



COVID-19 Situation Update for Watauga County

March 5, 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.

“With three approved COVID-19 vaccines now available, it is important to note that each vaccine is safe and effective and has been studied in clinical trials. We have full confidence in these vaccines and hope people will take the vaccine that is offered to them when it’s their turn. The news of a third vaccine provides more hope, and we are very glad to have more vaccines available to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities,” stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.



Vaccinating Makes Everyone Safer - COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Our vaccine allocation for the week of March 8th will include 600 first doses and 1,370 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 5, 2021)		
Week of March 1st Allocation	Total First Doses Received	Total First Doses Administered
2,600 doses	7,800	5,760

Second Doses (Data as of March 5, 2021)		
Week of March 1st Allocation	Total Second Doses Received	Total Second Doses Administered
200 doses	3,275	3,327

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 Group 1, 2 and 3. These are individuals who remain on our interest form list and who we have not yet reached out to to schedule an appointment. For Group 3, 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 5, 2021)	
Watauga	5,749

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 21-27 (graphs below), there were decreases for the number of new cases and the number of individuals in quarantine.

Hospitalizations

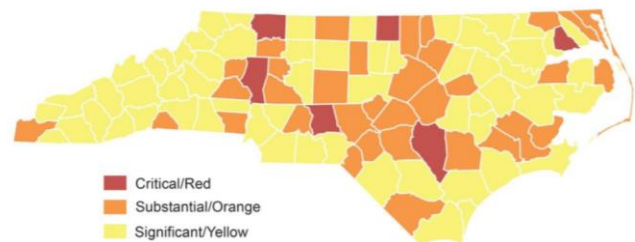
Good news - the number of hospitalizations decreased again this past week. We continue to watch this closely to ensure we have capacity for those who may need hospital care for things like a heart attack, stroke, car accident, etc.

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. Next week we will not offer testing in order to prioritize vaccine deployment. 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](#).

