COVID-19 Situation Update for Ashe County

January 15, 2021

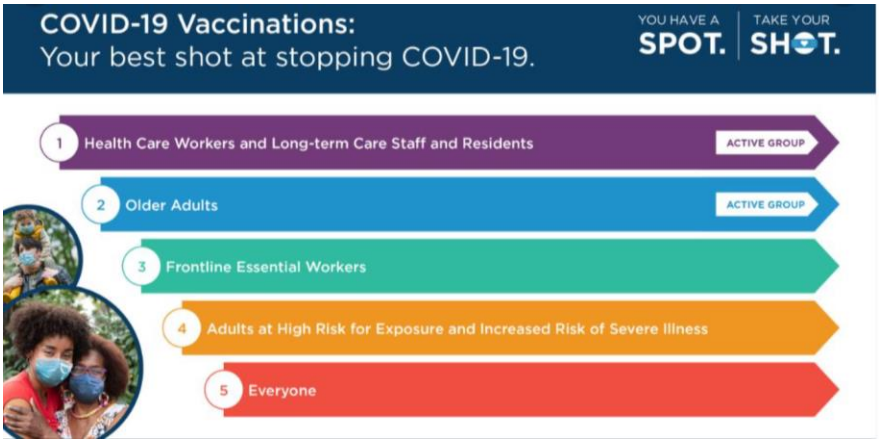
This document is intended to provide a regular update on the local response to COVID-19 in our communities and timely, trended data related to COVID-19. This report will be published on Fridays.

"Right now we are receiving limited supplies of vaccine so we are following the priority groups outlined from the state and scheduling appointments based on those who have completed our COVID-19 vaccine interest form. We are prioritizing vaccine deployment and will continue to do everything we can to ensure vaccine gets out to the community as quickly and efficiently as possible," stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.

Vaccinating Makes Everyone Safer - COVID-19 Vaccine Update

What phase are we in for Ashe County?

On January 14, NC DHHS announced changes to the priority groups for vaccine distribution. We will be following these groups for our counties. Right now Group 1 and Group 2 are eligible for vaccine which includes health care workers with in-person patient contact, long-term care staff and residents—people in skilled nursing facilities, adult care homes, continuing care retirement communities and anyone 65 years or older, regardless of health status or living situation.



How many doses of vaccine do we have?
For Ashe County, we have received 1,000 doses of Moderna to date. We have administered 820 vaccines as of January 15, 2021 at noon. We are anticipating receiving 500 doses of vaccine next week for individuals' first dose. Also, we are anticipating we will be receiving 300 doses for individuals' second dose.

Interested in Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine?
We have launched a COVID-19 vaccine interest form for anyone interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Anyone can fill out the form regardless of which phase they will fit into. You can find the form on our website here.

Want to Volunteer for a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic?
If you are interested in volunteering your time to help with COVID-19 vaccine clinics in Alleghany, Ashe or Watauga County, please complete this form.

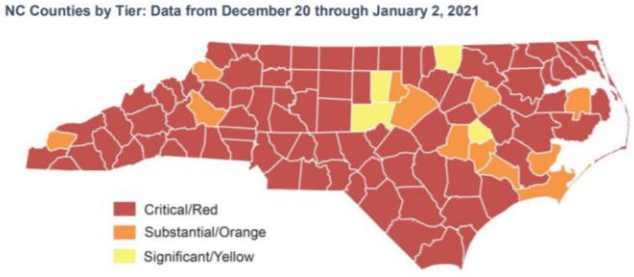
The vaccine will be offered **free of charge to everyone** whether or not you have health insurance. To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, visit our website here or NC DHHS's website here.

Key Points

Case Updates
For the week of January 3-9 (graphs below), there was an increase in both new cases and the number of individuals in quarantine.

Hospitalizations
We continue to monitor hospitalizations 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 Critical Community Spread for Ashe County
In the latest update, Ashe County is **RED** which notes critical 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 by Appointment. We are offering testing on Mondays and Thursdays of each week. 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.

Testing is also offered by appointment at Mountain Family Care Center (336) 846-6322 (located on the campus of Ashe Memorial Hospital), CVS Pharmacy in West Jefferson, Ashe Pediatrics 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.

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.

