

# K-12 COVID-19 Response

**State Board of Education Meeting**  
January 6, 2022



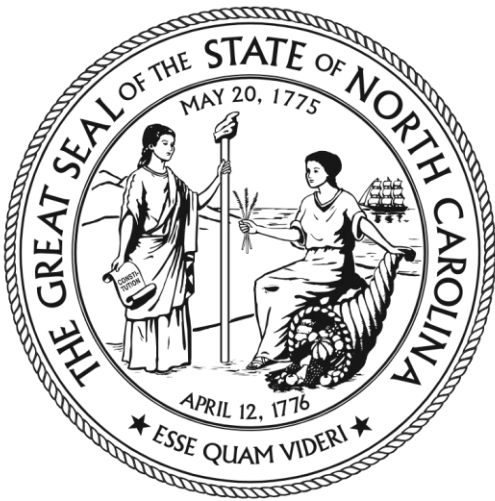
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# Agenda

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- **Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends**
- **Vaccines Update**
- **Updated Scientific Studies**
- **StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Update**



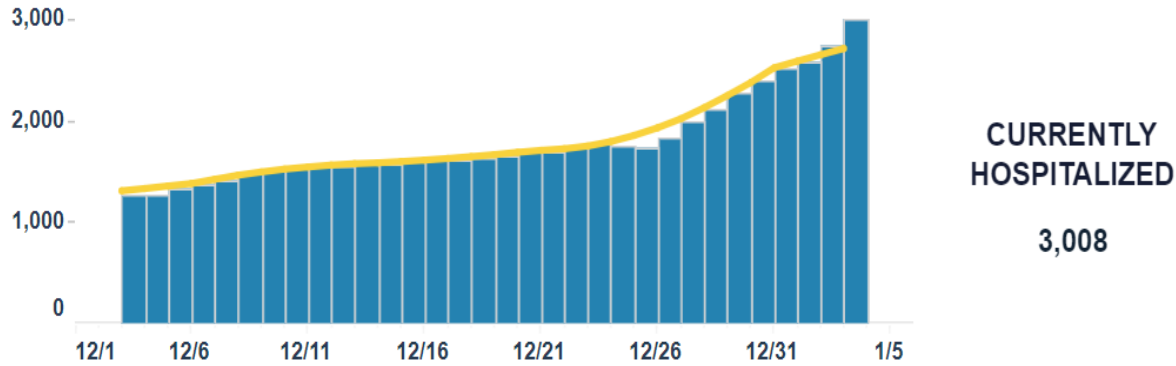
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# Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends

