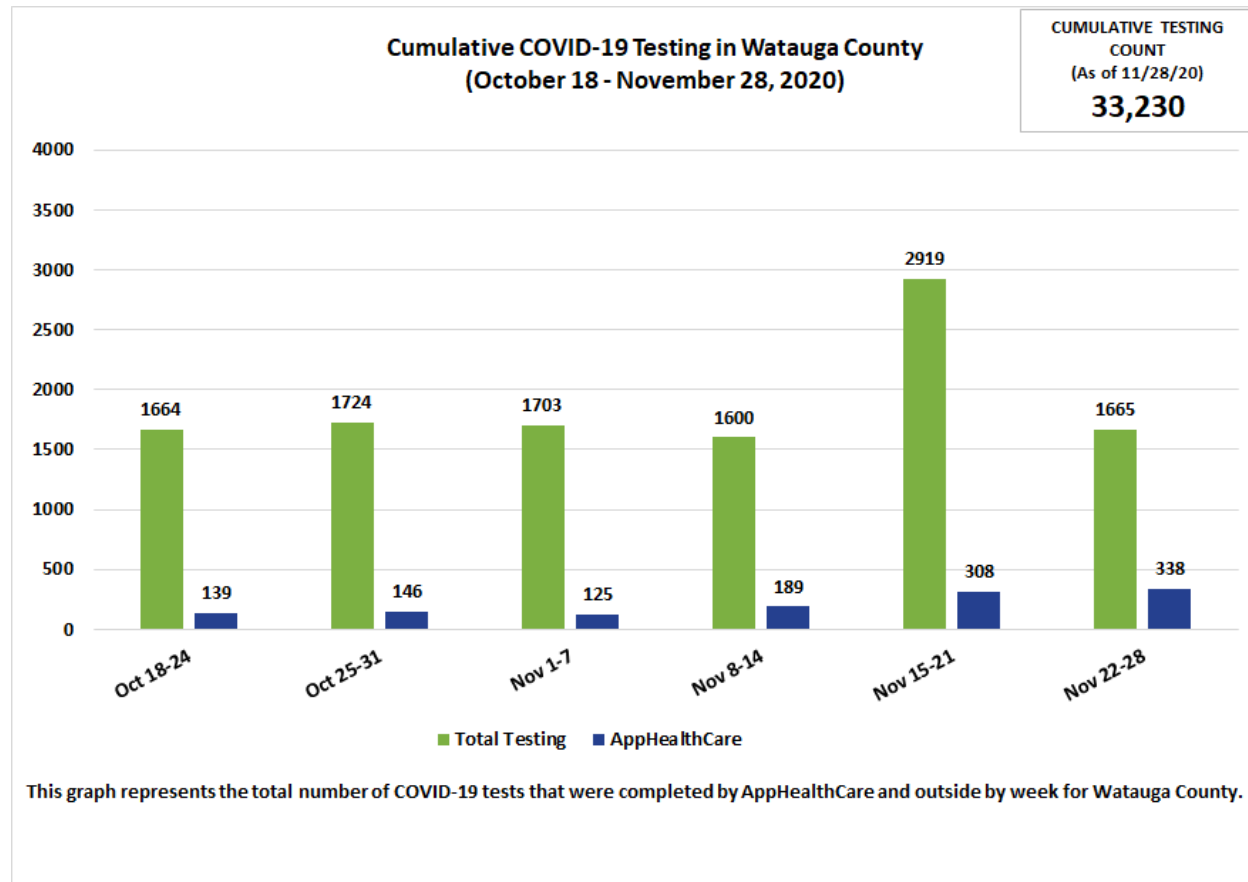NC DHHS updates this data daily and can be found on NC DHHS's website.

Cases by Race for Watauga County

Weekly Cases Trend

Total Cases

White	91% (1,352)
Other	5% (69)
Suppressed	5% (68)
Missing Data	406

Cases by Ethnicity for Watauga County

Weekly Cases Trend

Total Cases

Hispanic	12% (131)
Non-Hispanic	88% (966)
Suppressed	1% (7)
Missing Data	791

Cases by Age for Watauga County

Weekly Cases Trend

Total Cases

0-1	0% (3)
2-4	1% (11)
5-9	1% (21)
10-14	2% (34)
15-17	2% (33)
18-24	54% (1,022)
25-49	20% (374)
50-64	11% (200)
65-74	6% (112)
75+	4% (76)
Suppressed	0% (7)
Missing Data	2

