



COVID-19 Situation Update for Watauga County

March 12, 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.

"The COVID-19 vaccines available now are safe, effective and available for free. We have full confidence in these vaccines and hope people will take the vaccine that is offered to them when it's their turn. These vaccines help protect you from COVID-19 and are very effective in preventing hospitalization and death," stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.



Vaccinating Makes Everyone Safer - COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Our vaccine allocation for the week of March 15th will include 600 first doses and 700 second doses.

Who is eligible for vaccines?

The active groups for vaccination are 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 (Group 1), anyone 65 years or older, regardless of health status or living situation (Group 2) and frontline essential workers (Group 3).



How is equity around vaccines being addressed in Watauga County?

Equity is an important and significant factor to address during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as it pertains to the COVID-19 vaccine. In Watauga County, those who need help with transportation can use the [AppalCart](#) to get to and from vaccination locations. For those who are in need of interpreters, we have interpreters available to help with your vaccine appointment. Also, some people are unable to leave their homes due to lack of accessibility, location, disability, etc. and we are able to offer vaccinations at someone's home by scheduled appointments.

How does AppalCart help me get to my vaccine appointment?

Individuals who do not have access to transportation can sign up to use Appalcart to get to your vaccine appointment. Once you have a confirmed vaccine appointment, contact AppalCart for free assistance to and from your vaccine appointment. Contact the AppalCart dispatch office at (828) 297-1300 or visit their website at www.appalcart.com/news-updates for more information.



COVID-19 Vaccine Data

How many doses of vaccine do we have?

First Doses (Data as of March 12, 2021)		
Week of March 8th Allocation	Total First Doses Accepted	Total First Doses Administered
600 doses	8,195	8,514

Pfizer vaccine vials can contain extra doses so this is the reason the administered doses is higher than the received doses.

Second Doses (Data as of March 12, 2021)		
Week of March 8th Allocation	Total Second Doses Accepted	Total Second Doses Administered
1,370 doses	5,150	3,667

The total doses of vaccine received includes the vaccine that was transferred to us from the hospital.

People Eligible for Vaccine

This is an approximate number of those who are eligible to receive vaccines in Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4. These are individuals who remain on our interest form list and who we have not yet reached out to to schedule an appointment. For Groups 3 and 4, we are using both our interest form list and coordinating with employers directly to schedule appointments, therefore this number does not represent all frontline workers eligible for vaccines in each county.

People Eligible for Vaccine (Data as of March 12, 2021)	
Watauga	1,920

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 February 28 - March 6 (graphs below), the number of new cases remains steady. There was an increase in the number of individuals in quarantine.

Hospitalizations

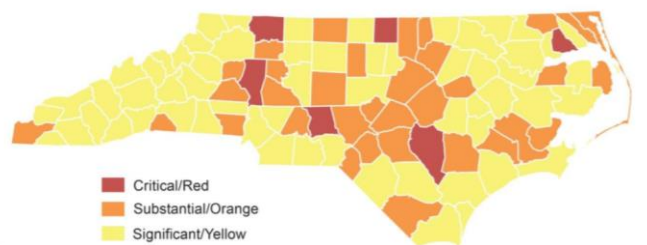
The number of COVID-19 hospitalizations remains in single digits. We continue to watch this closely to ensure we have capacity for those who may need hospital care for things like a heart attack, stroke, car accident, etc.

NC DHHS County Alert System Notes

Significant Community Spread for Watauga County

In the latest update, 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](#).

NC Counties by Tier: Data from February 14 through February 27, 2021



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 (regardless of whether you have symptoms or not), 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 offer testing on Monday and Thursday each week unless otherwise noted. 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 [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.

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 <i>Data is current as of Thursday, March 11th</i>				
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Residential Complex	The Cottages of Boone	3	19	03/08/2021
Residential Complex	University Highlands	1	15	03/02/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Living Learning Center Residence Hall	0	7	02/19/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Dogwood Residence Hall	0	8	02/24/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Coltrane Residence Hall	2	5	03/02/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Appalachian Panhellenic Residence Hall	0	5	02/24/2021