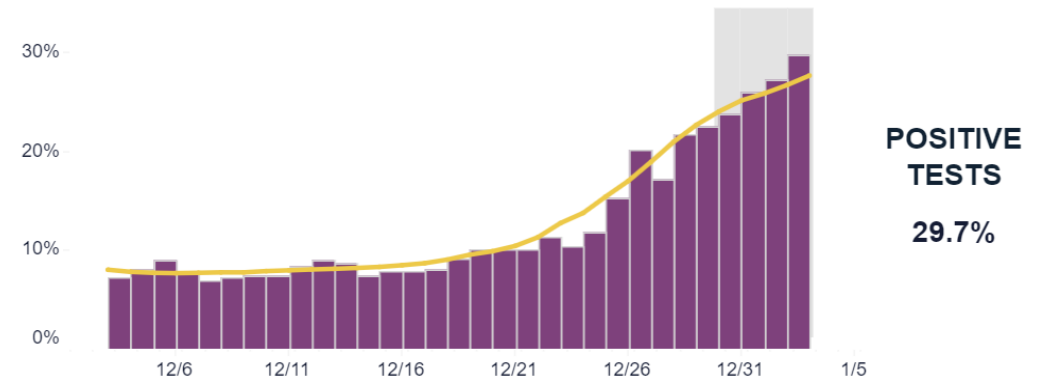
January 6, 2022

# Four Key Metrics- Rising steeply again

## Daily Number of People Currently Hospitalized

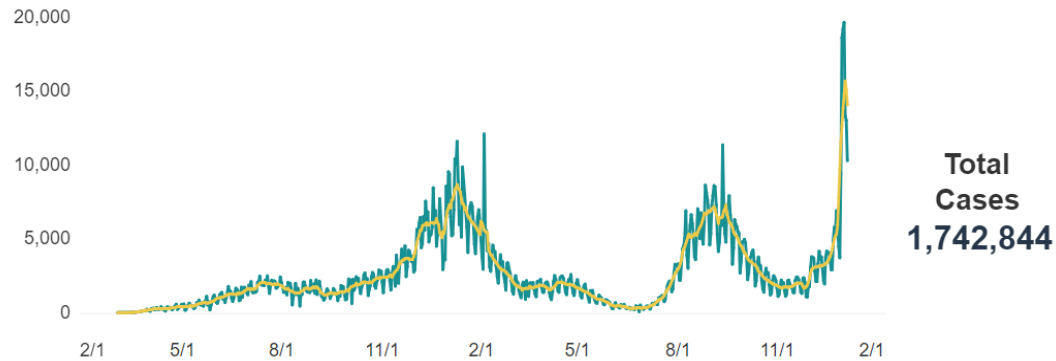


## Positive Tests as a Percent of Total Tests

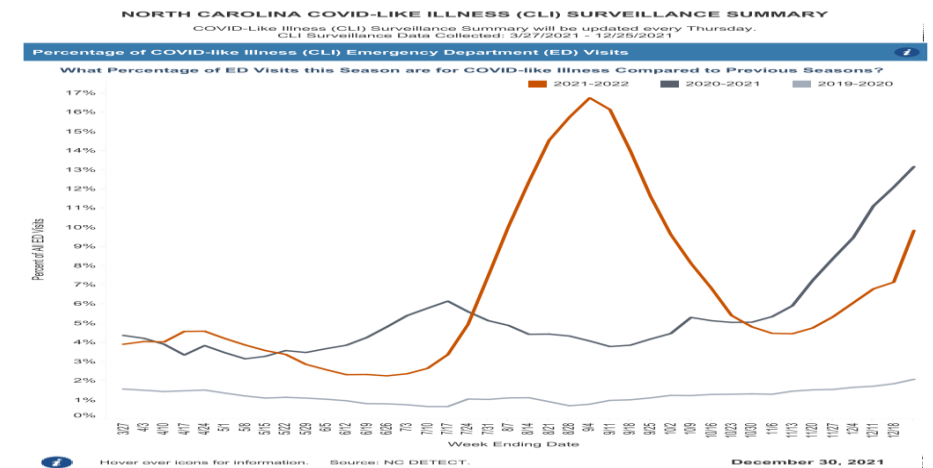


## Daily Cases by Date Reported

Is North Carolina seeing a downward trajectory over 14 days, or sustained leveling in new cases?



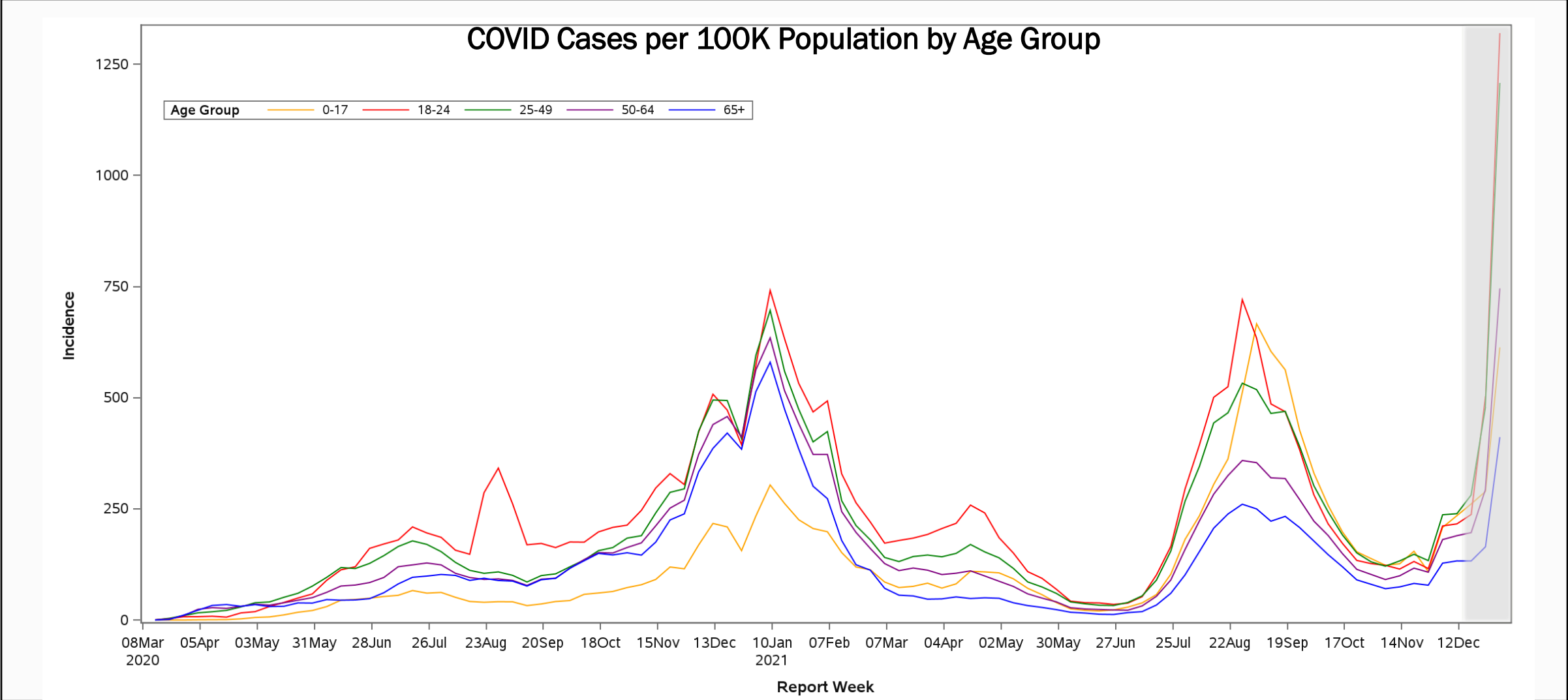
## What Percentage of ED Visits this Season are for COVID-like Illness Compared to Previous Seasons?



