

# Watauga Communicable Disease Update

March 10th, 2023

## Trends, Updates & Important Points

- Preliminary data indicate that those ages 20-24 had 7 times the risk of getting chlamydia as compared to the rest of the Watauga County population (ages 0-19 and 25+) in 2022 (95% CI 5.65, 8.57).
  - Chlamydia remains the most prevalent communicable disease in Watauga County.
- Flu and RSV cases have continued to remain low as measured by emergency department visits.
- COVID cases, wastewater, and hospitalizations have continued on a downward trend since January.
- NCDHHS has partnered with StarMed to offer free telehealth treatment services for people who are COVID-19 positive. Antiviral pills are a safe treatment for those who test positive within 5 days of feeling sick & are at risk of severe illness. Visit [StarMed.Care/NC](https://www.starmed.com/nc).

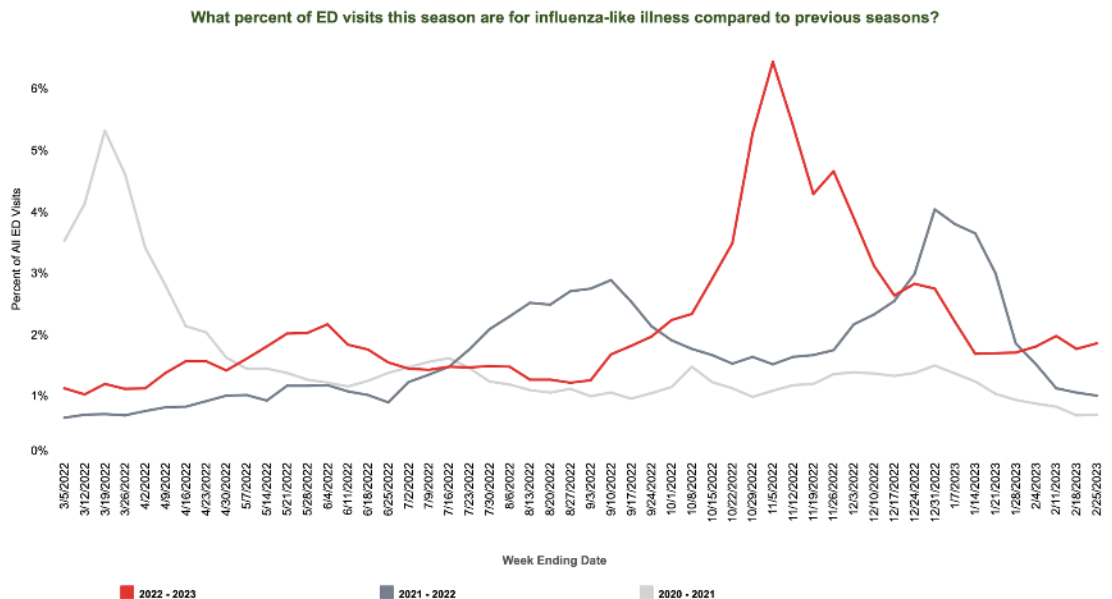
## Respiratory Virus Surveillance and Recommendations

### New Respiratory Virus Surveillance Dashboard

[NC DHHS's Respiratory Virus Surveillance Dashboard](#) shows past and present trends.

### Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza (flu)

- 1.9% of Emergency Department (ED) visits this week are attributed to influenza-like illness.