Active Outbreaks & Clusters
Data is current as of Thursday, January 7, 9:00am

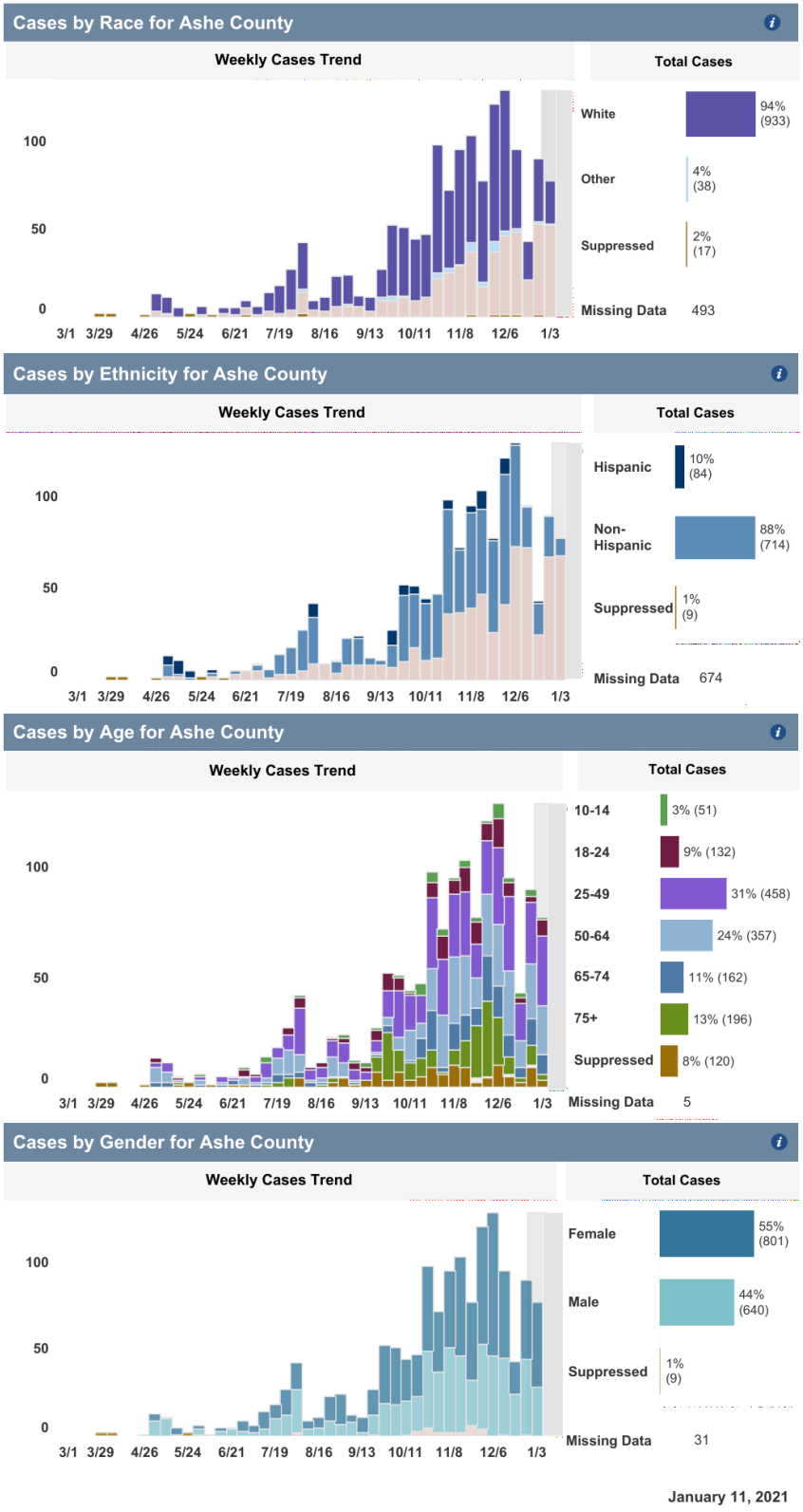
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Long Term Care Facility	Margate Health & Rehab	2 staff 0 resident	57 staff 89 residents 18 deaths	01/02/2021

