



COVID-19 Situation Update for Watauga County

April 30, 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.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update



Vaccinating makes everyone safer. If you are interested in getting your vaccine, there is a spot for you. Visit our website to schedule an appointment or call us at (828) 795-1970. Show your love by getting a vaccine to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Who is eligible for vaccines?

COVID-19 vaccine appointments are open for those who want a vaccine within the age requirements. The Pfizer vaccine is approved for people age 16-17 and older and all other vaccines are approved for 18 and older. Vaccine appointments will be added to our website as they are available based on vaccine supply so continue to check back regularly for additional appointments to be added.

Johnson & Johnson Pause

The recent pause of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was out of an abundance of caution and shows that our vaccine safety system is working. A CDC expert panel reviewed all the data during the pause to better understand the degree of risk associated with the J&J vaccine and reported blood clots. The CDC and FDA determined the level of risk for blood clots with the J&J vaccine is very low, and they have confidence that this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19. During the pause, nine additional cases of blood clots were identified, bringing the total number of known cases to 15. This is out of the nearly 7 million people who received the vaccine. The decision to lift the pause is based on experts' determination that the very small degree of risk associated with its use outweigh the benefits.

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

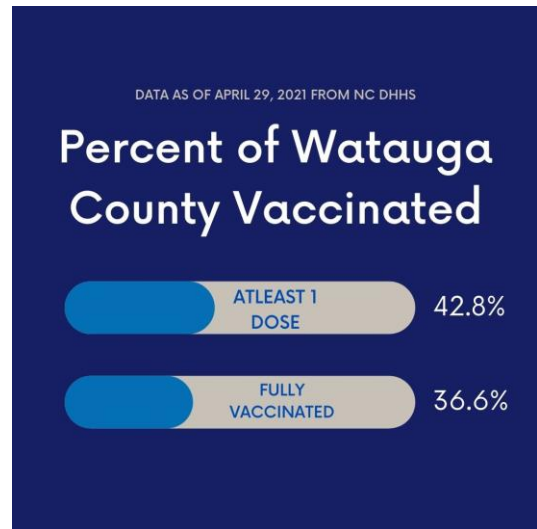


the [AppalCart](#) to get to and from vaccination locations. For those who are in need of interpreters, we have interpreters available to help with your vaccine appointment. Also, some people are unable to leave their homes due to lack of accessibility, location, disability, etc. and we are able to offer 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.

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 weeks of April 18-24 (graphs below), cases remain steady.

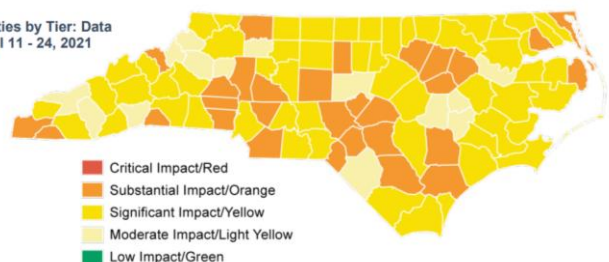
Hospitalizations

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

NC DHHS County Alert System Notes Moderate Impact for Watauga County

In the latest update, Watauga County is **LIGHT YELLOW** which notes moderate impact. 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 April 11 - 24, 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.

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 Monday through Friday by noon.

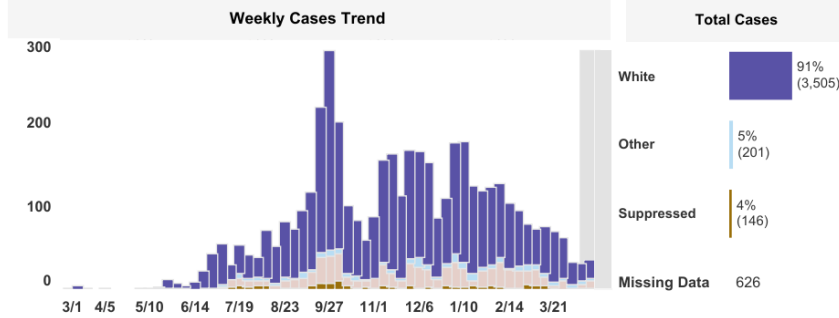
An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory confirmed cases. A cluster is defined as a minimum of five cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period and plausible epidemiologic linkage between cases. An outbreak or cluster is considered over if 28 days have passed 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, April 29th</i>				
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Institute of Higher Education	App State Women's Soccer Team	5	5	4/21/2021
Institute of Higher Education	Thunder Hill Residence Hall	0	18	3/31/2021
Residential Complex	The Cottages of Boone	2	21	04/26/2021
Correctional Facility	Watauga County Detention Center	27	28	04/26/2021