## General Communicable Disease Data

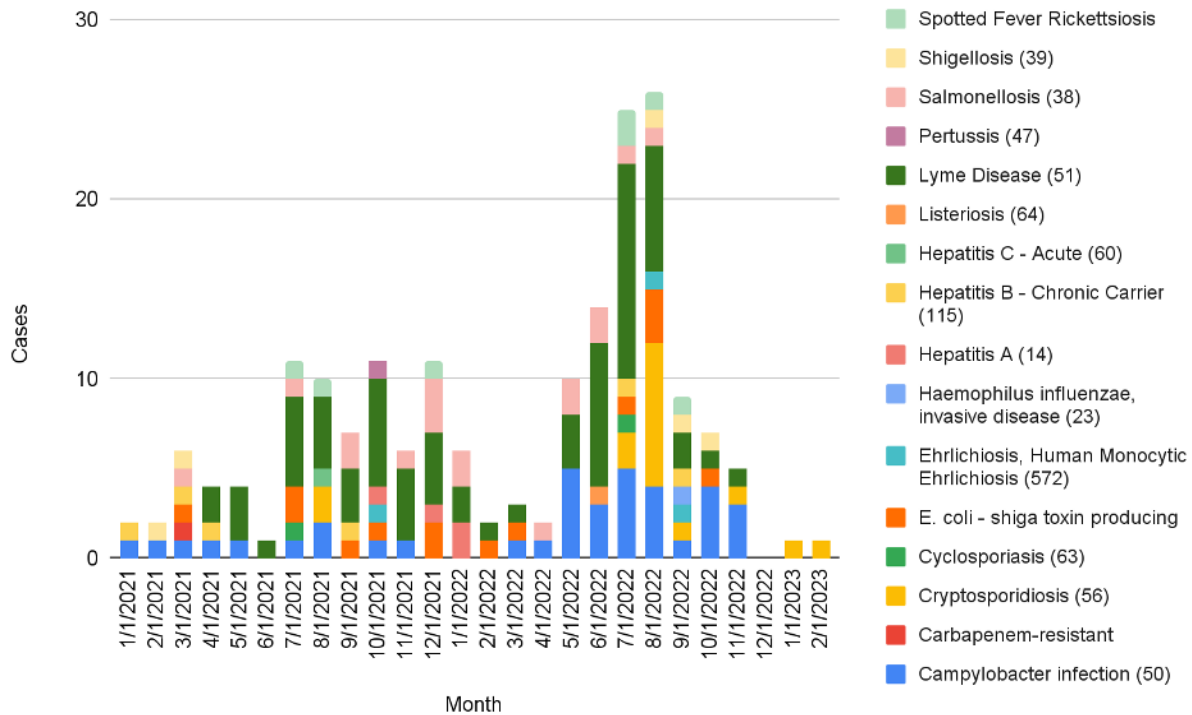
### General Communicable Disease and Vaccine Preventable Disease:

Vaccines prevent disease in the people who receive them and also in the broader community. Because of childhood vaccination programs, diseases like polio, measles, diphtheria, rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus,

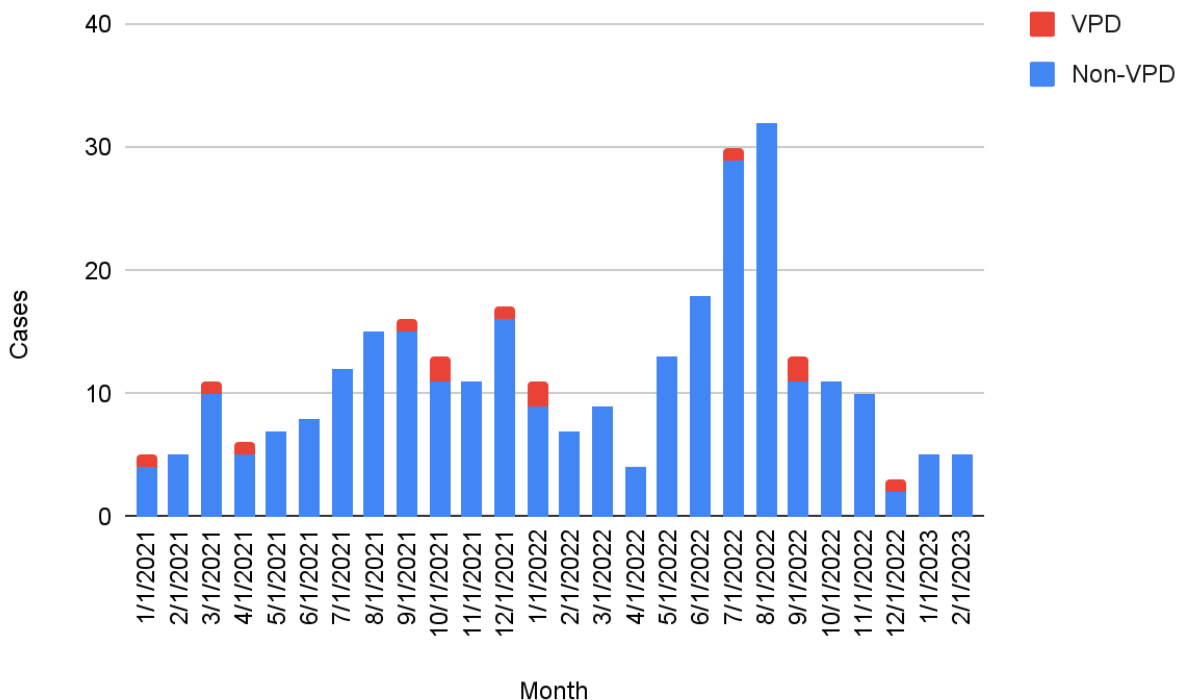
and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) are no longer widespread in the United States. However, cases and outbreaks of these diseases continue to occur due to travel to and from areas with lower vaccine coverage. Many diseases however are not preventable through vaccines, including but not limited to lyme disease, rocky mountain spotted fever, and salmonella.