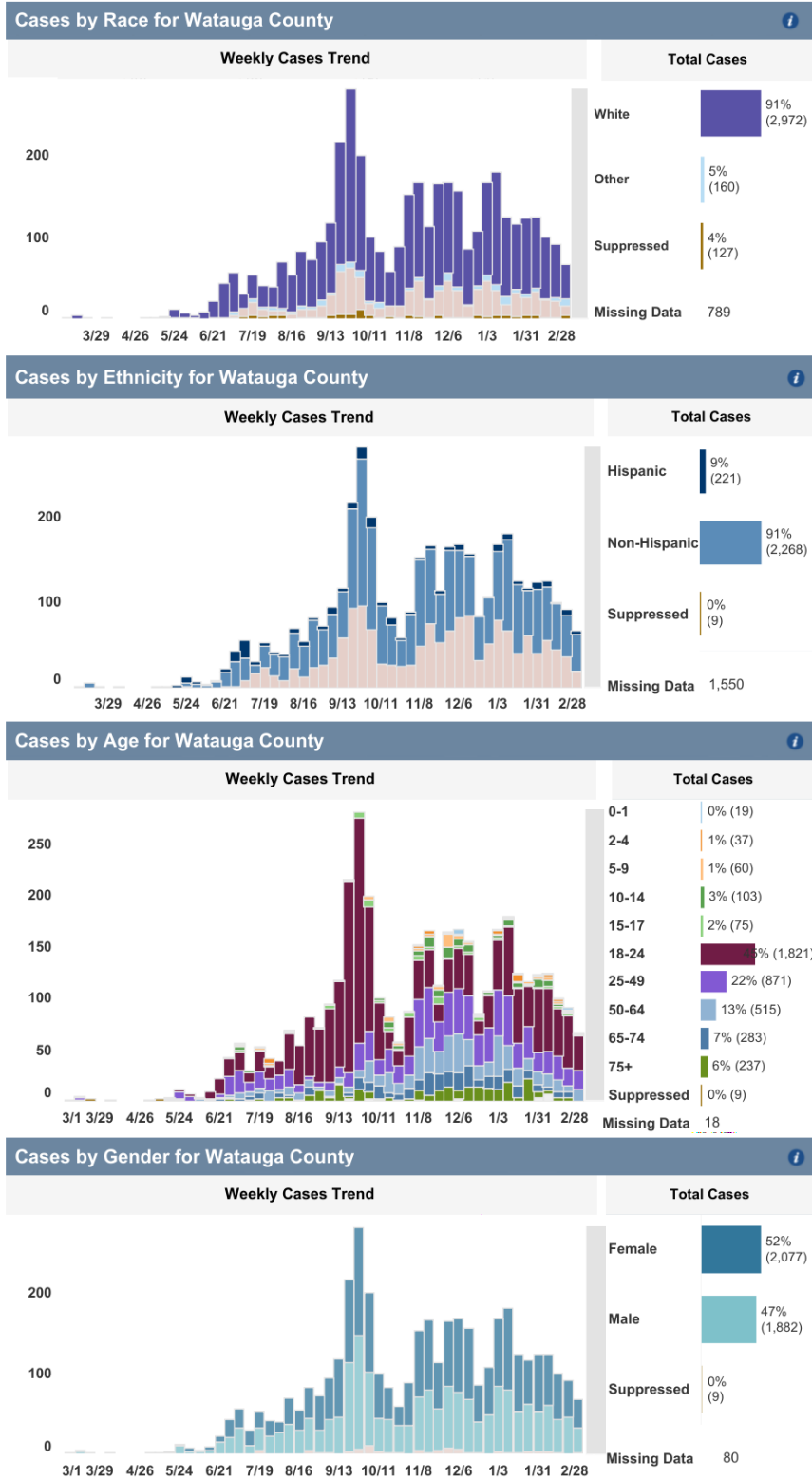
Mitigation and Response Efforts

- 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
- 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 opened its COVID-19 vaccine clinic on March 11, 2021 with vaccines available by appointment to staff, faculty, students and community members at no cost according to the NCDHHS prioritization system. The university continues providing COVID-19 testing at no cost to students, faculty and staff each Wednesday and Saturday from noon - 5 p.m., as well as daily testing in Student Health Service, and

targeted testing with specific student populations as needed. To date, App State has conducted more than 50,000 COVID-19 tests. The weekly positivity rate has not exceeded 3.3% in 2021. The university has distributed five new washable, reusable face coverings for all students, faculty and staff. [App State has a dedicated COVID-19 website](#) with guidance, testing schedule information, regular updates and data for the Appalachian community.

