



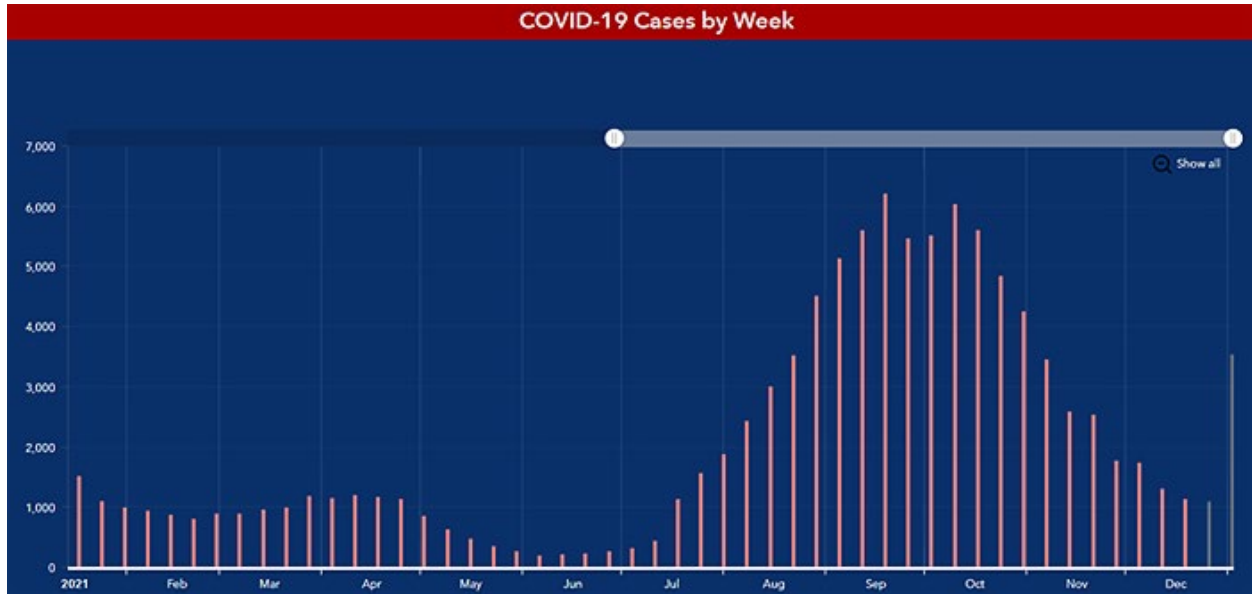
Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Weekly Case Update
December 26 — January 1, 2022

HIGH Statewide transmission R_t 1.64	HIGH Statewide alert status 506.1	LIMITED Hospital capacity	HIGH Test positivity 12.78%	67.8% of Alaskans aged 5+ are vaccinated
Red- $R_t > 1.2$ Orange- R_t 1-1.2 Yellow- $R_t < 1$	7-day case rate per 100,000 population. Red- ≥ 100 Orange- 50-99.99 Yellow- 10-49.99 Blue- 0-9.99	Multiple facilities continue to have a high number of inpatients, which results in delays in admitting patients from emergency departments as well as other operational challenges.	Red- $> 5\%$ Orange- 2-5% Yellow- $< 2\%$	This includes people with at least one dose. Estimated AK population 5 and older of 680,580 from the AK Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Case Trends

- Alaska currently has the forty-fourth highest number of cases in the last seven days per 100,000 population among the 50 states.
- Hospital capacity was strained during the Delta variant wave of COVID-19 and continues to be limited as the Omicron variant spreads rapidly. In some hospitals, it may become difficult to care for everyone who needs care, even for non-COVID health concerns. Some care may need to be delayed, there may be long wait times, and hospital beds may not be available.

- Hospitalizations are continuing to occur in younger Alaskans, with the median age of persons hospitalized due to COVID-19 in 2021 and 2022 being about 5 years younger than in 2020.
- Among those hospitalized due to COVID-19 and with specimen collection dates from January 16, 2021 through January 1, 2022, unvaccinated and partially vaccinated patients had a median age 14 years younger than fully vaccinated patients.