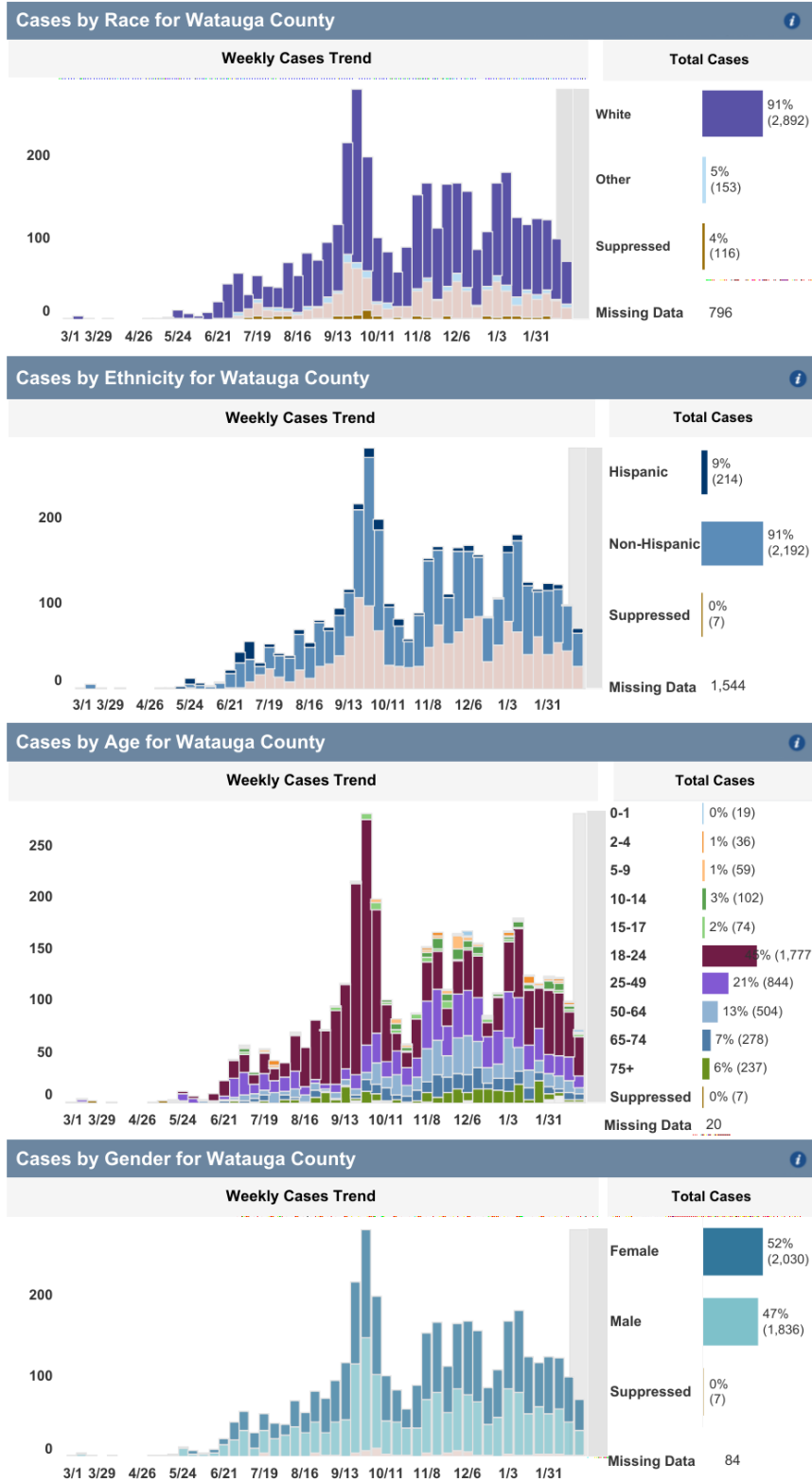
Active Outbreaks & Clusters <i>Data is current as of Thursday, March 4, 9:00am</i>				
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Long Term Care Facility	Deerfield Ridge Assisted Living	0	8 staff 21 residents 1 death	02/10/2021
Residential Complex	The Cottages of Boone	1	17	02/25/2021
Residential Complex	University Highlands	1	12	03/02/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Dogwood Residence Hall	1	8	02/25/2021
Institute of Higher Education	App State Living Learning Center Residence Hall	1	7	02/19/2021

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 and 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 providing COVID-19 testing at no cost to students, faculty and staff each Wednesday and Saturday from noon - 5 p.m. App State Student Health Service also continues providing testing for students each weekday. Additionally, periodic testing throughout the semester is required for residence hall students, student athletes and other students as determined necessary. App State is distributing five new washable, reusable face coverings for all students, faculty and staff. The university has been approved by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to be a COVID-19 vaccination distribution center for community members as well as 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 1st