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of March 8th



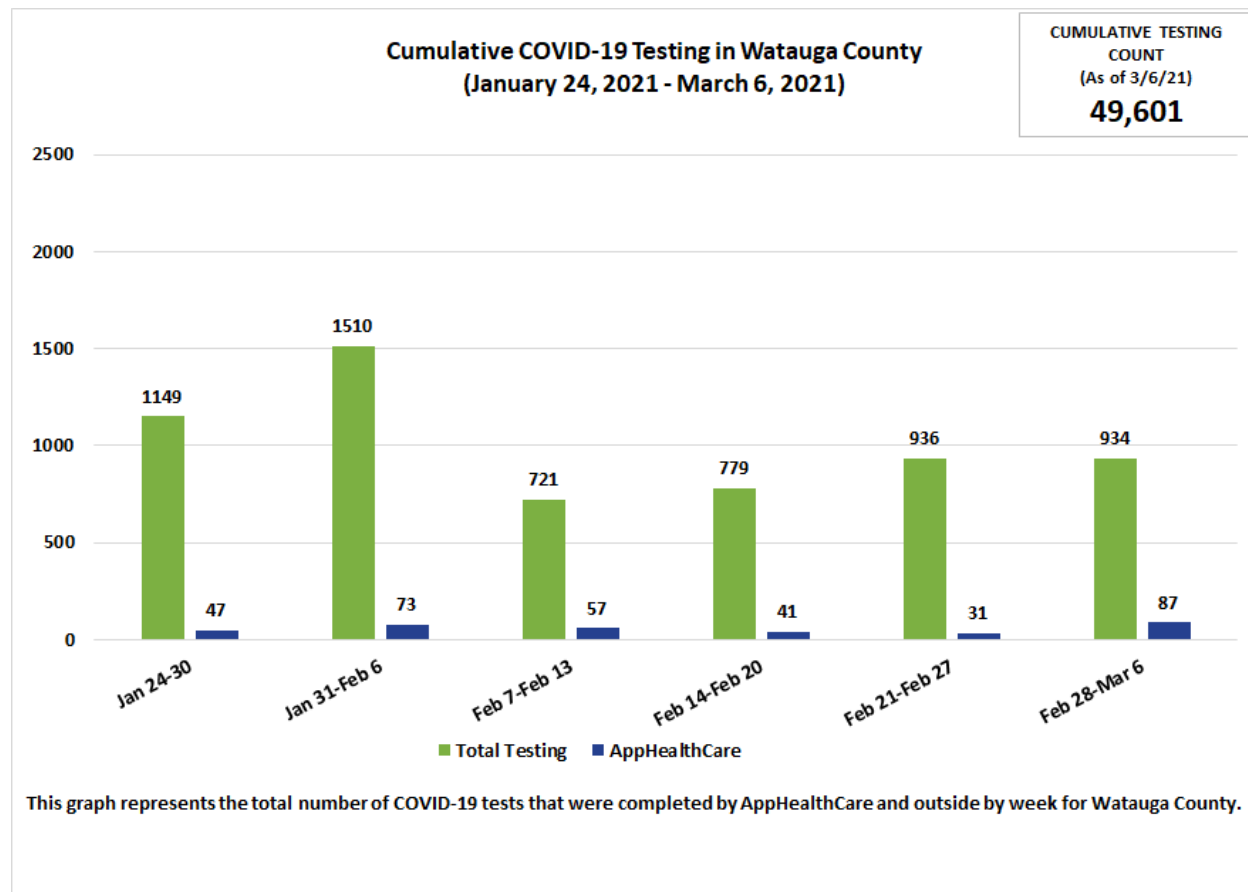
March 8, 2021

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

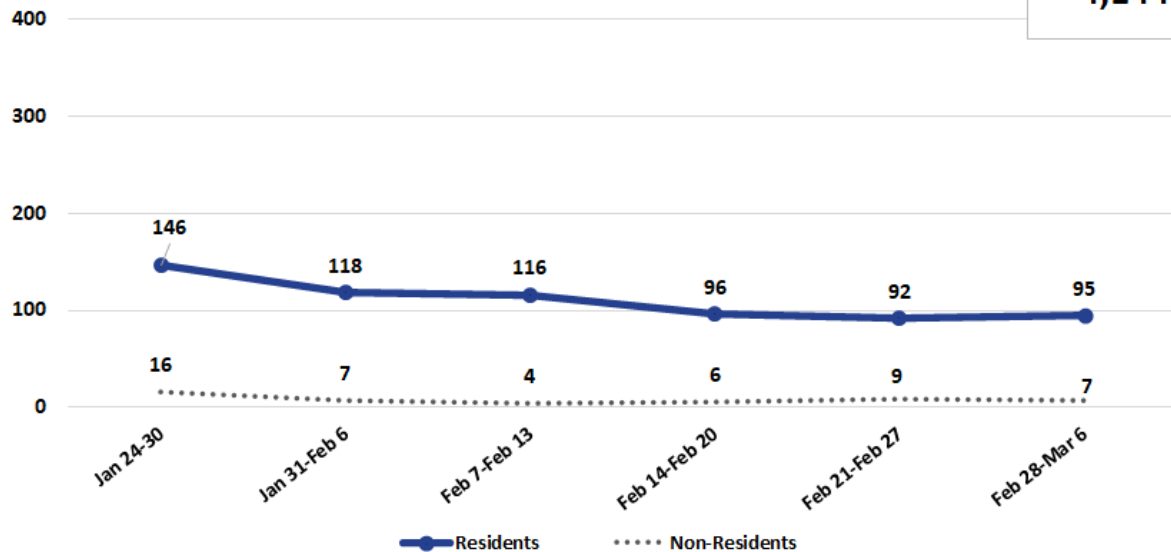
It is imperative that this report and the data contained within is understood in the appropriate context. Please, if you use this report, please