- High levels of COVID-19 transmission are occurring throughout much of Alaska and the pandemic is on a rapid upward trajectory in Alaska. Dozens of Alaskans are hospitalized with COVID-19 each week.
- 3,576 cases were reported in Alaskans the week of December 26–January 1. This is a 232% increase from the number of cases reported the week before. While differences in testing and reporting due to the holidays make quantifying the rate of increase more challenging, this increase in cases is the largest week-over-week increase recorded in Alaska in terms of the absolute number of cases and is also among the largest in terms of the proportional increase.
- The number of new COVID-19 cases has rapidly increased in the Municipality of Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and the City and Borough of Juneau. There was also an increase in cases in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. There is not a clear upwards or downwards trajectory in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- The intensity of COVID-19 transmission varies substantially between communities outside the largest boroughs, but many boroughs and census areas have seen recent and large increases in COVID-19 cases.
- Community transmission of the Omicron variant has been confirmed in Anchorage. Preliminary laboratory evidence suggests that the Omicron variant is rapidly becoming

the dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant in Alaska and is driving the sharp acceleration of the pandemic in Alaska.

COVID-19 Guidance

Take action now to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and preserve health care capacity.

- Please get vaccinated if you haven't already and get a booster dose if you are eligible (see below for more information). Currently available COVID vaccines will help protect you, your family, and your community against COVID-19.
- Wearing a mask when in indoor public spaces regardless of vaccination status is an important step to take to slow the spread of COVID-19. Most Alaskans live in an area with substantial or high community transmission where this action is needed to protect your health and the health of others.
- Continue to avoid crowds and practice social distancing – particularly when indoors.
- Seek testing if you have any symptoms or have been exposed to an infected person. If you do test positive, isolate right away, and notify your contacts. Ask them to get tested and to quarantine. People who are up to date on their COVID vaccination do not need to quarantine. Learn more about who needs to quarantine [here](#).
- If you test positive and you're at increased risk for severe COVID, consider obtaining monoclonal antibody treatment or oral antivirals. These have been shown to be effective treatments for reducing the risk of hospitalization. These treatments work best when given early.
- Persons at high risk include but are not limited to persons who are elderly, immunocompromised, obese, pregnant, or have certain chronic underlying medical conditions.

Borough/Census Area Alert Level Trends

- Alert levels are based on the case counts over the past 7 days as well as the daily number of reported cases over the past 7 days per 100,000 population.
- Alert levels have been changed to more closely mirror CDC's community transmission indicator and are calculated by borough and census area, rather than by region.

Borough/Census Area	Alert Level December 13		Alert Level December 20		Alert Level December 27		Alert Level January 3	
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate
Anchorage Municipality	466	161.3	435	150.5	393	136.0	2,180	754.4
Fairbanks North Star Borough	91	93.7	123	126.6	125	128.7	224	230.5

Juneau City and Borough	63	198.3	55	173.1	73	229.8	259	815.2
Kenai Peninsula Borough	74	125.6	72	122.2	78	132.4	100	169.7
Matanuska-Susitna Region	217	202.2	181	168.7	107	99.7	439	409.1
Nome Census Area	58	593.7	45	460.6	19	194.5*	25	255.9
North Slope Borough	8	81.9*	4	**	6	61.4*	35	358.2
Northwest Arctic Borough	35	461.6	17	224.2*	15	197.8*	44	580.2
Chugach Census Area	1	**	10	148.1*	2	**	9	133.3*
Copper River Census Area	7	259.4*	3	**	6	222.3*	7	259.4*
Denali Borough	0	**	0	**	1	**	4	**
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	8	115.3*	2	**	7	100.9*	18	259.5*
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	3	**	17	337.0*	1	**	23	456.0
Haines Borough	0	**	4	**	0	**	32	1,269.8
Petersburg Borough	3	**	6	188.1*	6	188.1*	5	**
Sitka City and Borough	26	305.1	23	269.9	29	340.3	72	844.8
Skagway Municipality	1	**	1	**	1	**	2	**
Wrangell City and Borough	1	**	0	**	1	**	2	**
Yakutat plus Hoonah-Angoon	1	**	3	**	9	339.9*	6	226.6*
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	67	489.9	52	380.2	52	380.2	50	365.6
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	13	213.5*	7	114.9*	7	114.9*	5	**
Bethel Census Area	40	223.9	31	173.5	18	100.7*	40	223.9
Kusilvak Census Area	55	680.0	52	642.9	35	432.7	17	210.2*
Aleutians East Borough	1	**	0	**	1	**	2	**
Aleutians West Census Area	2	**	0	**	4	**	12	216.5*
Dillingham Census Area	13	272.4*	5	**	7	146.7*	14	293.3*
Kodiak Island Borough	19	150.7*	8	63.4*	13	103.1*	57	452.0
Bristol Bay plus Lake and Peninsula	5	**	3	**	4	**	6	247.9*
Statewide	1,278	175.3	1,160	159.1	1,020	139.9	3,689	506.1