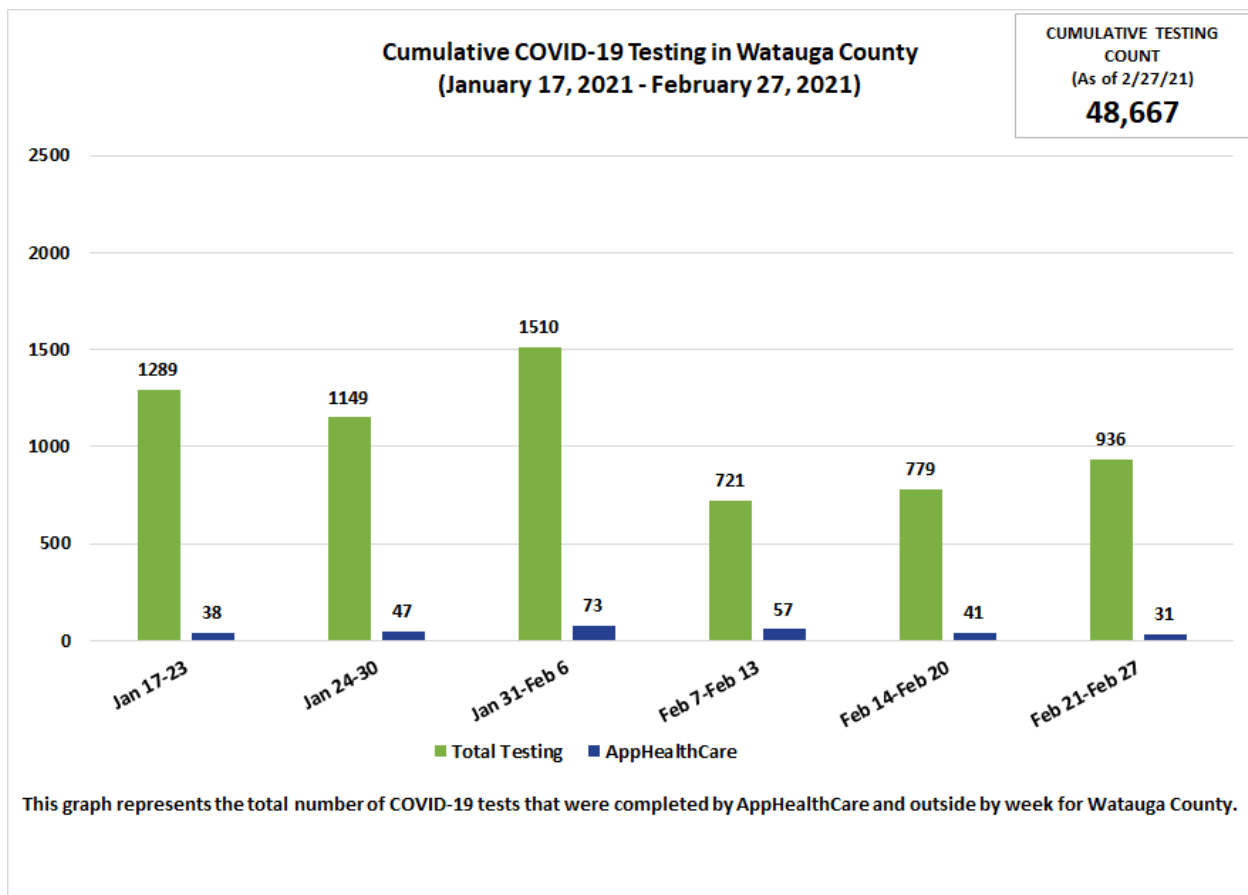
March 1, 2021

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

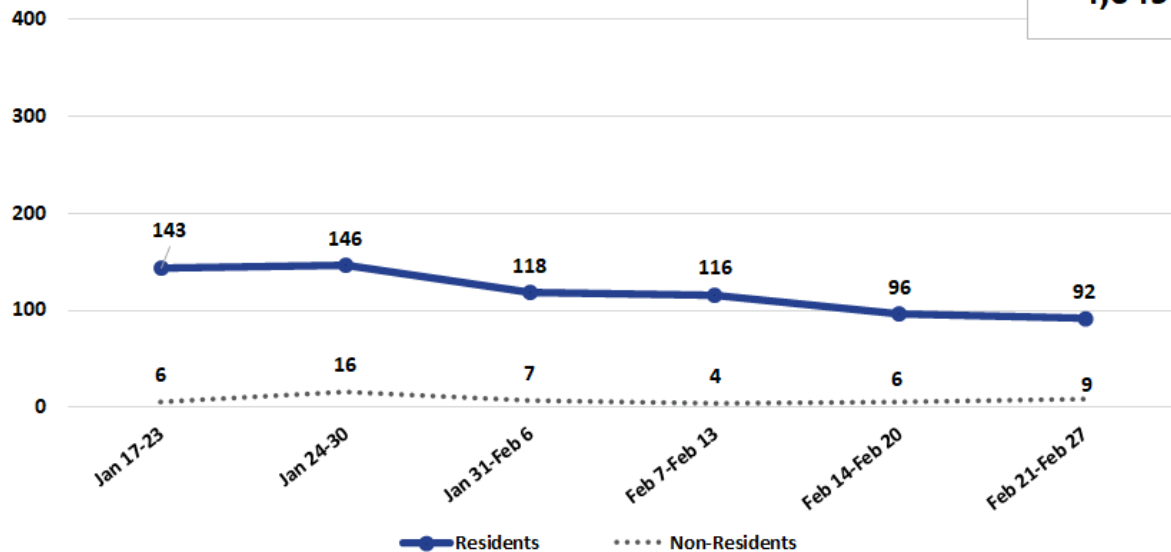
*It is imperative that this report and the data contained within is understood in the appropriate context. Please, if you use this report, please be certain that the information included within is shared within the appropriate context. Doing otherwise may be damaging to the public health response efforts. 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 17, 2021 - February 27, 2021)

