

## **9/22 UPDATES –**

- Community members are interested in people who become infected with COVID-19 after getting a COVID-19 vaccine. These are called “breakthrough cases”, where the virus “breaks through” the immunity that the person has from the vaccine. The results from our first analysis of breakthrough case data can be found in [this report](#). We are now working on a more in-depth report of breakthrough cases and will publish those findings when our analysis is complete.

This report is published every other Wednesday to provide a narrative of current COVID-19 trends and data not available elsewhere online. This report references data obtained from the Washington State Department of Health’s COVID-19 [Data Dashboard](#) as well as more detailed in-house analysis of case, hospitalization, death, and other COVID-related data.

Do you have a question or comment about this report, or a suggestion for what to include in a future Spotlight section? Please email us at [Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us](mailto:Askcowlitzhealth@co.cowlitz.wa.us).

***COVID-19 cases appear to have leveled off countywide but are increasing among children;  
COVID-19 Hospital admissions appear to be decreasing slowly;  
September’s COVID-19 death count on track to exceed August’s***

Cowlitz County saw an average of 84 new confirmed and probable cases per day from specimens collected September 7-13. Weekly new case counts appear to have leveled off, though the precise trend is uncertain. Statewide case counts appear to have leveled off as well. Cowlitz County’s new per capita case rate is currently about two-thirds higher than the state rate. A previous [report](#) found that the vast majority of Cowlitz County cases are among residents who are not vaccinated.

Case counts among adults have decreased since the start of the school year. Children aged 0-11 and 12-17, on the other hand, have seen about a 30% increase in case counts during this same time period. More analysis is needed to understand what is driving this increase. Last spring, community members asked if increased testing explained the disproportionate increase we were seeing in youth. We investigated this question in the Spotlight section of our [June 23 COVID-19 data report](#) and were unable to make any solid conclusions. Because complete testing data from the Washington State Department of Health are not currently available, we are still not able to answer this question. We will continue to track this issue and other potential drivers of youth case trends, and provide updates when available.

Cowlitz County saw an average of 5 residents hospitalized for COVID-19 each day from September 6-12. New COVID-19 hospitalizations among Cowlitz County residents appear to be decreasing slowly since their peak in late August. Cowlitz County’s new per capita hospitalization rate is currently about double the state average.

Cowlitz County has seen an average of at least one resident dying from COVID-19 each day in August. Due to reporting lags, death counts are considered incomplete for the prior 4 weeks. Consequently, final August death counts may eventually be higher. New COVID-19 deaths in Cowlitz County increased in August and have exceeded the previous all-time high. Cowlitz County’s new per capita COVID-19 death rate is currently at about five times the state average. September COVID-19 deaths among Cowlitz County residents are on track to exceed August’s total.

Testing data from the Washington State Department of Health are not available this week. Details available in the “NOTE” on our [COVID-19 Data webpage](#).

\*See next page for school operations update

### **For school operations (based on K-12 guidance from the state DOH and CDC )**

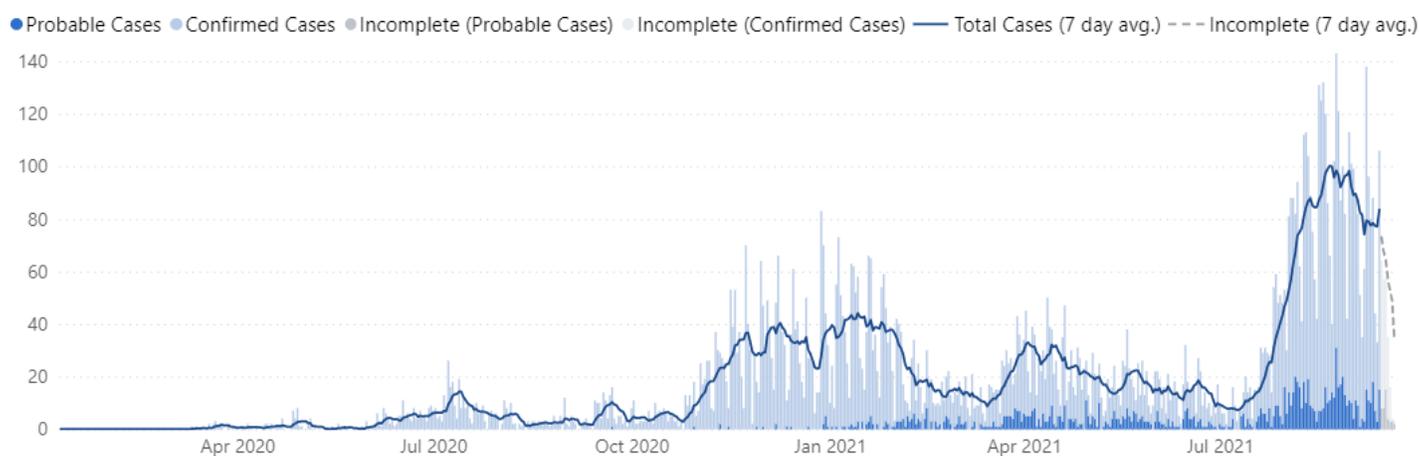
Based on the Levels of Community Transmission on the [CDC's COVID-19 Data Tracker Integrated County View](#), we are currently at a "High" level of COVID-19 community transmission, with a **one-week** case rate of 529 cases/100,000 population. Complete percent positivity data are not available.