**Rates based on <20 observations are statistically unreliable and should be used with caution.*

***Rates based on <6 observations are not reported.*

Vaccination Status

- Anyone aged ≥ 5 years in Alaska is now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.
- If you have received an initial dose of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, be sure to get your second dose too.
- Everyone ≥ 12 years old who received the primary series of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine ≥ 5 months ago or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine ≥ 6 months ago should receive a booster dose.
- Everyone who received the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine ≥ 2 months ago should receive a booster dose, preferably of an mRNA vaccine.
- Learn more about who should get a booster dose and to find COVID-19 vaccines near you at covidvax.alaska.gov.
- CDC [recommends](#) that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after a second dose of an mRNA vaccine.
- Vaccinated persons with immunocompromising conditions should discuss with their health care providers the need for additional personal protective measures.
- To schedule your vaccine appointment visit covidvax.alaska.gov or call 907-646-3322.
- To find clinics in your area you can visit vaccines.gov or text your zip code to GETVAX (438829) in English, or VACUNA (822862) for Spanish.
- The Alaska [vaccine dashboard](#) is available online for the most up-to-date data.

Borough/Census Area Vaccination Coverage

This is the percent of Alaskans aged ≥ 5 years who received one or more doses of vaccine.

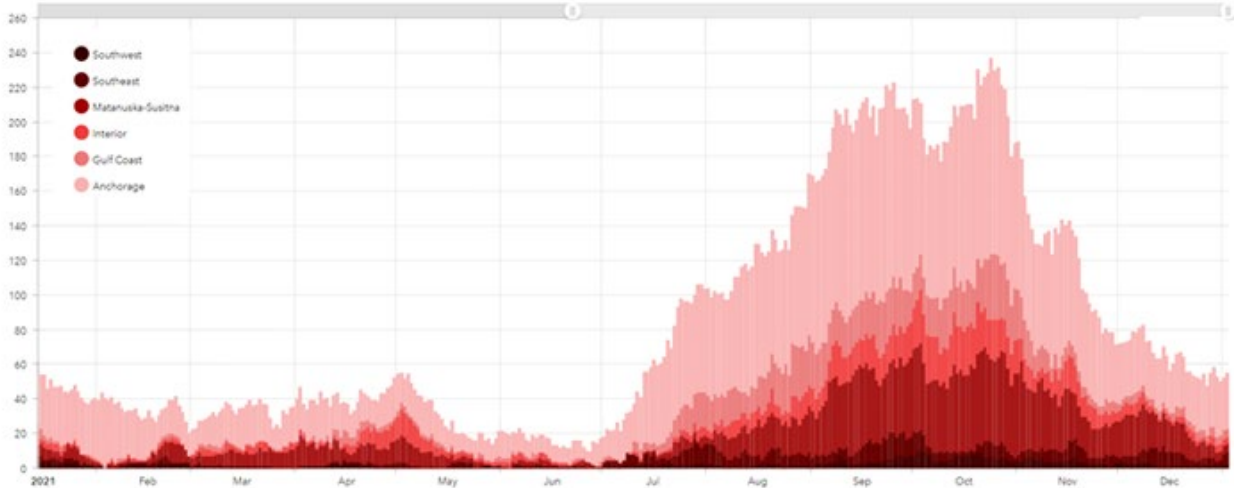
Borough/Census Area	January 3
Aleutians East Borough	96%
Aleutians West Census Area	74%
Anchorage Municipality	76%
Bethel Census Area	81%
Bristol Bay plus Lake and Peninsula	77%
Denali Borough	75%
Dillingham Census Area	65%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	67%
Haines Borough	73%

Juneau City and Borough	84%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	53%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	71%
Kodiak Island Borough	73%
Kusilvak Census Area	80%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	46%
Nome Census Area	82%
North Slope Borough	42%
Northwest Arctic Borough	67%
Petersburg Borough	68%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	69%
Sitka City and Borough	83%
Skagway Municipality	82%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	39%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	65%
Wrangell City and Borough	65%
Yakutat plus Hoonah-Angoon	80%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	83%
Statewide	67.8%