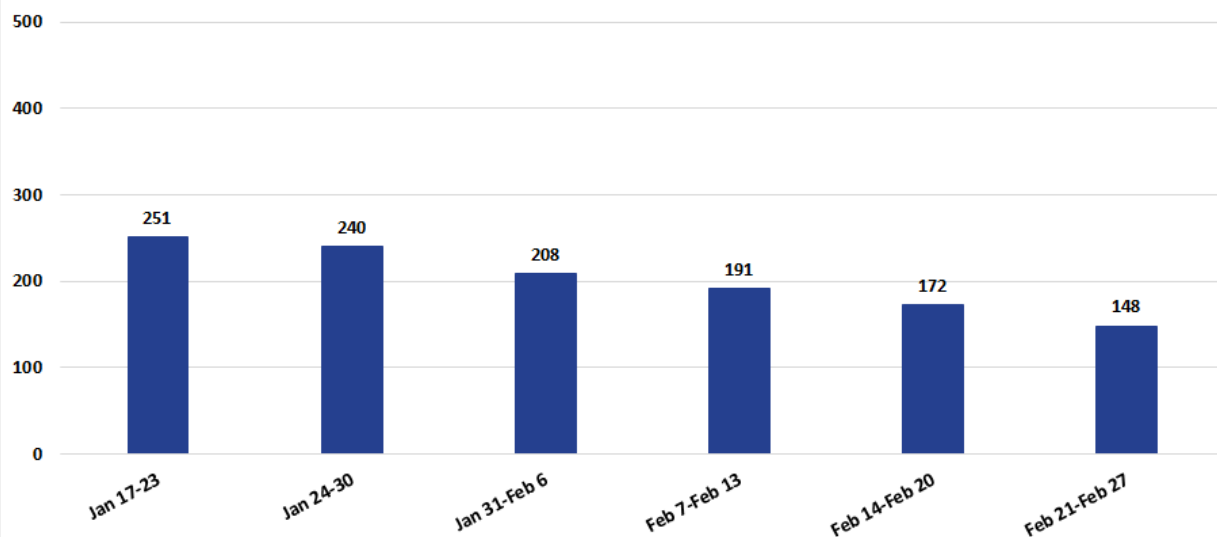
CUMULATIVE CASE
COUNT
(As of 2/27/21)