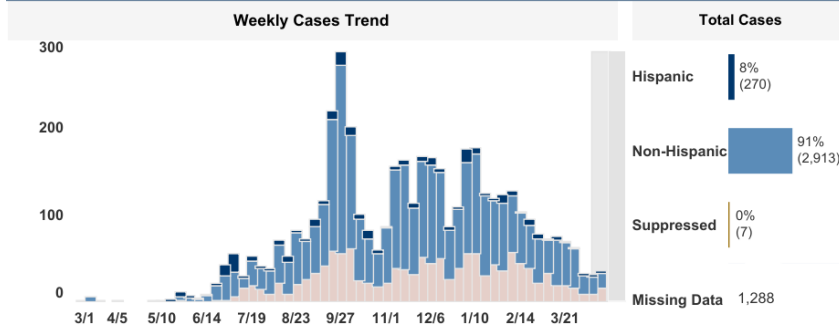
To date, App State has conducted more than 56,000 COVID-19 tests, with an overall positivity rate of just under 2% for 2021. With national, state and local efforts to return students to classrooms underway, and a nationwide increase in COVID-19 vaccine supply, App State is preparing for the full return of students, faculty and staff to campus for the fall 2021 semester, and continues to strongly encourage COVID-19 vaccination. The university will continue to provide free COVID-19 testing for students, faculty and staff each Wednesday and Saturday from noon - 5 p.m. through May 8. Daily testing continues to be available for students in Student Health Service, and targeted testing with specific student populations is also provided as needed. App State's dedicated COVID-19 website continues to provide guidance, testing schedule information, vaccine information, and regular data updates for the App State community.