be certain that the information included within is shared within the appropriate context. Doing otherwise may be damaging to the public health response efforts. 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 Case Count by Week in Watauga County (January 24, 2021 - March 6, 2021)

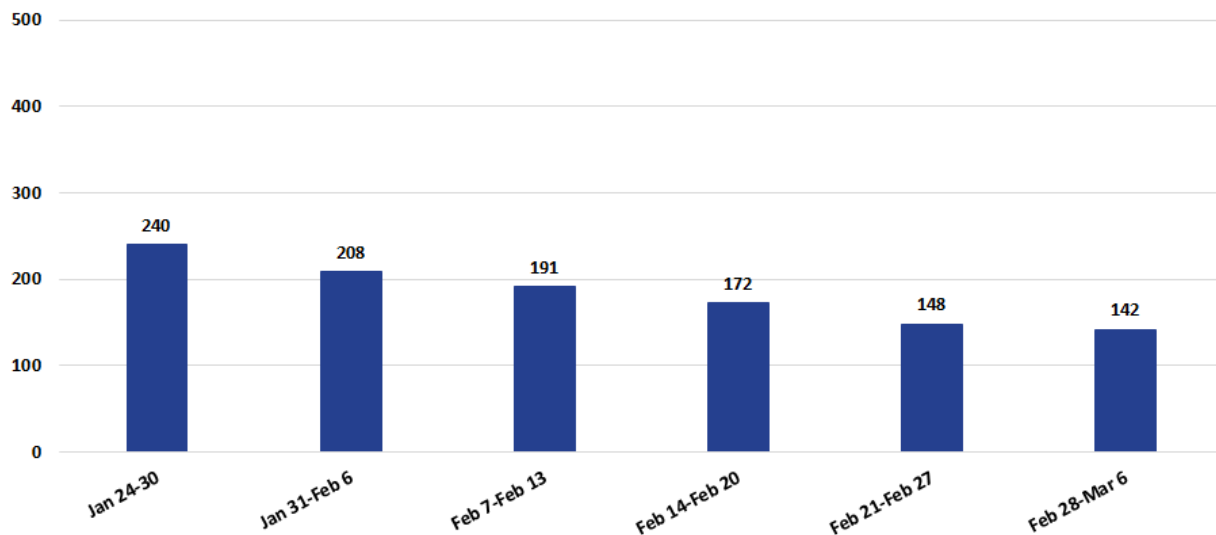
CUMULATIVE CASE
COUNT
(As of 3/6/21)