New Hospitalizations and Deaths

- Cumulative hospitalizations increased by 21 to 3,269. Hospitalization reports often lag when a case was initially reported.
- 5.7% of hospitalized patients in Alaska had COVID-19 as of January 3, 2022.
- On January 1st there were 52 persons with COVID-19 in AK hospitals, which is a 5.5% decrease relative to the week before when there were 55 persons hospitalized.
- The cumulative number of COVID-19 deaths among Alaska residents increased by 2 to 947. It is common to take some time for a death to be reported and verified, and deaths that occurred during December 26–January 1 may be reported in the future after death certificates are reviewed.

Total Confirmed COVID Beds Occupied



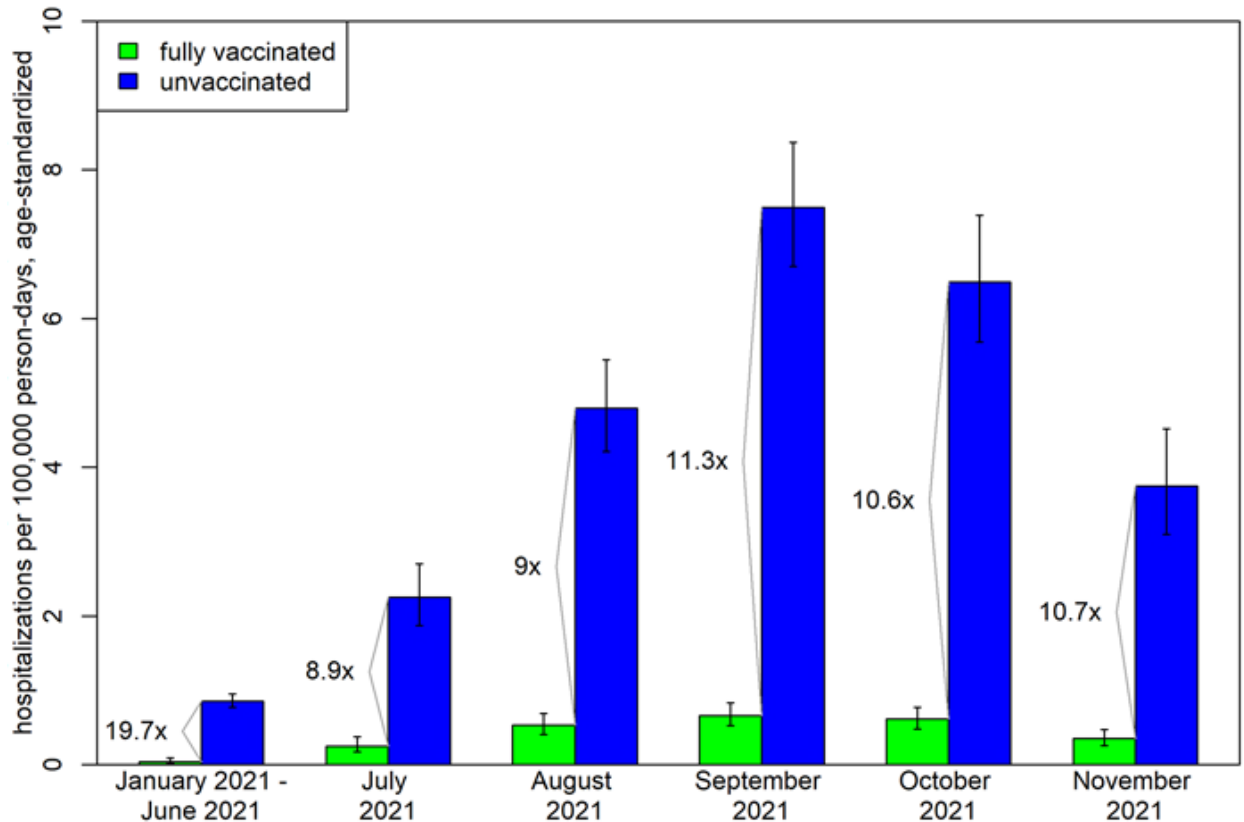
Variant Tracking

- The most recent Genomic Surveillance data can be found on the [“COVID-19 Variants”](#) tab of the Cases Dashboard.