Cases by Gender for Watauga County

Weekly Cases Trend

Total Cases

Female	50% (934)
Male	50% (925)
Suppressed	0% (7)
Missing Data	29

November 30, 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.*
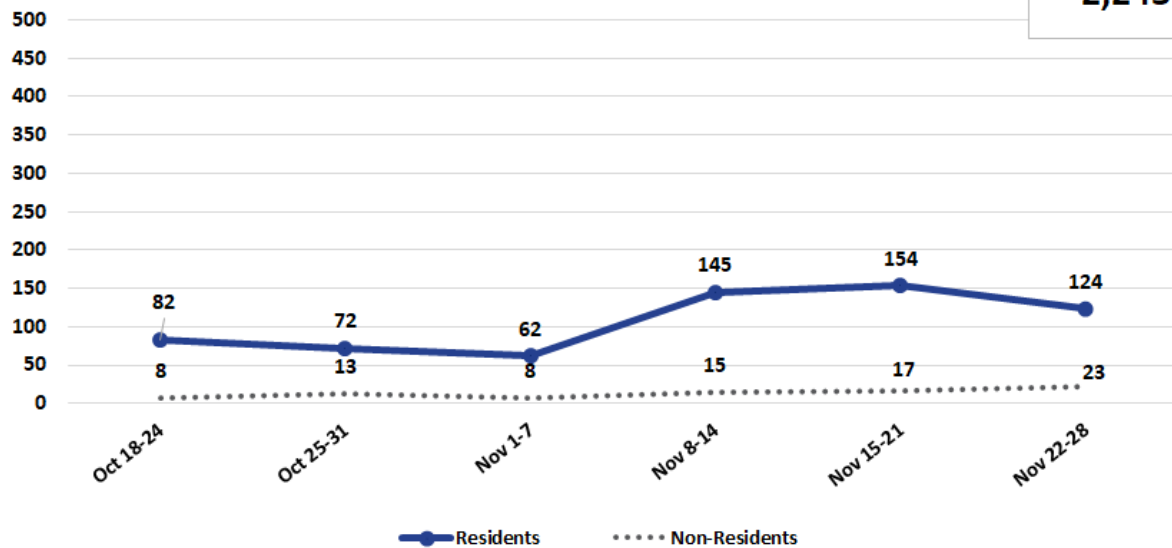
Important Disclaimer About Data

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 (October 18 - November 28, 2020)

CUMULATIVE TESTING COUNT (As of 11/28/20) **33,230**

	Total Testing	AppHealthCare
Oct 18-24	1664	139
Oct 25-31	1724	146
Nov 1-7	1703	125
Nov 8-14	1600	189
Nov 15-21	2919	308
Nov 22-28	1665	338

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
(October 18 - November 28, 2020)

|	Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28
Residents	82	72	62	145	154	124
Non-Residents	8	13	8	15	17	23

━●━ Residents   ••••• 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
(October 18 - November 28, 2020)

| Oct 18-24	Oct 25-31	Nov 1-7	Nov 8-14	Nov 15-21	Nov 22-28
135	111	108	192	252	207
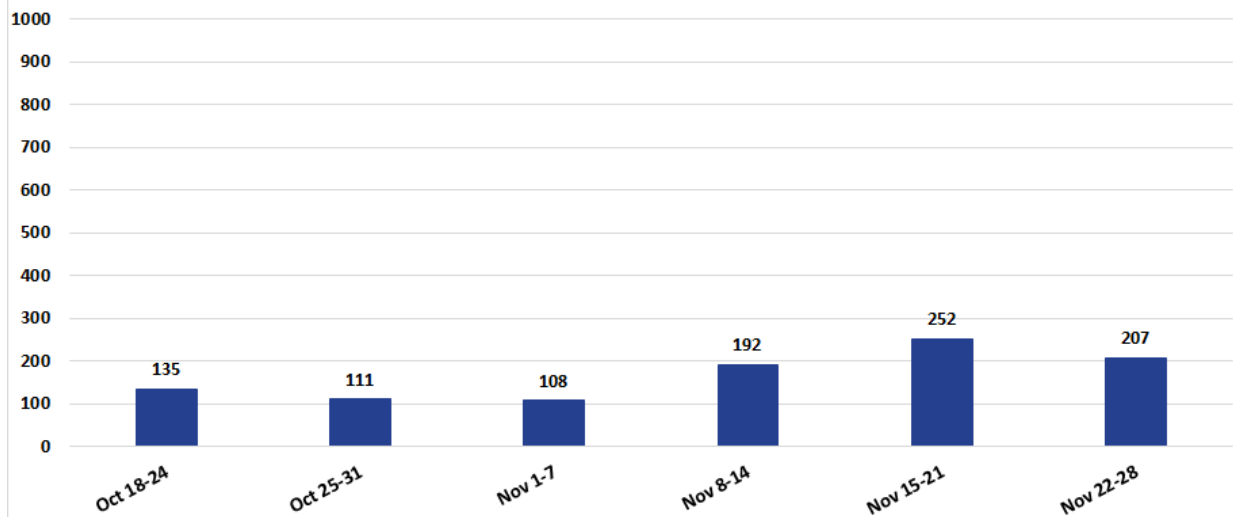
This graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Watauga County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for a total of ten days after the initial positive test result.

Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Watauga County
(October 18 - November 28, 2020)
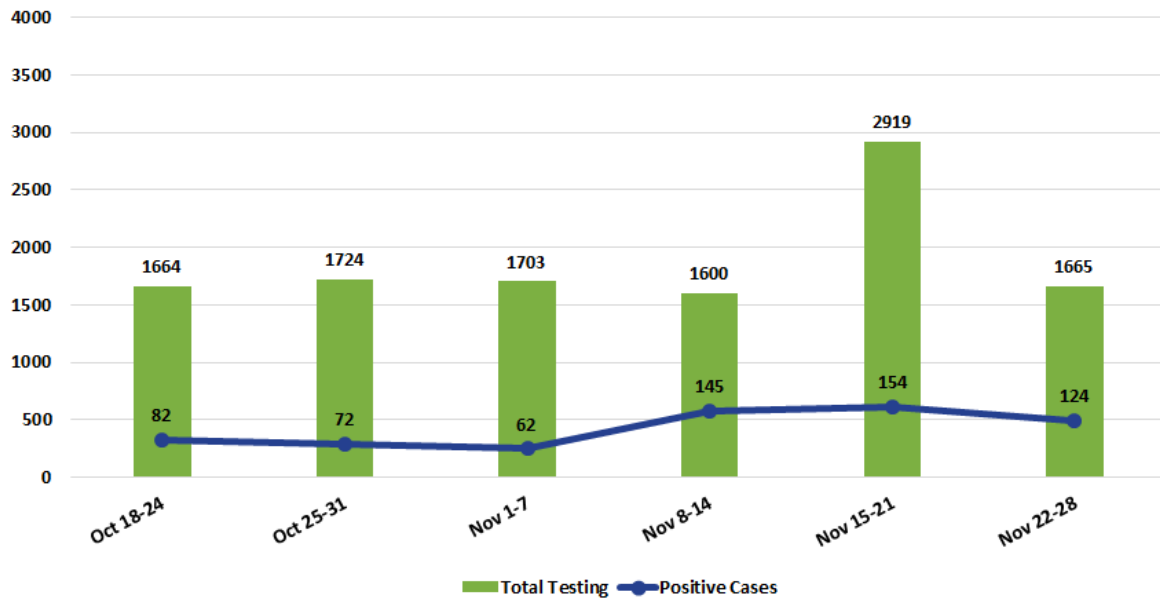
This graph represents the number of COVID-19 positive cases by week compared to the total number of reported tests that were completed by AppHealthCare and outside agencies each week.

Number of People Being Actively Monitored by Week in Watauga County
(October 18 - November 28, 2020)
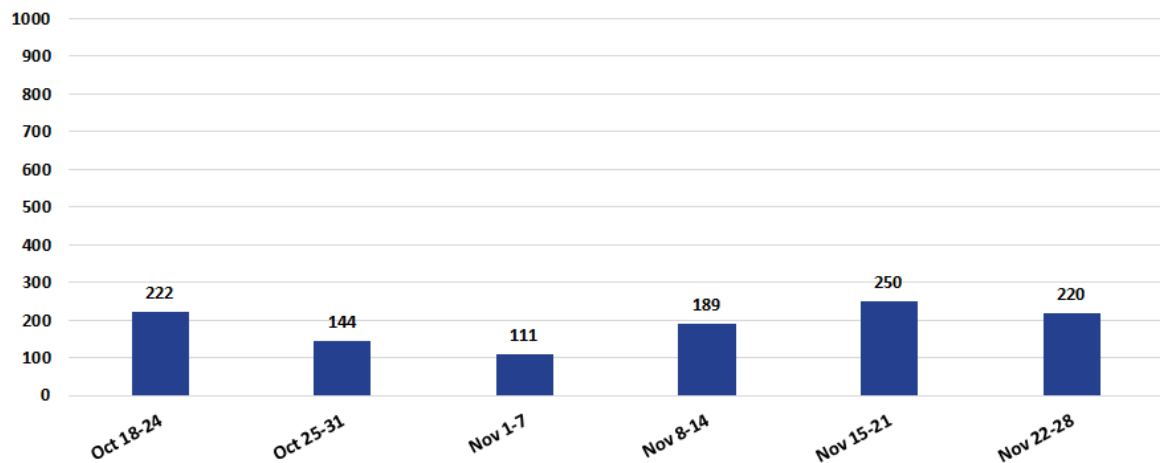
This graph represents the total number of Watauga County residents that AppHealthCare staff have monitored due to being exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Individuals are notified and asked to quarantine and monitor for symptoms for fourteen days.

App State cumulative testing as of week ending November 30, 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
28,354	830	2.9%

Date ▾ (Week ending)	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
Nov 30, 2020	1,483	8	0.5%
Nov 23, 2020	3,717	41	1.1%
Nov 16, 2020	1,869	42	2.2%
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%

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