4,144



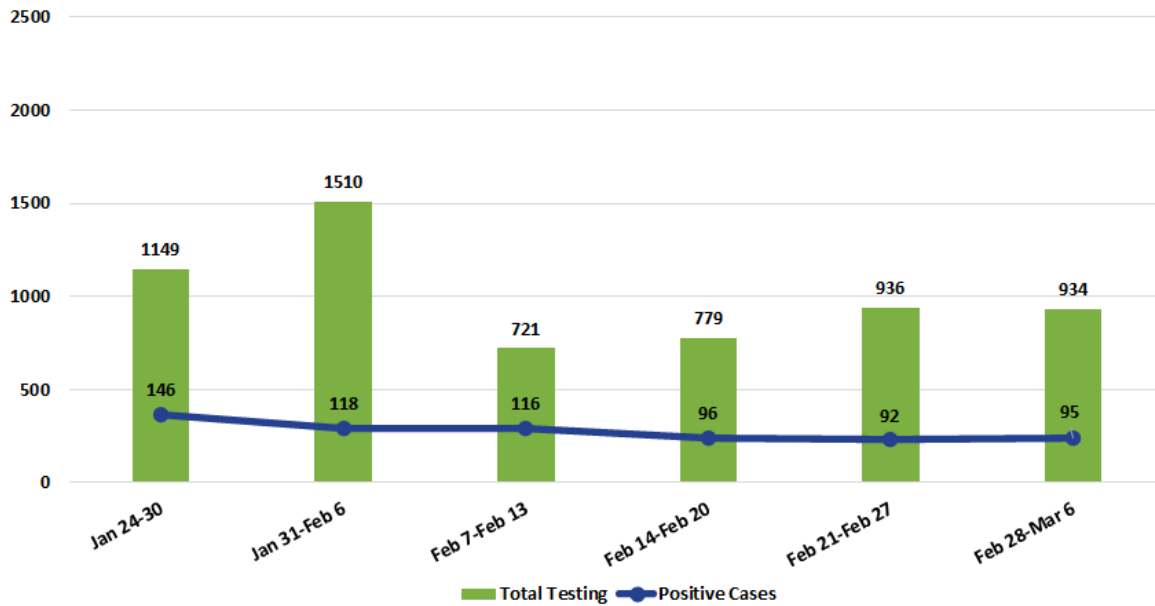
The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Watauga County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside outside Watauga County.

Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Watauga County (January 24, 2021 - March 6, 2021)



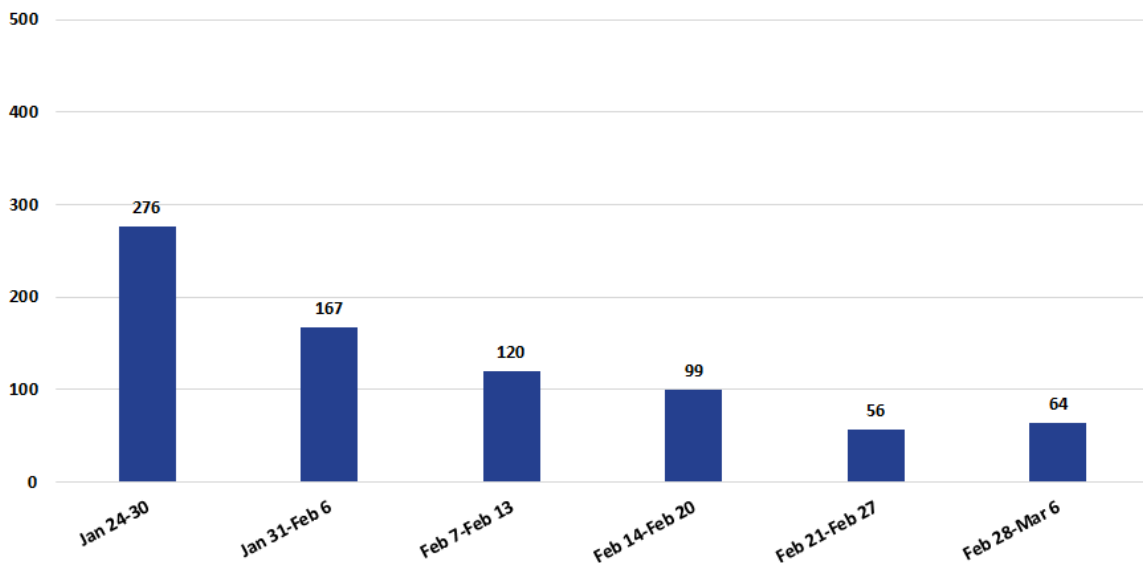
This graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Watauga County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for a total of ten days after the initial positive test result.

**Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Watauga County
(January 24, 2021 - March 6, 2021)**



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
(January 24, 2021 - March 6, 2021)**



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 March 7, 2021. 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
16,705	360	2.2%

Date ▾ (Week ending)	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
Mar 7, 2021	1,899	44	2.3%
Feb 28, 2021	2,015	49	2.4%
Feb 21, 2021	1,772	39	2.2%
Feb 14, 2021	1,762	49	2.8%
Feb 7, 2021	4,233	47	1.1%

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

