

Watauga COVID-19 Situation Update

March 25th, 2022

COVID-19 Updates & Important Points

As we have learned more about COVID-19 over the past two years and now have more tools available to prevent and treat this virus, we are continuing to adapt our strategy to respond based on the latest data and science. We are shifting our response efforts, specifically with testing and data, to align with public health needs and prioritizing our efforts knowing we have the tools to prevent severe outcomes due to COVID-19.

Beginning April 1, 2022:

- **Drive-thru testing for Ashe and Alleghany locations will no longer be offered.** If you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms and need a COVID-19 test, please call us at (828) 795-1970 to schedule a sick visit. If you need a COVID-19 test for a work or travel requirement, a free at-home test kit will be offered to you, while supplies last. COVID-19 testing for Watauga will remain the same.
- **The AppHealthCare data dashboard will no longer include individual case data** (cumulative case count, new cases and deaths) and will shift to focus on key metrics that better help us understand the current situation and monitor data to prevent severe illness.
- **The COVID-19 Situation Updates will be published monthly on the first Friday of each month.**

Protect Yourself & Others

Vaccinate and Boost: Get vaccinated now, including a COVID-19 booster as soon as you are eligible. Vaccines continue to be our best tool at preventing severe outcomes like hospitalization and death. Vaccines are widely available at pharmacies, healthcare offices and health departments. For a list of local vaccine providers, visit AppHealthCare.com.

Test: Get tested if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Testing is available at pharmacies, healthcare offices and health departments. At-home test kits are also available. For a list of local testing options and at-home testing information, visit AppHealthCare.com.

Mask: Masks can help protect you and others from COVID-19. As some mask requirements are lifted, some individuals may wear a mask based on personal preference. Masks will still be important in higher risk settings like healthcare facilities, long term care facilities, and correctional facilities. Also, if you are at higher risk of severe illness, may be in a setting of higher risk or have concerns about your exposure risk, you may choose to add to your layered protection by wearing a high quality, well-fitted mask, in addition to being up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccinations.

COVID-19 Community Levels:

A measure of the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as of 3/24/2022:

In Watauga County, North Carolina, community level is **Medium**.

- If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines
- Get tested if you have symptoms

Protect Yourself & Others

If you test positive for COVID-19:



Limit contact with others for at least 5 days from symptom start date (or test date if asymptomatic). Once 5 days have passed, limit contact until you are fever-free and symptoms are improving

AND



Wear a mask for 5 additional days (or until 10 days have passed from your symptom start date, or test date if asymptomatic)

If you are exposed to COVID-19:



Limit contact with others for 5 days.

AND



Wear a mask for an additional 5 days



UNLESS you are up-to-date on vaccinations, including boosters (if eligible) OR have tested positive in the last 90 days, THEN wear a mask for 10 days.

Treatment Options

While vaccines offer the best protection against severe outcomes due to COVID-19, treatment options are available on a limited basis. Any treatment should be recommended by a healthcare provider and requires a positive COVID-19 test. For more information about available treatment options and to find a treatment location near you, visit the [NC DHHS website](#).

For more information about COVID-19, vaccines, and testing, visit [AppHealthCare.com](#) or call our COVID-19 Call Center at (828) 795-1970.

COVID-19 Watauga County Vaccination Updates

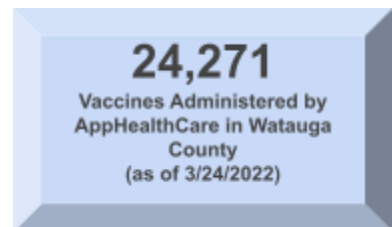
County-specific race, ethnicity and age data are from the [NCDHHS COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#), - (All vaccine demographic data are current as of 3/24/2022 at 12:00pm).

Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations remains our most effective tool to protect against severe outcomes related to COVID-19 including hospitalization and death.