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of April 26th

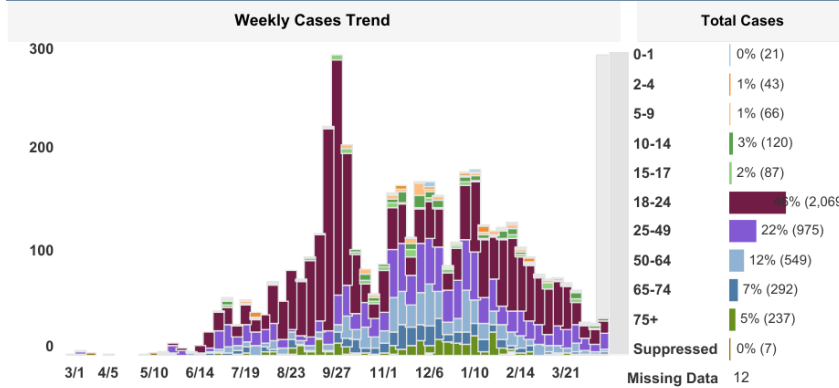
Cases by Race for Watauga County



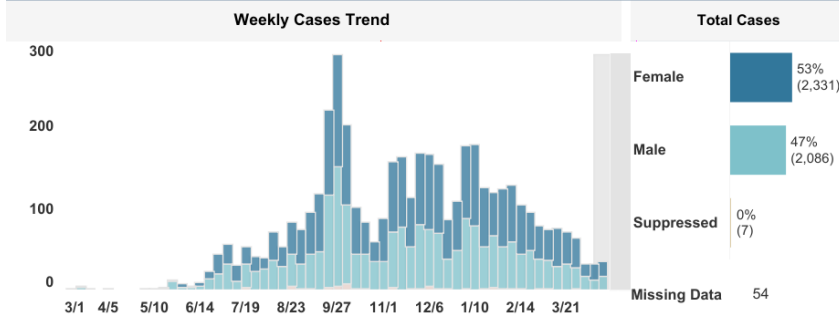
Cases by Ethnicity for Watauga County



Cases by Age for Watauga County



Cases by Gender for Watauga County



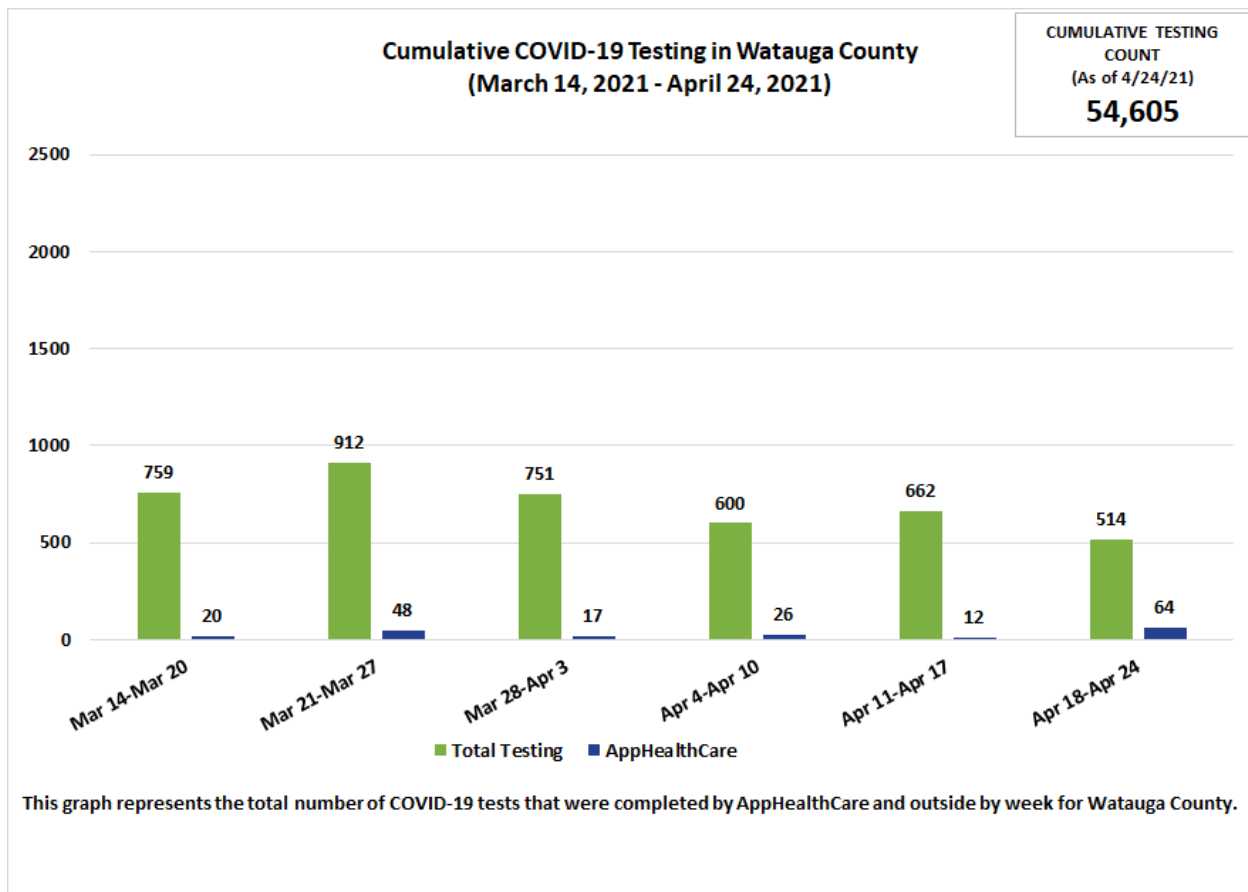
April 26, 2021

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

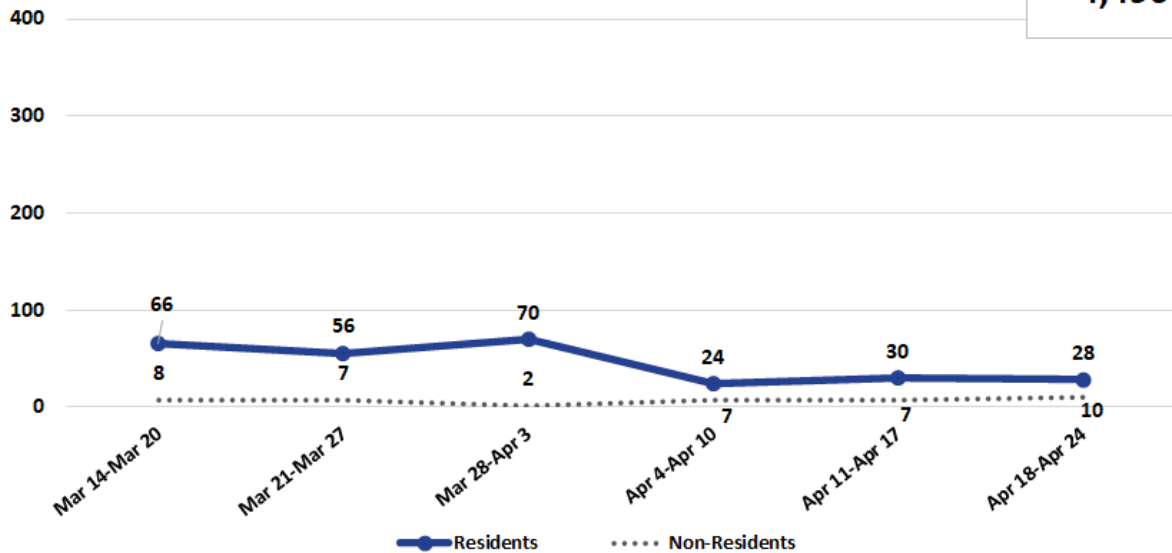