# Case Rates Rapidly Increasing Across All Age Groups



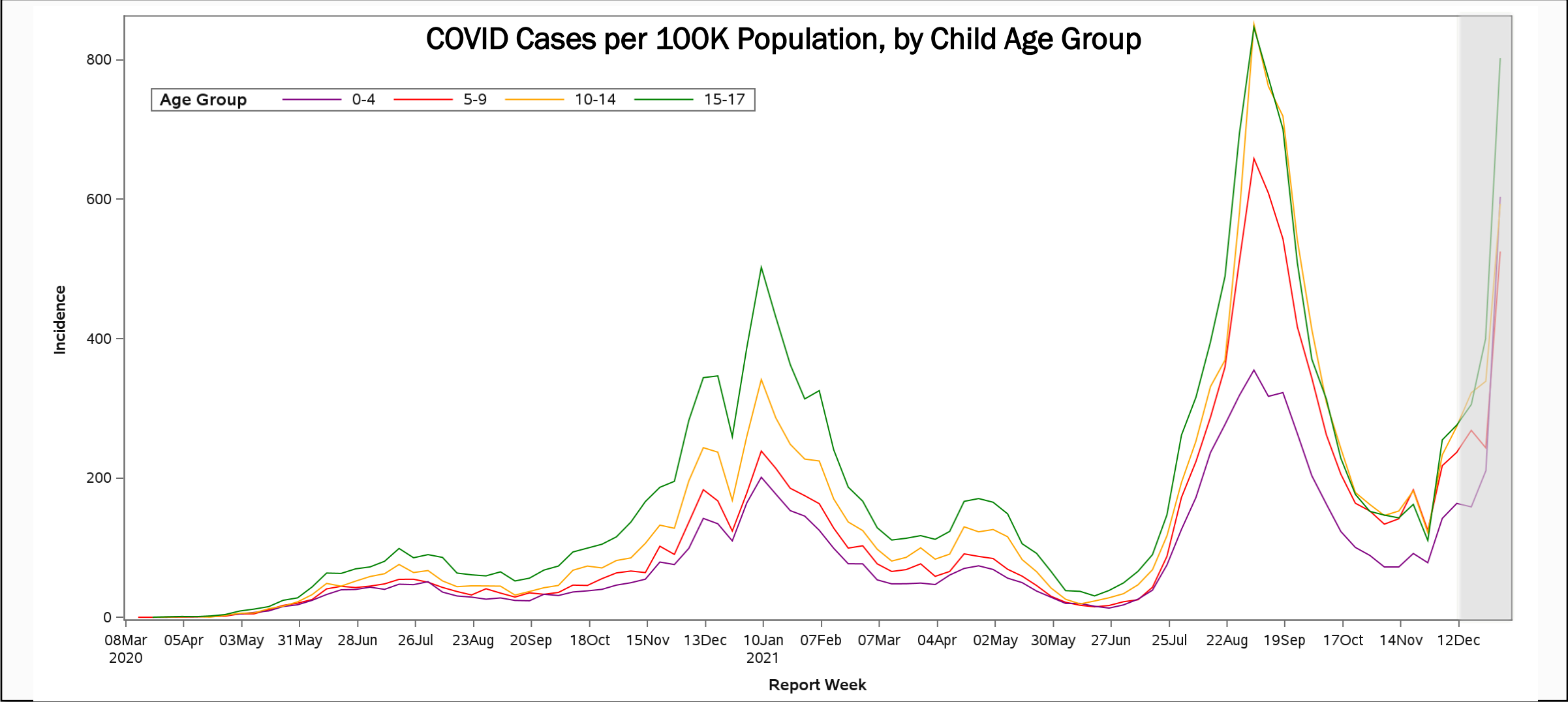
Case rates across age groups have rapidly increased begun to converge; rates among the 0–49-year-old age groups remain the highest.