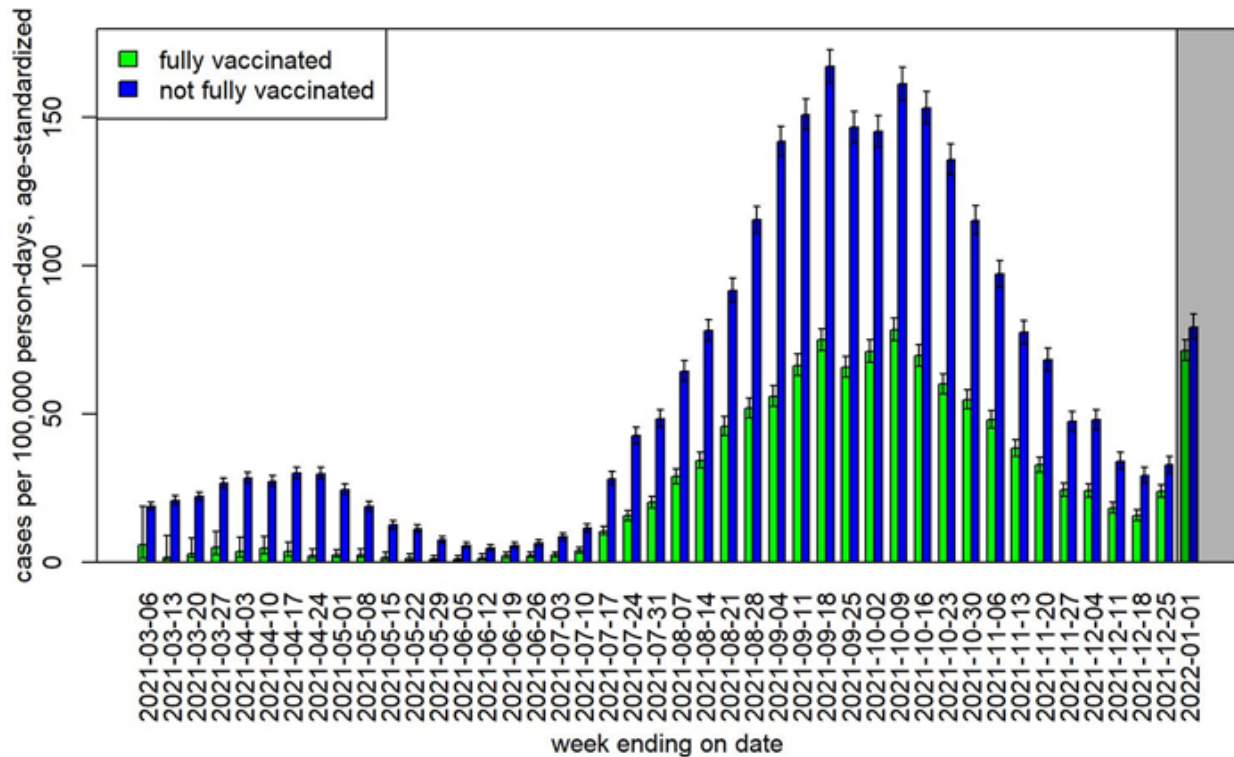
Variants of Concern	Cases Identified	Change from Previous Report	First Identified in Alaska
Delta (B.1.617.2-like)	6,251	+12	30 May 2021
Omicron (B.1.1.529-like)	7	+1	29 November 2021
Variants Being Monitored	Cases Identified	Change from Previous Report	First Identified in Alaska
Alpha (B.1.1.7)	466	0	20 December 2020
Beta (B.1.351)	7	0	20 March 2021
Epsilon (B.1.427/429)	144	0	24 December 2020
Eta (B.1.525)	1	0	16 March 2021
Gamma (P.1/P.1.1/P.1.2)	77	0	8 February 2021
Iota (B.1.526)	24	0	4 February 2021
Mu (B.1.621)	161	0	6 May 2021
Zeta (P.2)	4	0	27 January 2021

Vaccine Breakthrough Cases

- Vaccine breakthrough (VB) infections of COVID-19 are those detected in a person who is at least 2 weeks beyond their second dose of a 2-dose series or the only dose of a 1-dose series.
- Alaska residents who are fully vaccinated are much less likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 than those who are not fully vaccinated. (Age-standardized per capita rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations by vaccination status are updated monthly.)