It is imperative that this report and the data contained within is understood in the appropriate context. Please, if you use this report, please be certain that the information included within is shared within the appropriate context. Doing otherwise may be damaging to the public health response efforts. 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
(March 14, 2021 - April 24, 2021)

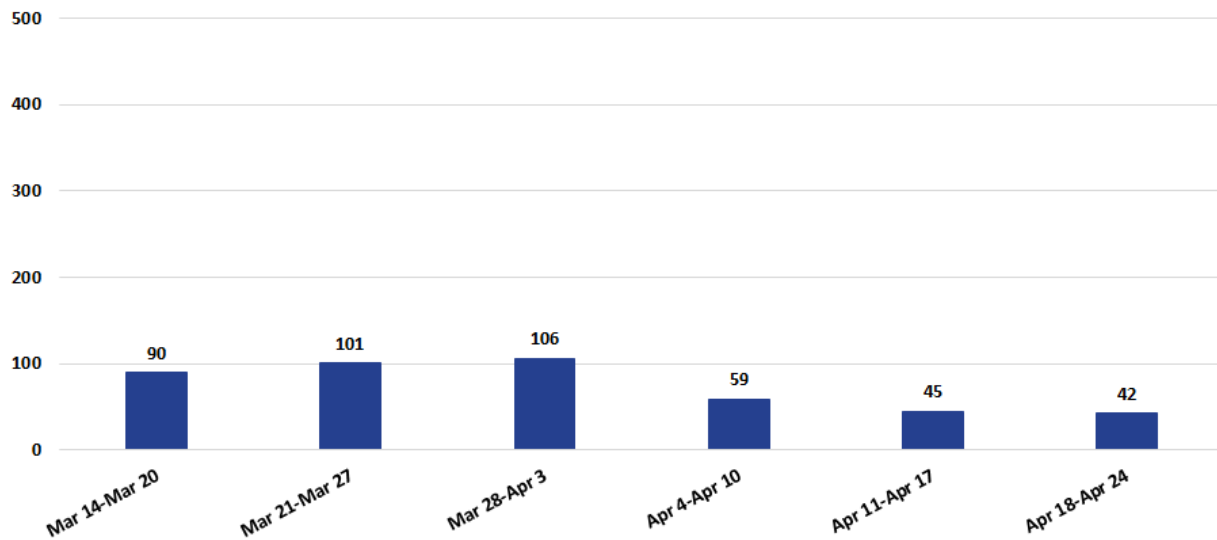
CUMULATIVE CASE
COUNT
(As of 4/24/21)