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

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of January 11th

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

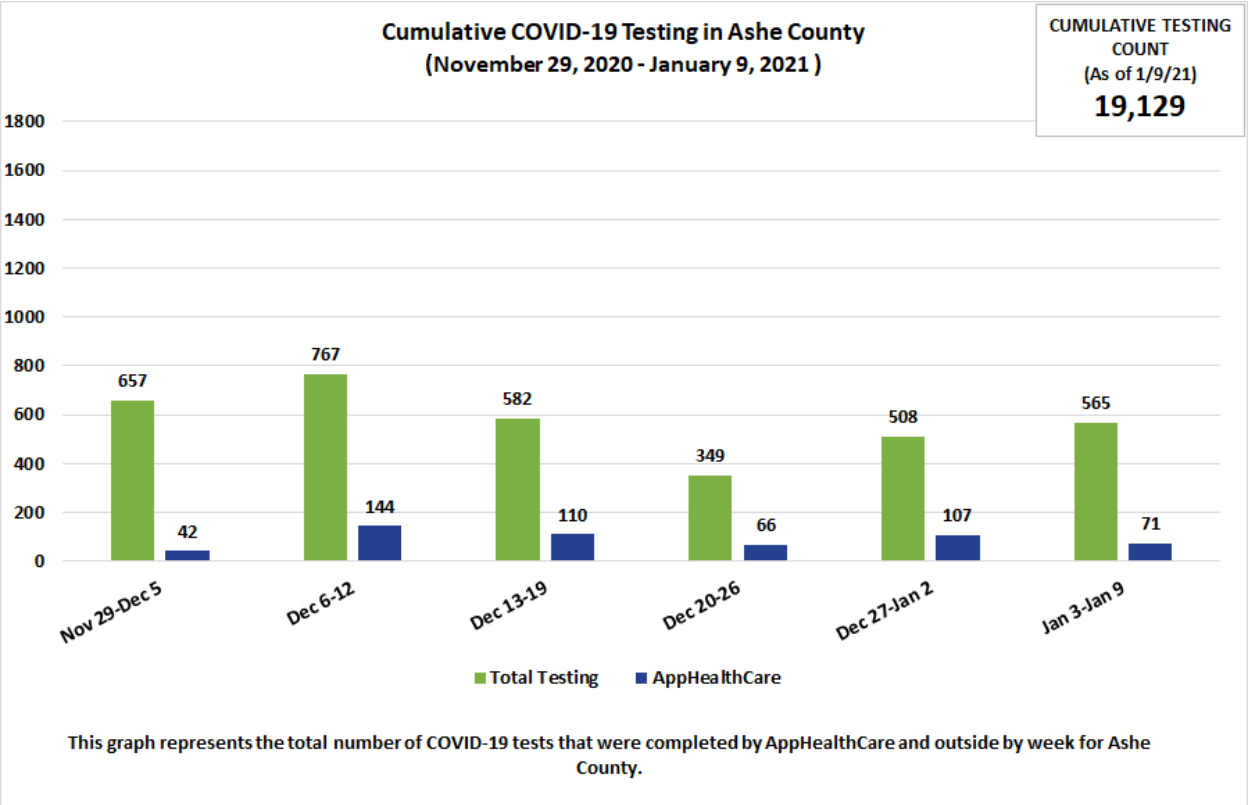


Data for Ashe County

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.