- The following updated VB data are among Alaska residents aged ≥ 5 years with a specimen collection date from January 16–January 1, 2022.
 - From January 16, 2021–January 1, 2022, 112 deaths, 349 hospitalizations, and 27,832 cases with a VB infection were reported among Alaska residents aged ≥ 5 years. These counts are provisional and subject to change as data are compiled and reviewed. In that same time frame, a total of 98,217 cases, 2,061 hospitalizations, and 634 deaths were reported.
 - 73% of all cases, 83% of all hospitalizations, and 82% of deaths among Alaska residents aged ≥ 5 years from January 16, 2021–January 1, 2022 were in people who were not fully vaccinated.
 - More detailed information about hospitalizations, deaths, repeat and vaccine breakthrough infections among Alaska residents can also be found in the [monthly report](#), which includes data through November.
 - Age-standardized per capita rates of COVID-19 cases by vaccination status are updated weekly. Some COVID-19 cases with specimen collection in the immediate past week (indicated by the grey box) may have not yet been reported or counted.



- The following table shows by region the number of vaccine breakthrough cases and the number of cases among persons who are not fully vaccinated.

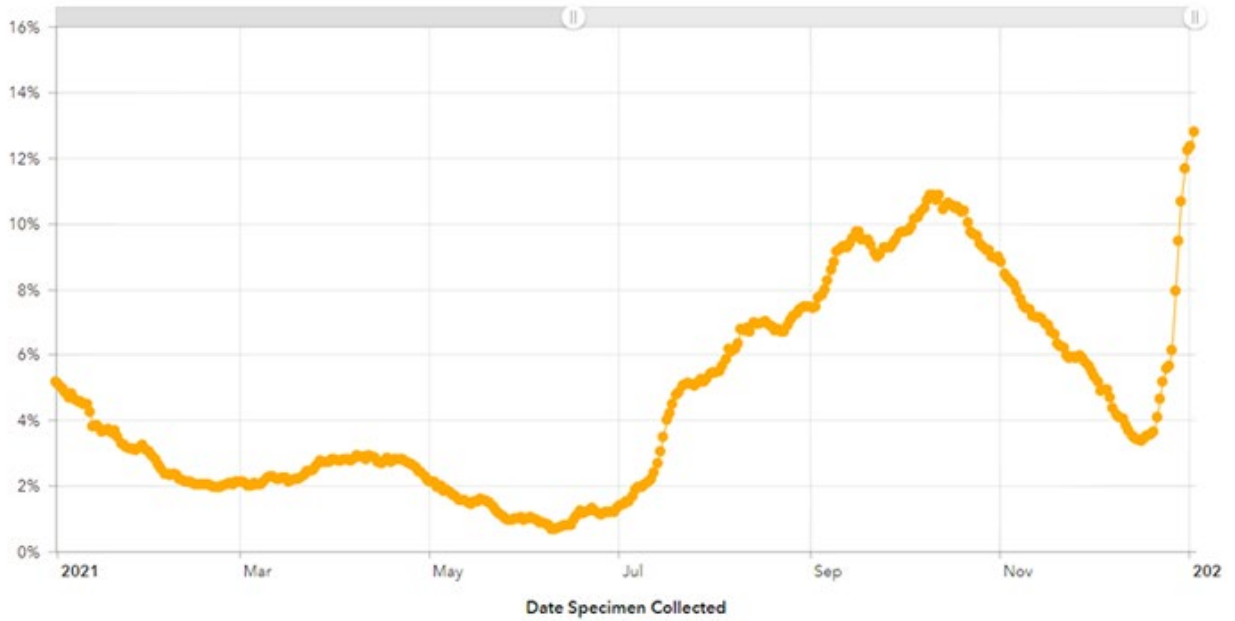
Region	Cases (December 26–January 1)	
	Vaccine breakthrough (All ages)	Not fully vaccinated (All ages)
Anchorage Municipality	1079	1014
Fairbanks North Star Borough	85	117
Juneau City and Borough	145	90
Kenai Peninsula Borough	38	46
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	163	262
Northwest Region	62	42
Other Interior Region	31	31
Other Southeast Region - Northern	70	53
Other Southeast Region - Southern	36	24
Southwest Region	68	48
Y-K Delta Region	35	31

- A variety of factors may affect the proportion of vaccine breakthrough cases by region. In communities with higher vaccination coverage, a larger proportion of cases is expected to occur among fully vaccinated persons. Other potential factors include the extent of prior infection in a region and differences in testing practices between regions.