4,490



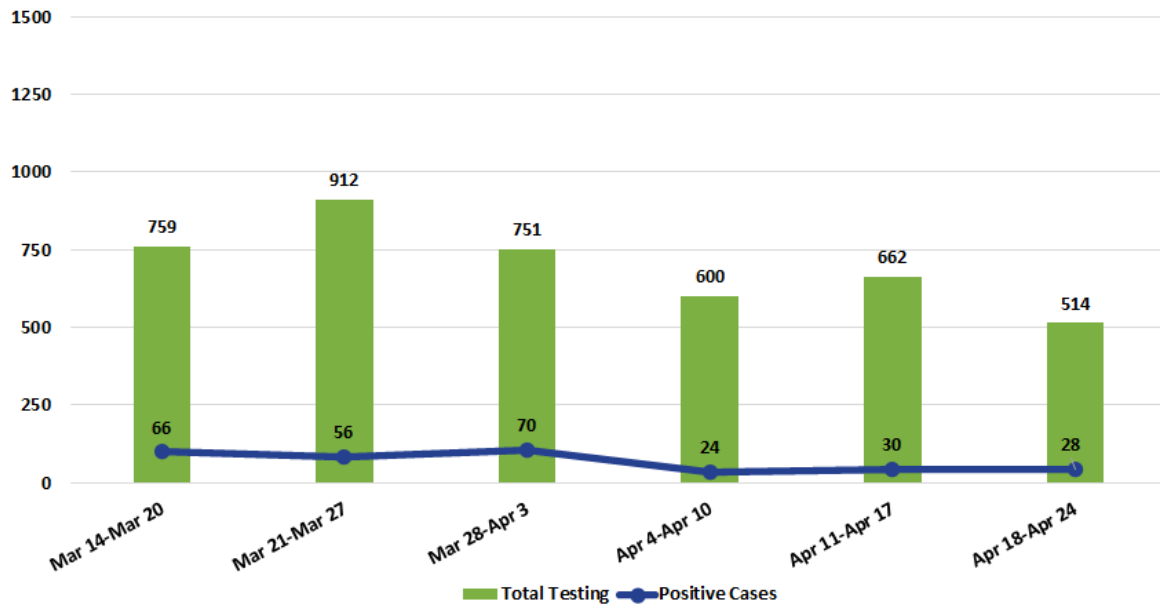
The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Watauga County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside outside Watauga County.

Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Watauga County
(March 14, 2021 - April 24, 2021)



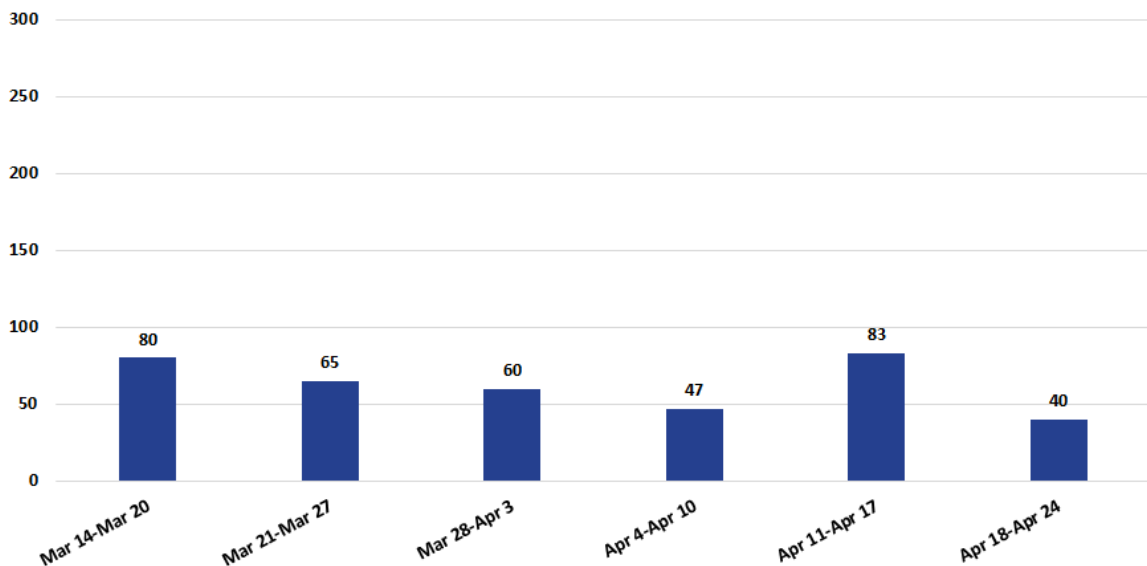
This graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Watauga County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for a total of ten days after the initial positive test result.

**Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Watauga County
(March 14, 2021 - April 24, 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
(March 14, 2021 - April 24, 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 April 25, 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
	25,128	471	1.9%
Date ▾ (Week ending)	On-Campus Tests	Positive Tests	% Positive Cases
Apr 25, 2021	772	9	1.2%
Apr 18, 2021	936	10	1.1%
Apr 11, 2021	1,084	8	0.7%
Apr 4, 2021	966	8	0.8%
Mar 28, 2021	1,385	25	1.8%

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