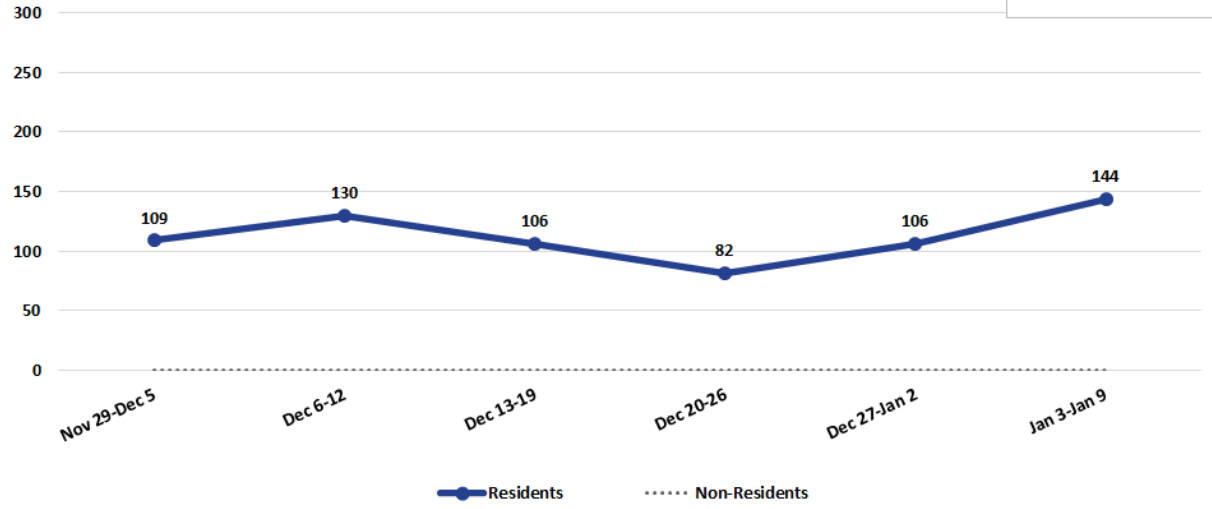
Important Disclaimer About Data

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.***



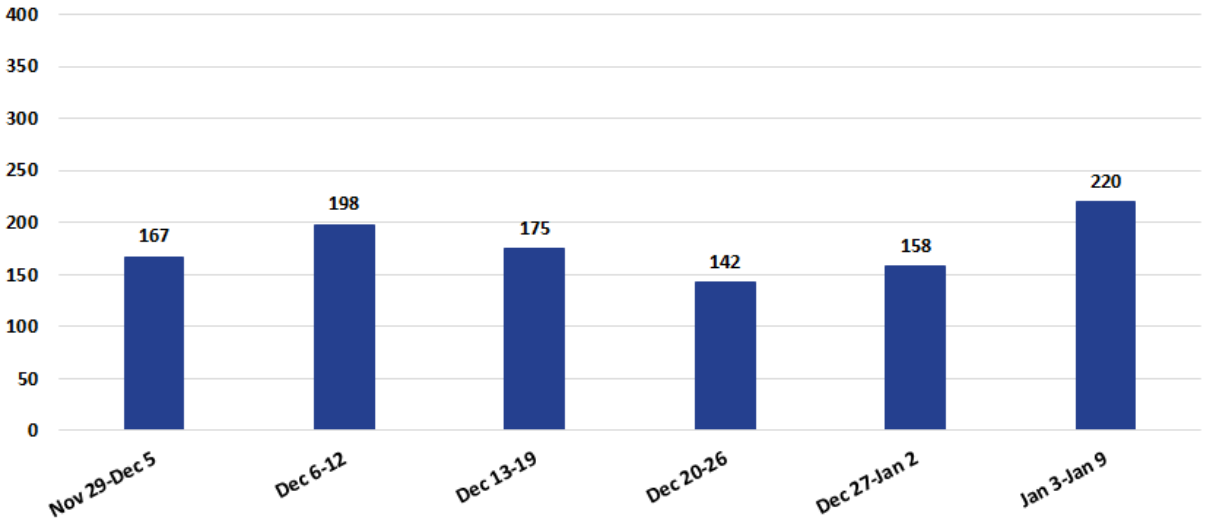
Cumulative Case Count by Week in Ashe County
(November 29, 2020 - January 9, 2021)