Note that the CDC's case rate is a one week case rate, which differs from the two-week case rate used in Washington State. Cowlitz County's most recent **two-week** case incidence rate is 999 cases/100,000 population.

## Cowlitz County COVID-19 Epidemiologic Curve

This epidemiologic curve was screenshot from the Washington State Department of Health (state DOH) [Data Dashboard](#). The most current version of this curve can be found on the "Epidemiologic Curves" tab under "Cases" and "Cowlitz County".

### CASE COUNTS



## Active cases

COVID-19 cases are considered "active", or contagious, for 10 days after their symptom onset, or, for asymptomatic cases, 10 days after their test date. There are currently an estimated 730 identified active COVID-19 cases in Cowlitz County. Note that these only include cases that have been identified via a COVID-19 test. Because we know that some people with COVID-19 are not tested, the true number of active cases is probably higher than this figure.

## Variants

- Genetic sequencing of COVID-19 viruses allows public health to identify which variants of COVID-19 are circulating.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [SARS-CoV-2 Classifications and Definitions website](#) provides information on variants being tracked in the US.
- The latest statewide variant report can be found [here](#).

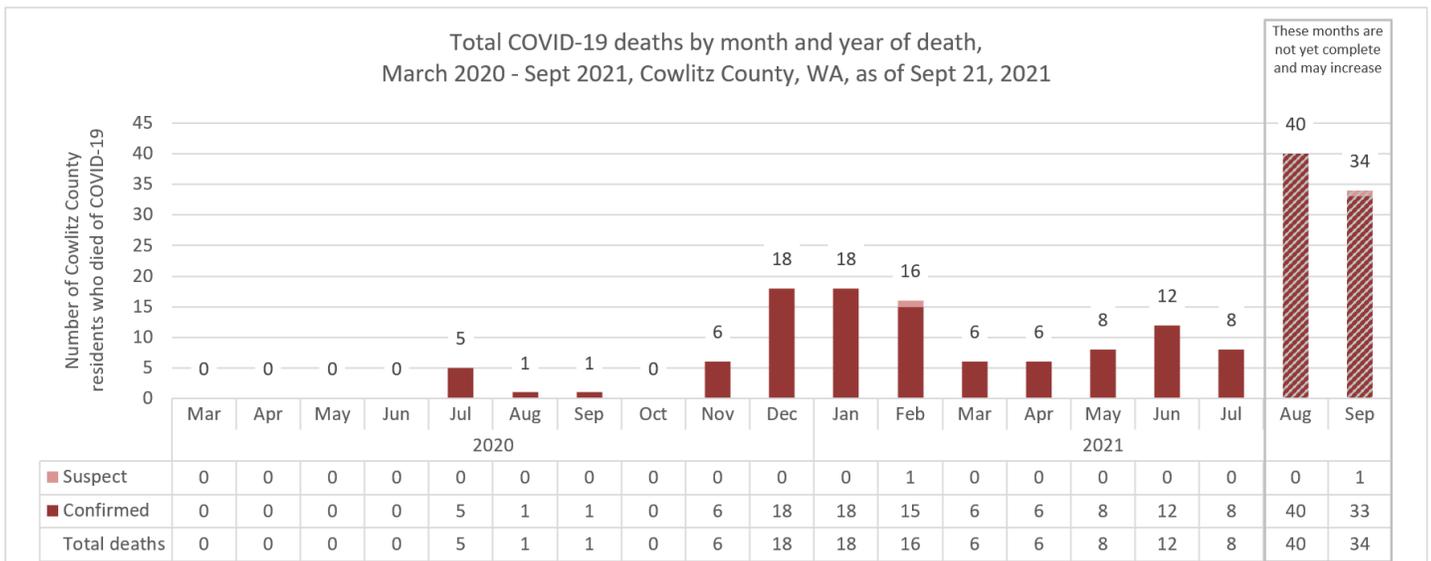
# Deaths

The number of deaths reported by the state DOH includes both confirmed and suspect deaths. Confirmed COVID-19 deaths are those with a positive COVID-19 test (molecular or antigen) and have COVID-19 listed on the death certificate. Suspected COVID-19 deaths are those that occur within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test but do not have COVID-19 listed on the death certificate. Suspect deaths are removed from the state’s count if COVID-19 is later ruled out as the official cause of death following a clinical review. A clinical review may instead reclassify a suspect death into a confirmed death. As a result, the number of suspect deaths in the most recent month or two may decrease if they are ruled out or reclassified to “confirmed”. All confirmed and suspect COVID-19 deaths undergo a clinical review in Cowlitz County.

Note that the counts on this graph will not match the counts reported on the state DOH’s [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). The Dashboard reports deaths based on the decedent’s test date. Our graph is based on the date of death, which we believe to be more meaningful.

COVID-19 death count to date among Cowlitz County residents:

- **179** total deaths
  - **177** were confirmed
  - **2** are considered suspect



## Additional information on COVID-19 deaths

- Over 95% of total confirmed deaths had underlying conditions.
- About one-quarter of total confirmed deaths were associated with a long-term care facility.