The figures below represent general communicable disease cases in residents of Watauga County by month, excluding COVID-19 and sexually transmitted conditions.

### Communicable Disease Cases in Watauga County by Month



### Vaccine Preventable Disease Cases in Watauga County by Month



## Sexually Transmitted Conditions:

In North Carolina, there are eight reportable bacterial sexually transmitted conditions (STDs & STIs), including gonorrhea, chlamydia, and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). Chlamydia is the most prevalent STC in Watauga County, with gonorrhea as the second most prevalent. AppHealthCare provides clinical services, education and awareness efforts and monitoring disease trends through surveillance and epidemiology. To best prevent the spread of STDs, seek treatment if relevant, seek free routine testing, and take precautions to promote safety.

### Chlamydia:

Preliminary data indicate that among Watauga County residents in 2022, individuals ages 20-24 had 6.96 times the risk (95% CI 5.61, 8.65) of getting chlamydia than the general population (ages 0-19 and 25+).

Individuals with chlamydia often do not show any symptoms. Chlamydia is a common and treatable STD that can cause permanent damage to female reproductive systems that can make it difficult or impossible to get pregnant later, and can complicate pregnancies.

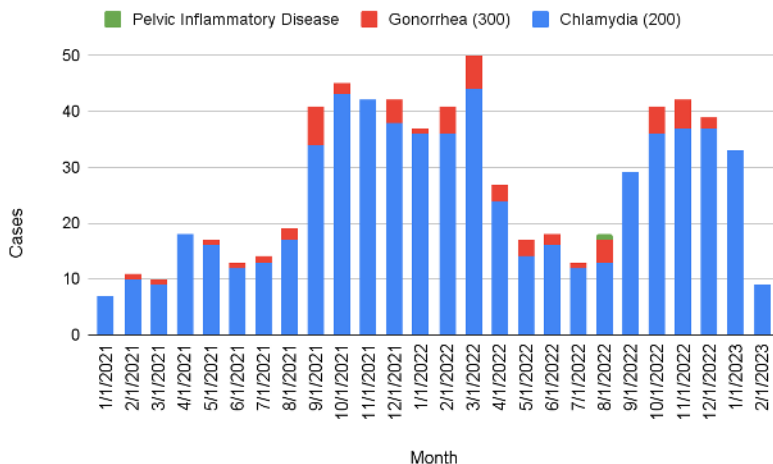
#### Chlamydia Spread:

- Chlamydia can spread by people with or without symptoms. Asymptomatic chlamydia is common in individuals of all genders and can still have lasting harmful effects.
- Individuals with chlamydia should be treated, as should their sexual partners regardless of symptoms.
- Chlamydia can spread through vaginal, anal, or oral sex.

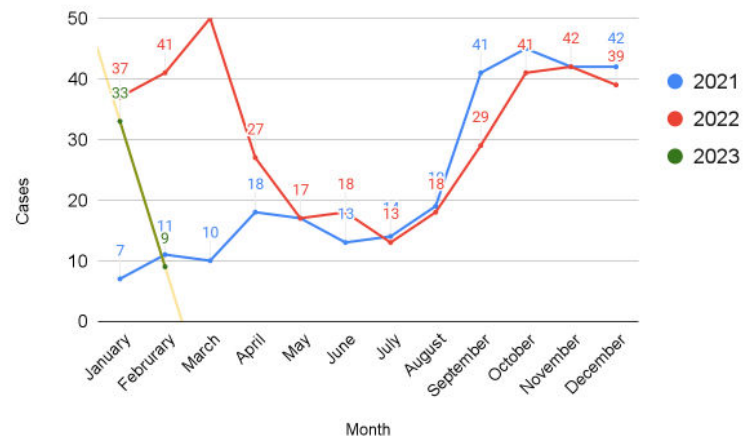
#### Chlamydia Testing and Screening:

- If you are sexually active, getting tested for STDs is one of the most important things you can do to protect your health. Make sure you have an open and honest conversation about your sexual history and STD testing with your doctor and ask whether you should be tested for STDs.
- All sexually active women younger than 25 years should be tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia every year. Women 25 years and older with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners or a sex partner who has an STD should also be tested for gonorrhea and chlamydia every year.
- Everyone who is pregnant and may be at risk for infection should also be tested for chlamydia and gonorrhea starting early in pregnancy. Repeat testing may be needed in some cases.

Reportable Sexually Transmitted Conditions in Watauga County by Month



Monthly STC (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and PID) Cases by Year



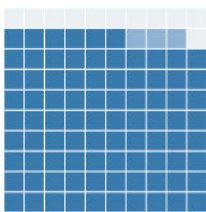
# COVID-19 Watauga County Vaccination Updates

County-specific race, ethnicity and age data are from the [NCDHHS COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#), Vaccine demographic data are current as of 3/1/2023.

## Initial Vaccinations

Initial vaccination updates reflect the percentage of all Watauga County residents. Initial series range from one to three doses based on the vaccine type (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson, etc.) and the recipient's age.

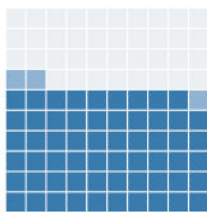
65+ Year Olds



89% At Least One Dose  
(8,258)

86% Initial Series Complete  
(7,904)

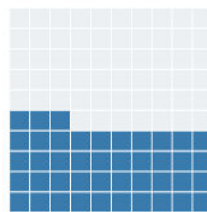
18+ Year Olds



62% At Least One Dose  
(30,461)

59% Initial Series Complete  
(28,818)

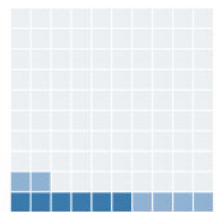
5-17 Year Olds



42% At Least One Dose  
(2,201)

43% Initial Series Complete  
(2,256)

0-4 Year Olds



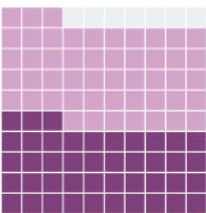
12% At Least One Dose  
(225)

6% Initial Series Complete  
(116)

## Boosters

The booster percentage shows what percent of people have at least one original booster or an updated booster, out of all of those who have finished their initial vaccination series.

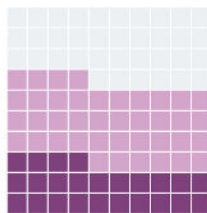
65+ Year Olds



94% At Least One Original Booster  
(7,355)

43% Updated Booster  
(3,430)

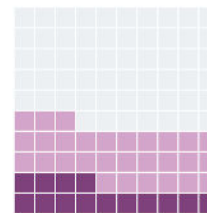
18+ Year Olds



64% At Least One Original Booster  
(18,497)

24% Updated Booster  
(6,894)

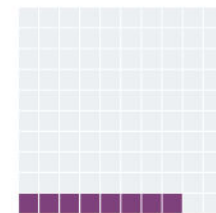
5-17 Year Olds



43% At Least One Original Booster  
(966)

14% Updated Booster  
(306)

0-4 Year Olds



8% Updated Booster  
(9)

# Watauga County COVID-19 Updates

(Community level data and guidance per the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), accessed March 3rd, 2023)

**COVID-19 Community Level: Low**

Guidance: Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. Get tested if you have symptoms. Wear a mask if you have symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19. Wear a mask on public transportation. You may choose to wear a mask at any time as an additional precaution to protect yourself and others.