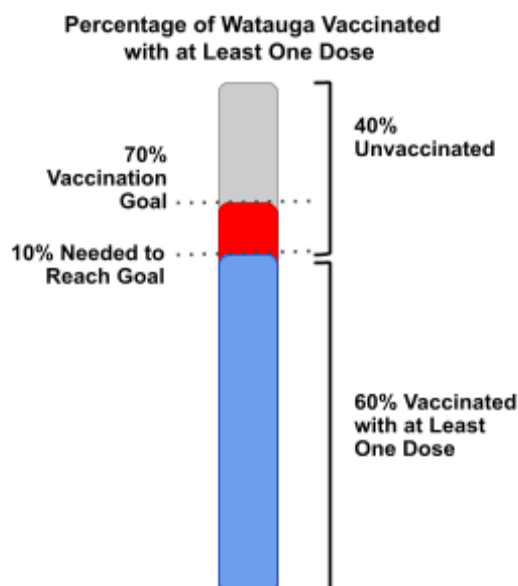
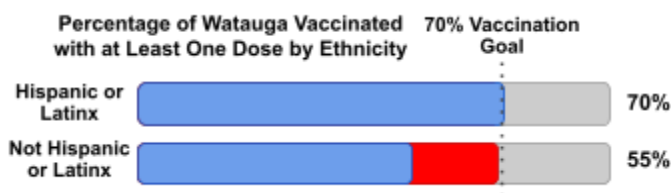
Unvaccinated adults (age 18+) in the U.S. were
16x as likely to be hospitalized in association with COVID-19
14x as likely to die from COVID-19 than those who completed their primary series.

Compared to those who completed their primary series plus an additional or booster dose, the risk for unvaccinated adults increased to **44x** for hospitalization and **41x** for death related to COVID-19.

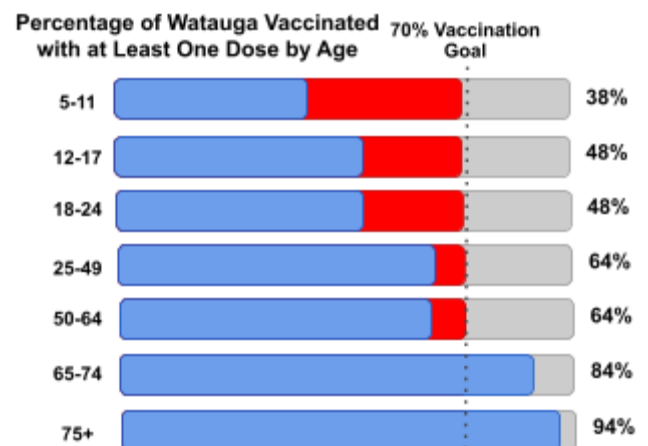


Data tracking these outcomes is updated monthly and can be viewed at [the CDC Data Tracker site linked here](#).

For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccines or a list of local providers, visit [AppHealthCare.com](#).



Percent of Population by Race Vaccinated with at Least One Dose	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%
Asian	0%
Black or African American	48%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
Other	61%
White	55%



North Carolina COVID-19 Case Updates

North Carolina State Synopsis

The North Carolina COVID-19 State Synopsis can be viewed at: [COVID-19 State Profile Report](#), which is provided by White House COVID-19 Team, Joint Coordination Cell, Data Strategy and Execution Workgroup.

COVID-19 Variants Detected in North Carolina by Week

The Omicron variant seems to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. Current COVID-19 vaccines are expected to protect against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths from the Omicron variant. The best way to protect yourself is by getting a COVID-19 Vaccination, and booster once eligible.

Data on COVID-19 Variants Detected in North Carolina by Week can be viewed at: [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 Surveillance Study](#).

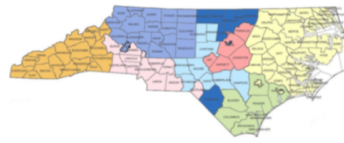
State Wastewater Surveillance Data

NC Department of Health and Human Services is collecting wastewater samples from an increasing set of participating wastewater treatment plants across NC to test for levels of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Individuals infected with COVID-19 shed viral particles in their stool, which can be measured in wastewater. This metric will be increasingly important in measuring the amount of virus at the community level, as it provides information regarding the levels of virus independently of testing participation or reporting.

State wastewater surveillance data is updated on the NC DHHS dashboard weekly and can be viewed at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/wastewater-monitoring>.