4,049



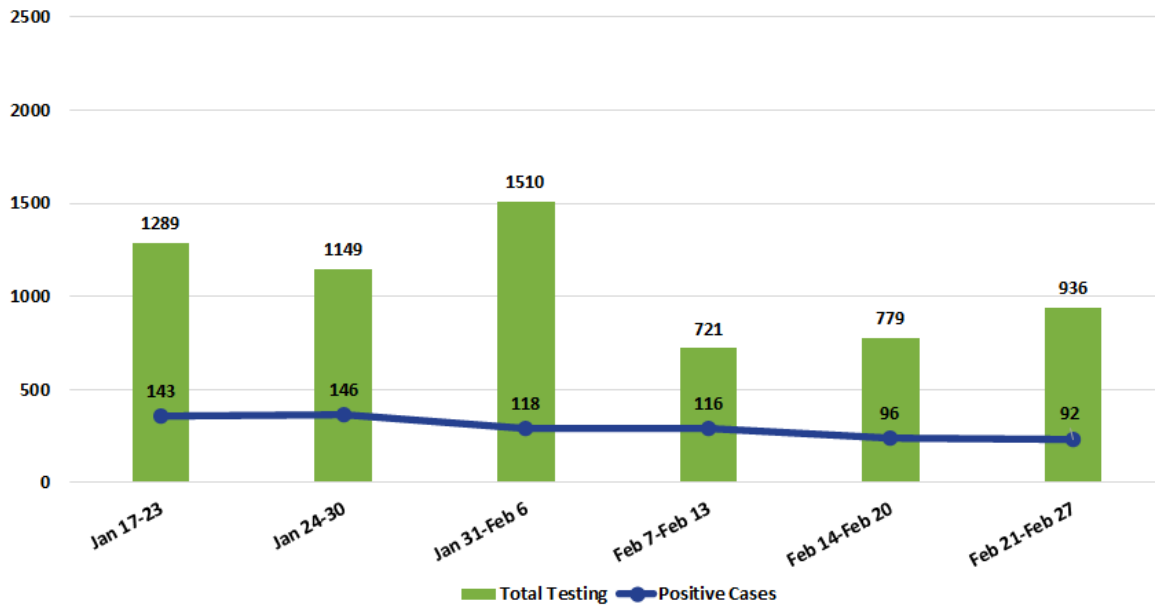
The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Watauga County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside outside Watauga County.

Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Watauga County
(January 17, 2021 - February 27, 2021)



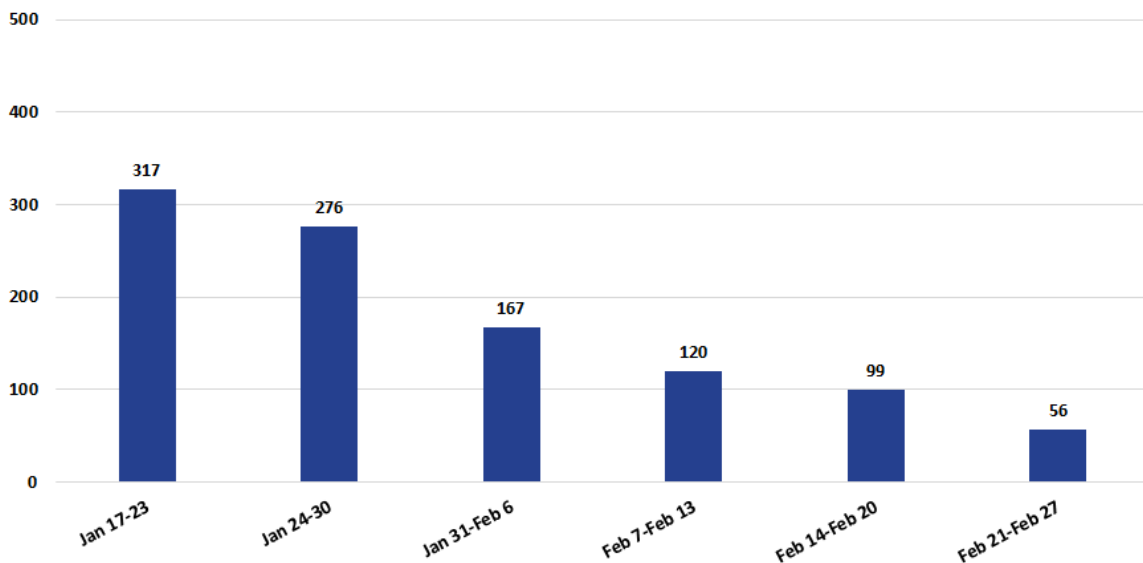
This graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Watauga County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for a total of ten days after the initial positive test result.

**Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Watauga County
(January 17, 2021 - February 27, 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 17, 2021 - February 27, 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 February 28, 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
14,806	316	2.1%

Date ▾ (Week ending)	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
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%
Jan 31, 2021	1,385	29	2.1%

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