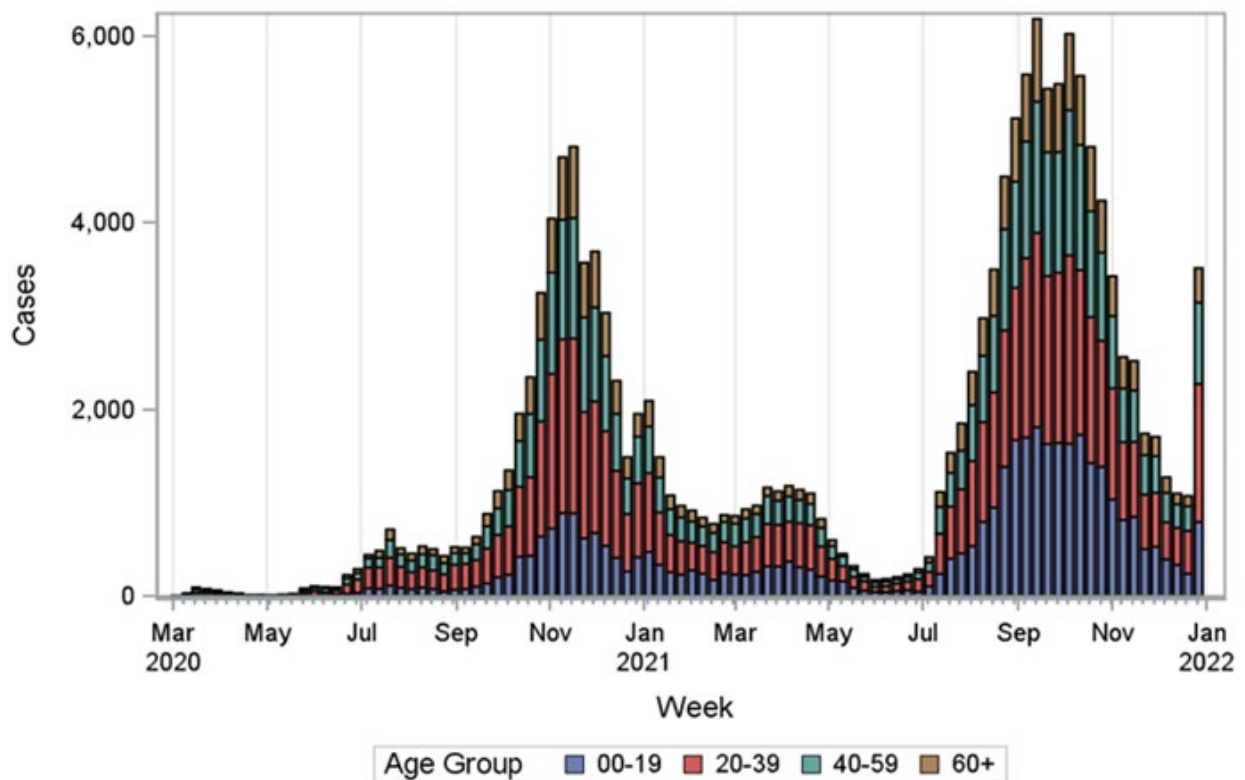
COVID-19 Communication Resources

- DHSS Insights Blog: [Taking care of yourself is worth it](#)
- Revised webpages:
 - [If you are sick or exposed to COVID-19](#)
- New video PSAs to share:
 - [Home Test](#)
 - [Home Test Social Media](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccines for Ages 5+](#)
 - [Pediatric Vaccine](#)
 - [Pediatric Vaccine: Dr. Adam Grove](#)
 - [Why Not Get Vaccinated?](#)
 - [Layer up, Alaska!](#)
- Pediatric COVID-19 Vaccine Flyer: [5 Reasons to Vaccinate for Ages 5+](#)
- Over-the-Counter Testing Flyer: [At-home COVID-19 tests](#)
- Request support from DHSS
 - DHSS offers free presentations upon request to groups about COVID-19, the vaccines, COVID-19 prevention, or other health topics upon request. Learn more or request a presentation on our [Speaker's Bureau web page](#).
 - DHSS offers support for one-time or reoccurring COVID-19 vaccination events. Submit your request for support and provide information about the event by [filling out this form](#).
- Can't tune into a live ECHO videoconference but don't want to miss out on the latest updates? The full schedule of ECHO sessions and access to COVID-19 ECHO videos and slideshows are available for download anytime on the [DHSS ECHO web page](#).