Regional COVID-19 Hospitalization Data

The hospitalization data reflected includes Watauga County. All hospitalization data is from [NCDHHS' Hospitalization Data Dashboard](#). (All data is current as of 3/24/2022)



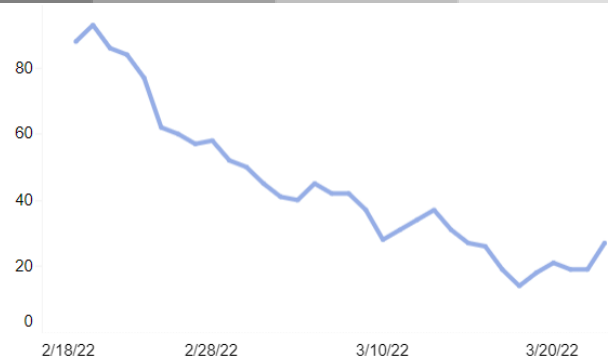
CapRAC - Capital Region Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
DHPC - Duke Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
EHPC - Eastern Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
MAHPC - Mountain Area Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
MCRHC - Mid Carolina Regional Healthcare Coalition
MHPC - Metrolina Healthcare Preparedness Coalition
SHPR - Southeastern Healthcare Preparedness Region
THPC - Triad Healthcare Preparedness Coalition

Currently Hospitalized COVID-19 Patients in Triad Health Preparedness Coalition Region (THPC)



170
Currently COVID-19 hospitalized patients as of 3/23/2022

Number of COVID-19 Adult ICU Patients in THPC



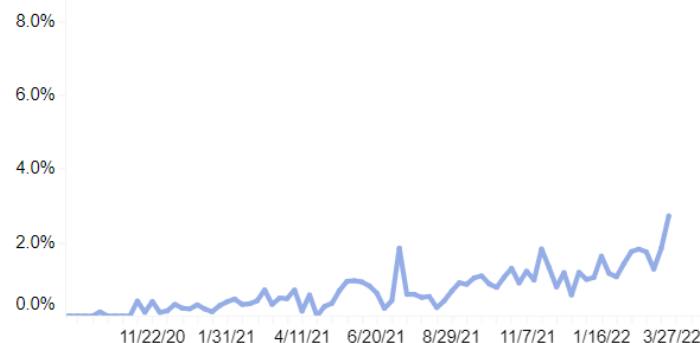
27
Current COVID-19 adult ICU patients as of 3/23/2022

Weekly COVID-19 Hospital Severity Trend: Percent of Patients on a Ventilator in THPC



11%
Of currently hospitalized COVID-19 patients on a ventilator as of 3/20/2022

Weekly COVID-19 Hospital Severity Trend: Percent of Pediatric Hospitalizations in THPC