## Weekly Metrics Used to Determine the COVID-19 Community Level

Case Rate per 100,000 population	51.62
New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population	4
% Staffed inpatient beds in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19	2.5%

## COVID-19 Deaths:

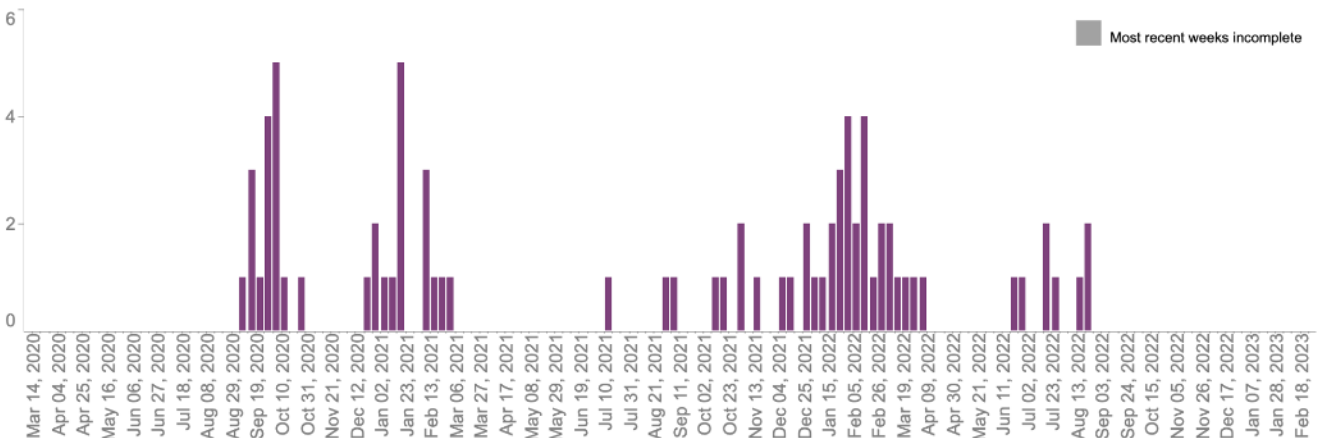
(COVID-19 death data per [North Carolina Health and Human Services](#), current as of 3/1/2023.)

The majority of COVID-19 related deaths occur among individuals who are unvaccinated. Staying up to date on vaccination, including boosters recommended by the CDC, remains the most effective way to prevent severe outcomes like severe illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19.

### Deaths

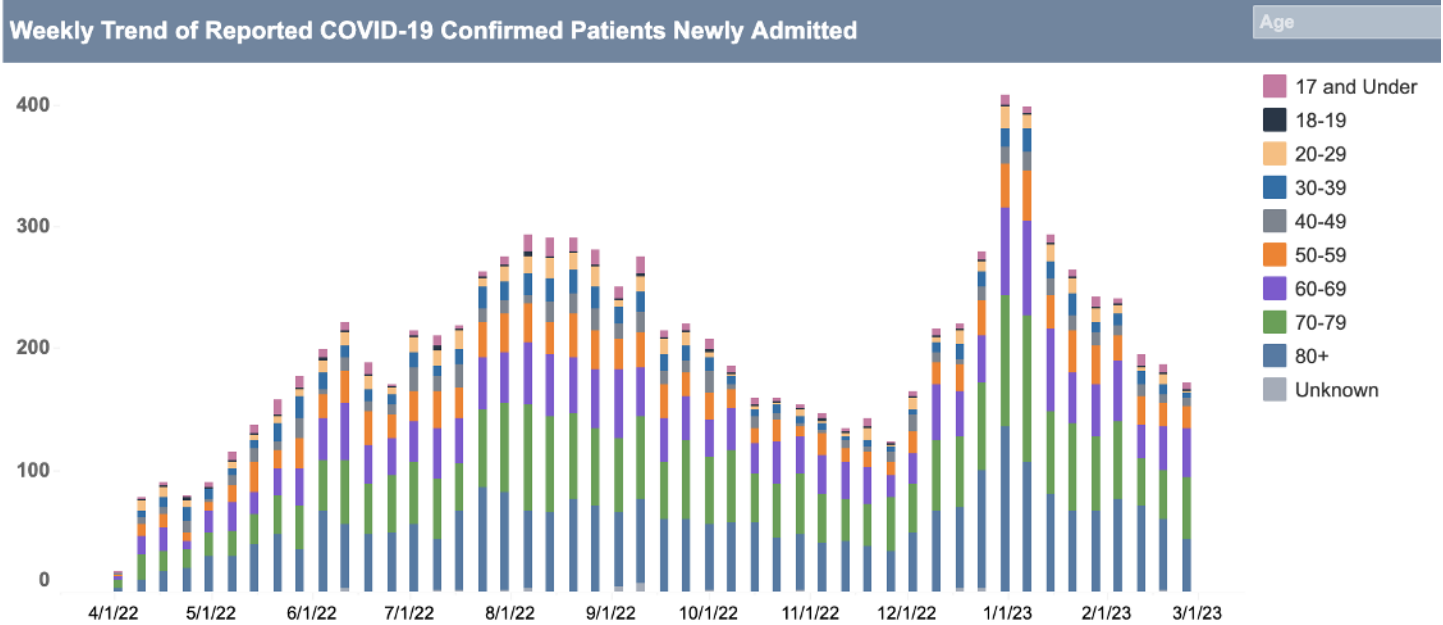
All Time:

**78 Total Deaths in Watauga County**



# Regional COVID-19 Hospitalization Data

The hospitalization data reflects the number of COVID-19 patients newly admitted in the Triad Health Preparedness Coalition Region (THPC), which includes Watauga County. All hospitalization data is from [NCDHHS' Hospitalization Data Dashboard](#).



# North Carolina COVID-19 Case Updates

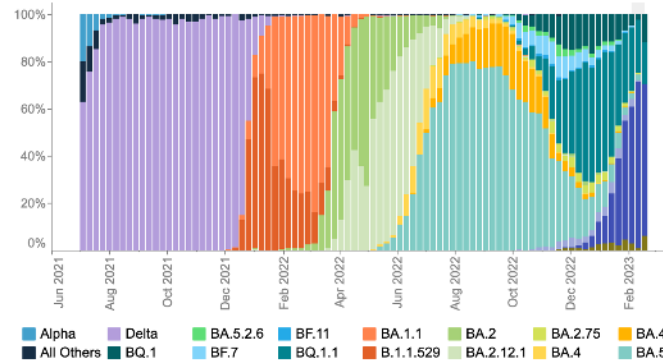
## North Carolina State Synopsis

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 variants seem 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 COVID-19

What variants are being detected in North Carolina?



Last Two Weeks

Feb 05, 2023 - Feb 18, 2023

Category	Type	Sequenced Cases	% of Total
Omicron	XBB.1.5	169	70.12%
	BQ.1.1	53	21.99%
	BQ.1	7	2.90%
	BA.5	5	2.07%
	CH.1.1	3	1.24%
	XBB	2	0.83%
	BA.2.75	2	0.83%

Percentage of variants reported each week by laboratories that sequence to identify COVID-19 variants. (Most cases and tests are not identified by variants; this is a smaller sample.) [More info](#)



variants. 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 was accessed from and can be viewed at: [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' COVID-19 Surveillance Study](#).

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## State Wastewater Surveillance Data

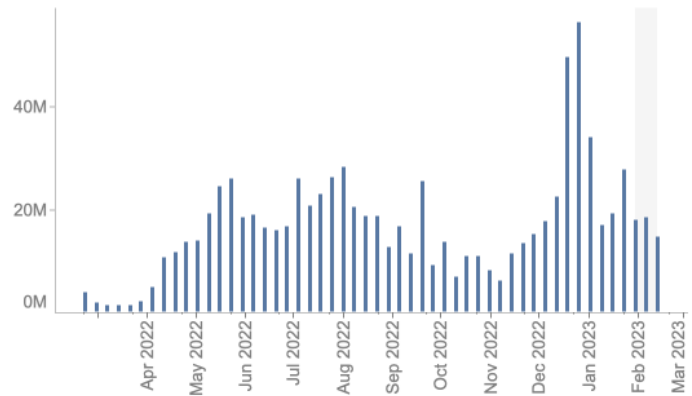
NC Department of Health and Human Services is collecting wastewater samples from an increasing set of participating wastewater treatment plants across NC to test for levels of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Individuals infected with COVID-19 shed viral particles in their stool, which can 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 from the NC DHHS dashboard, where it is updated weekly and can be accessed [here](#).

**14.7 Million** → Previous Week 18.3 Million

### COVID-19 Virus Particles Found in Wastewater

COVID-19 virus particles appearing in wastewater can signal how quickly the virus is spreading, even if people don't get tested or have symptoms.



Average COVID-19 virus copies found per person per week from participating North Carolina wastewater treatment plants. [More Info](#)

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](mailto:preparedness@apphealth.com)

Media inquiries: [media@apphealth.com](mailto:media@apphealth.com)

[www.AppHealthCare.com](http://www.AppHealthCare.com) and follow us on Facebook & Twitter