Statewide Percentage of Daily Tests with Positive Results (Seven day rolling average)

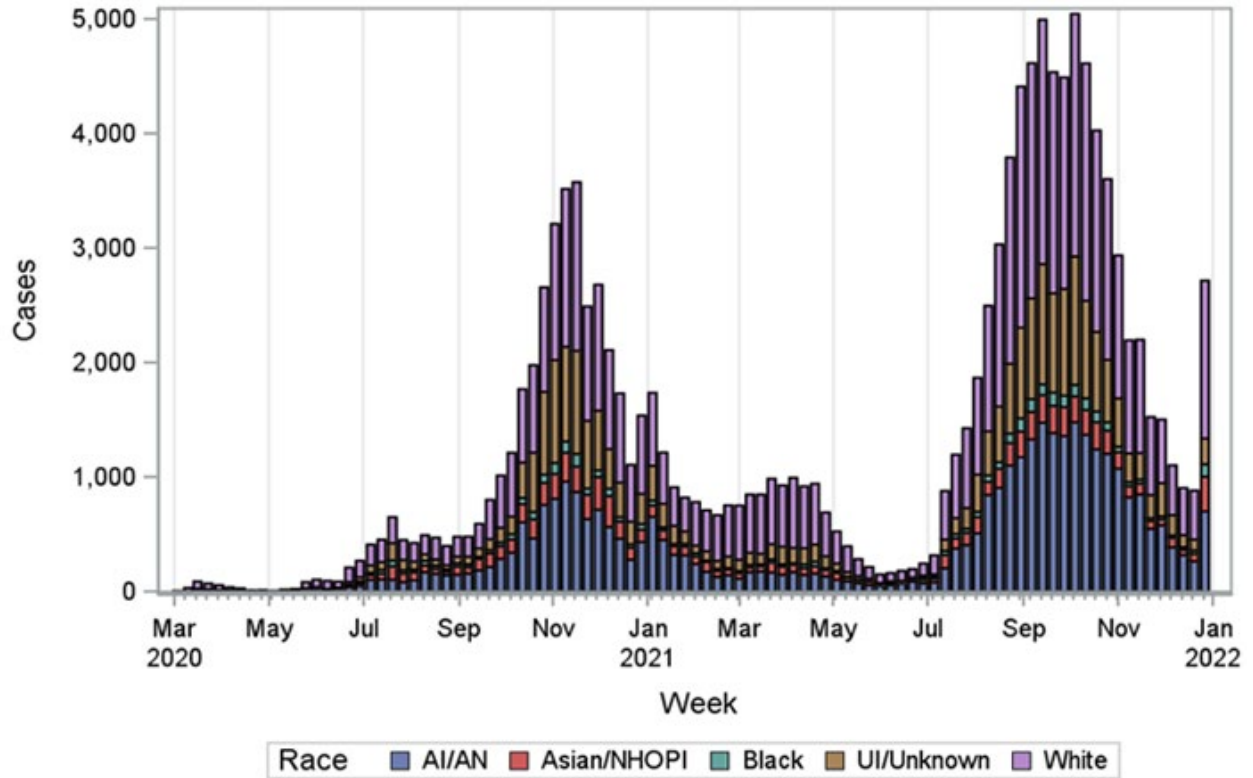


Cases by Week of Onset and Age



Note: Quality assurance efforts are ongoing to attribute cases to the correct date on the onset date epi curve. Some recent cases will be reattributed to different weeks.

Cases by Week of Onset and Race



Note: Quality assurance efforts are ongoing to attribute cases to the correct date on the onset date epi curve. Some recent cases will be reattributed to different weeks. Race abbreviations include AI/AN (American Indian or Alaska Native), Asian/NHOPI (Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander), and UI/Unknown (Under investigation or unknown).

Additional informational resources:

- The State of Alaska [COVID-19 vaccine status update page](#)
- The State of Alaska [COVID-19 information page](#) provides more information about the virus and how individuals and businesses can protect themselves and others from transmission.
- For the most up-to-date case information, see the Alaska Coronavirus Response Hub dashboard: data.coronavirus.alaska.gov. All dashboard data are updated Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (except [holidays](#)).
- For DHSS media inquiries, please contact clinton.bennett@alaska.gov