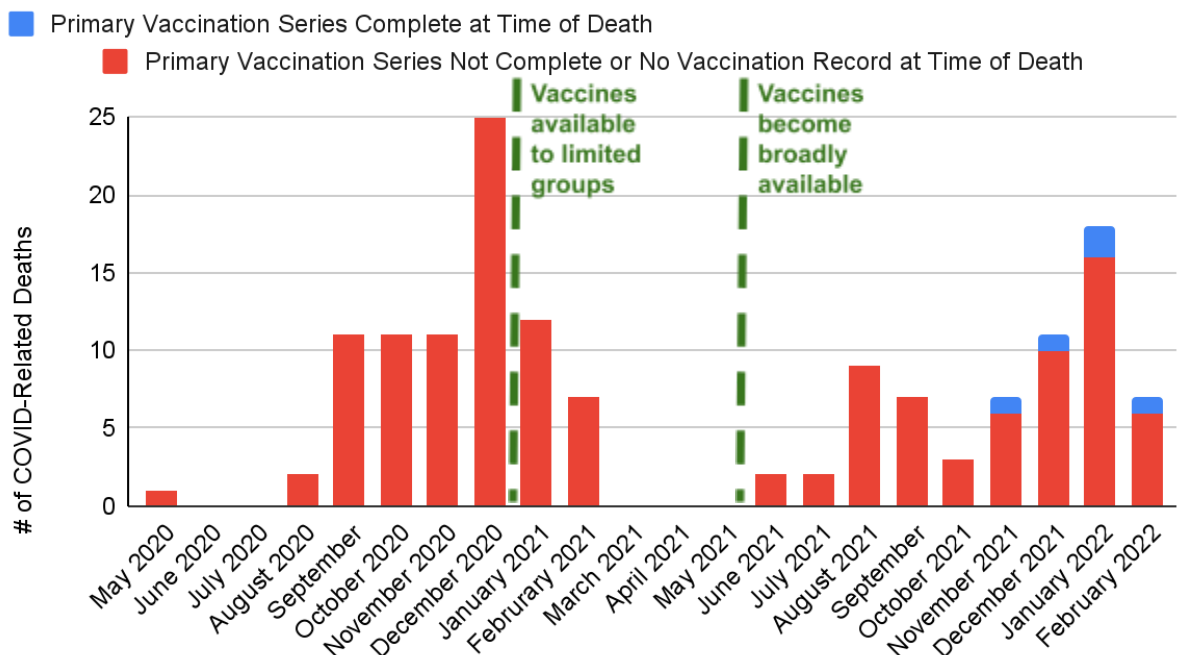


2.7%
Of currently hospitalized COVID-19 patients are pediatric as of 3/20/2022

Monthly COVID-Related Deaths in the Appalachian District

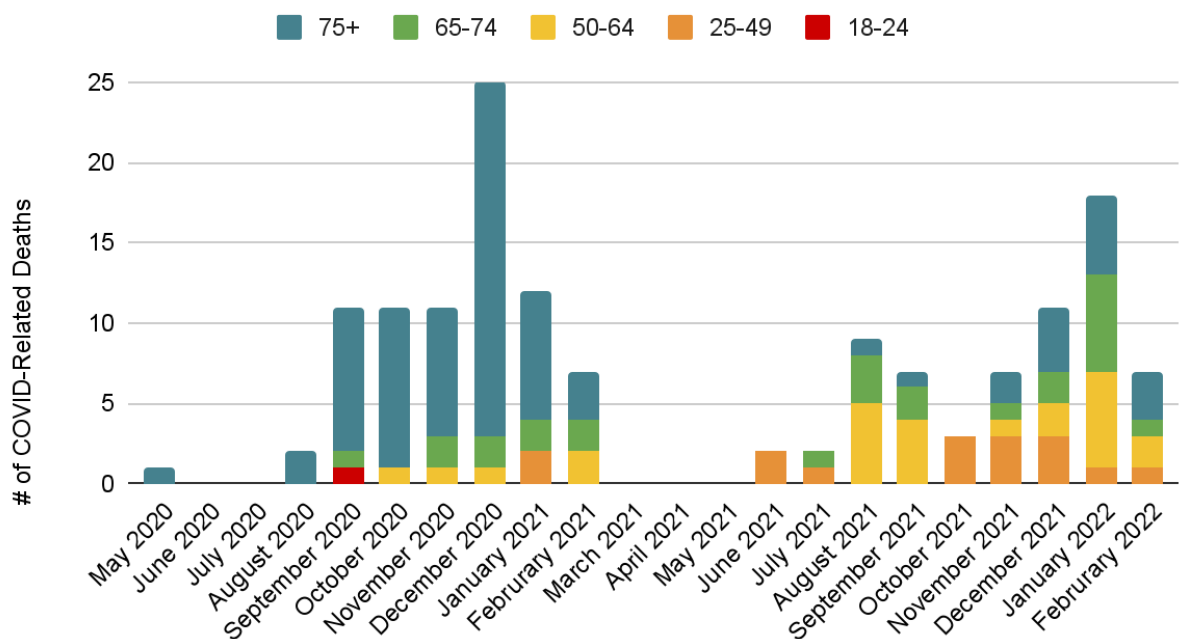
The data reflected includes COVID-19 related deaths for residents of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga counties combined. Data is collected from hospital reports (*All data is current as of 3/3/2022 at 9:00 am*)

COVID-19 Related Deaths Over Time in Appalachian District Residents



Of note, COVID-related deaths decreased significantly after vaccinations became available at the end of 2020. To date, the overwhelming majority of COVID-19 related deaths are among unvaccinated individuals.

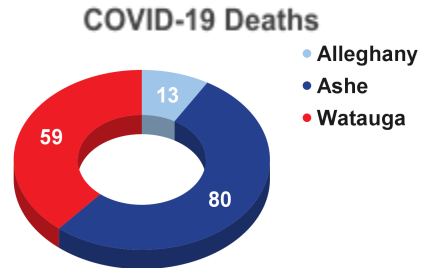
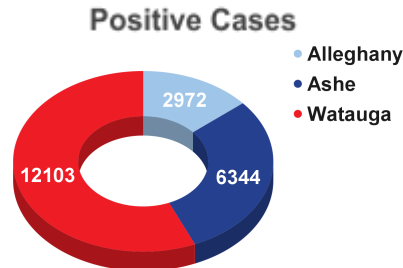
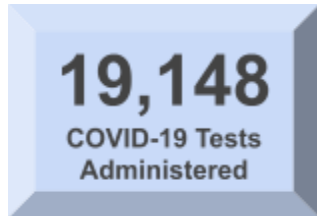
COVID-19 Related Deaths in Appalachian District Residents by Age



In the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-related deaths were overwhelmingly among those age 75+. We have since seen the trend of COVID-deaths toward younger populations, mirroring the trend of increased vaccination rates among our older populations.