CUMULATIVE CASE COUNT
(As of 1/9/21)
1,619

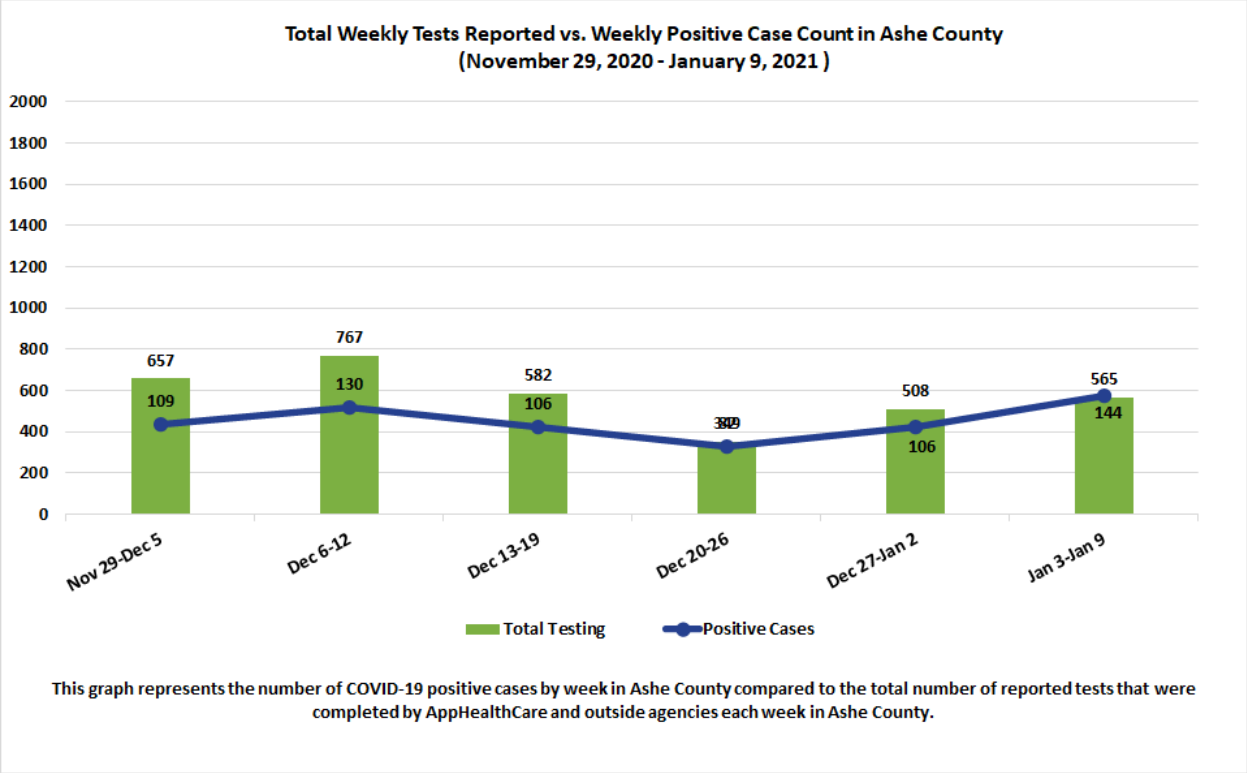


The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Ashe County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside in another county.

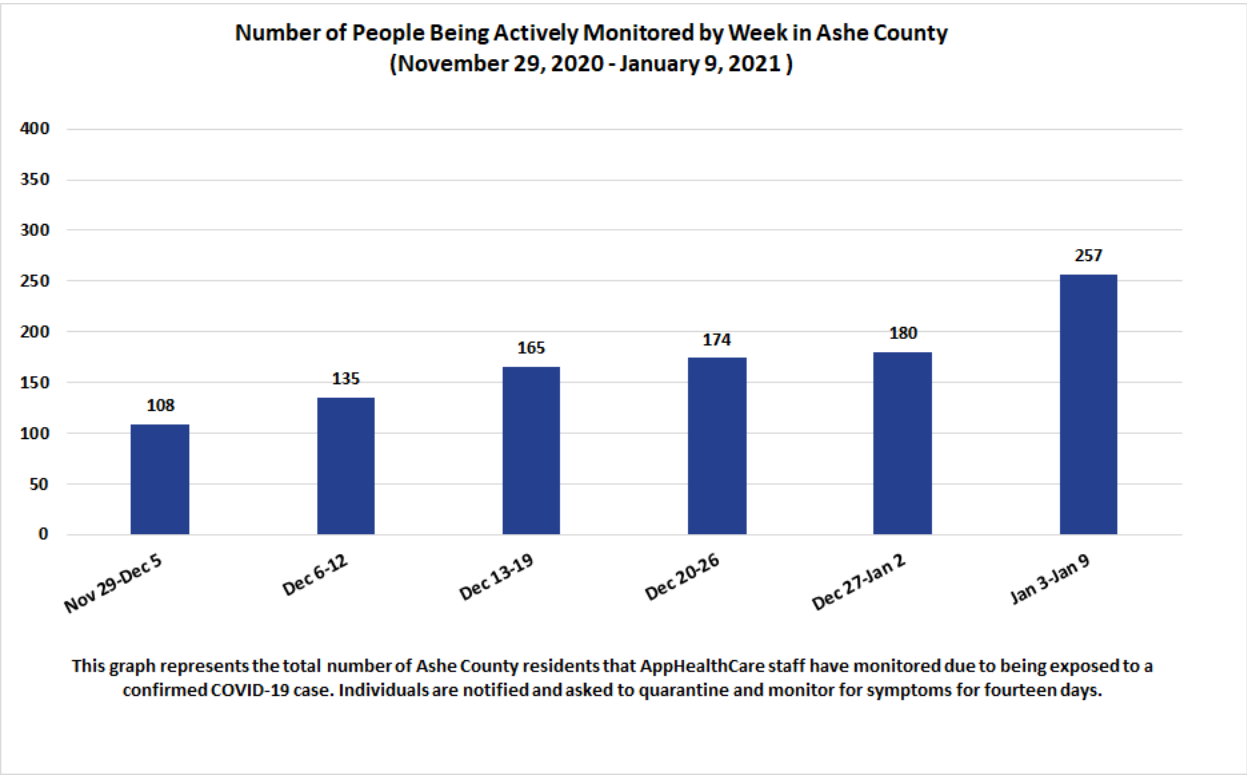
Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Ashe County
(November 29, 2020 - January 9, 2021)



The graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Ashe County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for ten days after the initial positive test result.



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



This graph represents the total number of Ashe 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.

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

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

AppHealthCare
Caring for our Community