Watauga County COVID-19 Case Updates

Cases to Date in **Watauga County**: (Data is current as of 3/24/2022 at 9:00 am- Cumulative case counts may decrease or fluctuate due to ongoing reconciliation of data sets and elimination of duplicate data.)

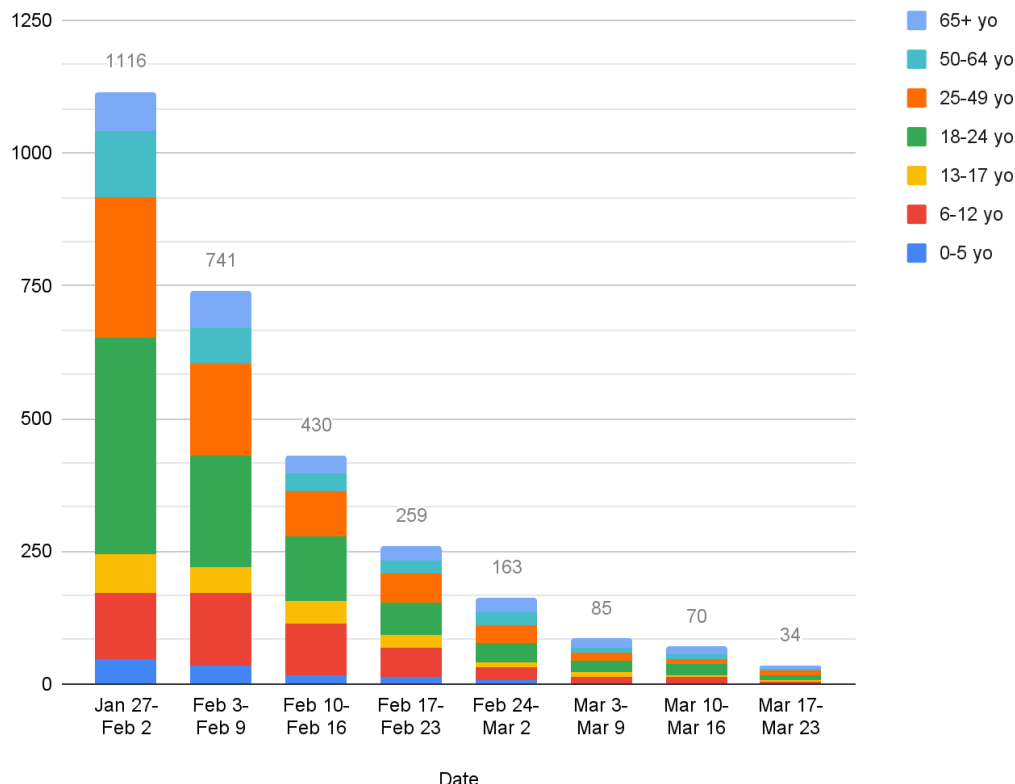


COVID-19 testing is offered by drive-thru Monday through Friday 8:30-10:00 am on a first-come, first-served basis. You do not need an appointment for testing. COVID-19 testing is free for everyone and we offer both PCR and rapid tests. AppHealthCare will serve anyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

In Watauga County, we are partnering with StarMed Healthcare to expand capacity for COVID-19 testing. The hours and days of testing remain the same (8:30-10:00 am Monday through Friday). **No appointment is needed for testing at any of our locations, however, prior registration is required for testing in Watauga.** For information on registering with StarMed for testing in Watauga, visit: <https://www.apphealthcare.com/covid-19-information/covid-19-testing/>.

Active Cases/Week Broken Down by Age Group

Watauga County



Active cases include those in their isolation period within the designated time frame. On 12/28/2021 the CDC reduced the isolation period from 10 days to 5 days, starting from symptom onset, or test date if asymptomatic. The data reflects the updated 5-day isolation period for all date ranges represented.

Active Clusters and Outbreaks in Watauga County

The current cluster and outbreak information for congregate living, childcare and educational settings in our district can be viewed at the [NC DHHS Cluster and Outbreak reports](#). An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory confirmed cases within a 28 day period in a congregate living setting. A cluster is defined as a minimum of five cases within a 14-day period and plausible epidemiologic linkage between cases. An outbreak or cluster is considered active until 28 days have passed with no newly identified cases.

[Click here to view COVID-19 case and trend distribution by demographic groups for Watauga County.](#)

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