# Case Rates Rapidly Increasing Among Children



Case rates remain higher among school-aged group (as compared to 0–4-year-olds).



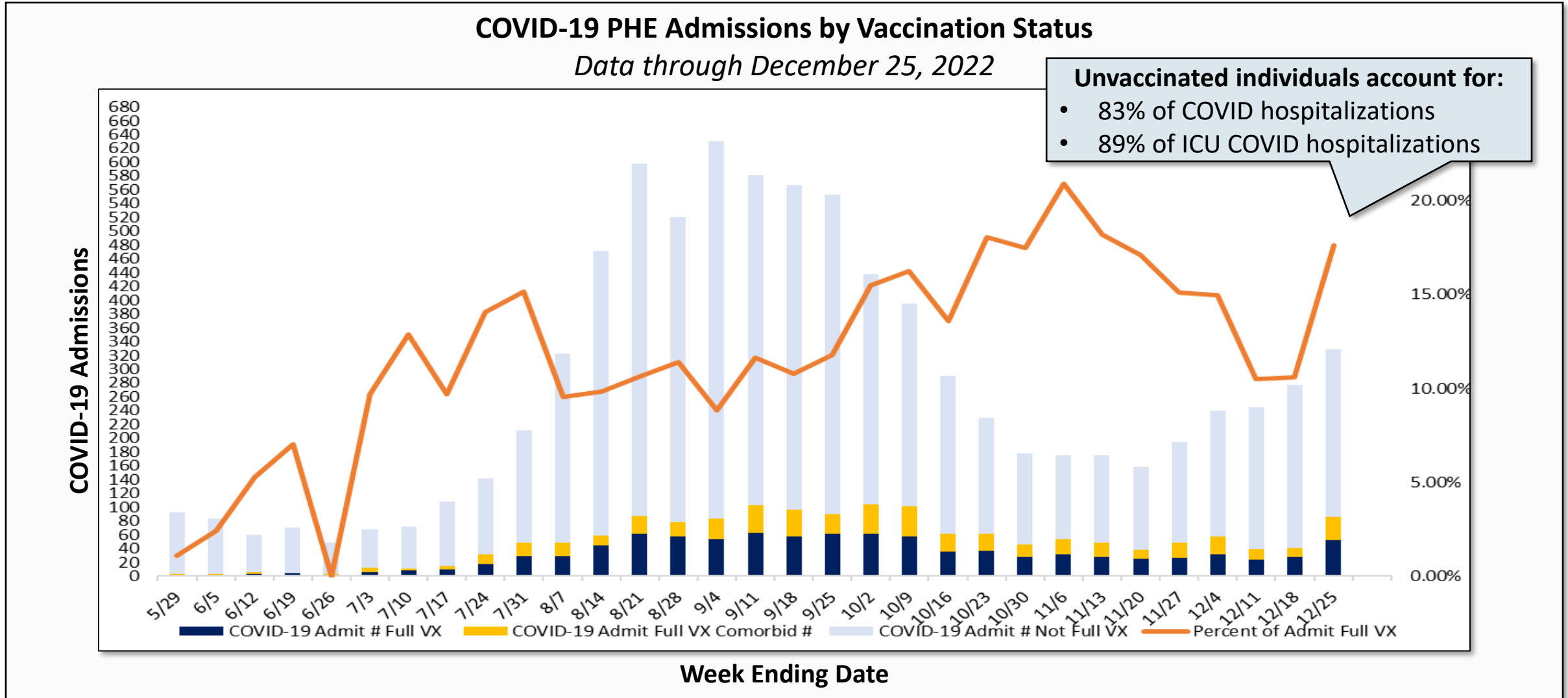
## Impact on Infection and Clinical Illness

- Highly transmissible. At least twice as contagious as Delta
- Rapidly spreading – Estimated to be at least 95% of what is circulating in Southeastern US region
- Preliminary data suggests less severe disease – Affects upper respiratory track (nose and throat) more than lower respiratory tract (lungs)

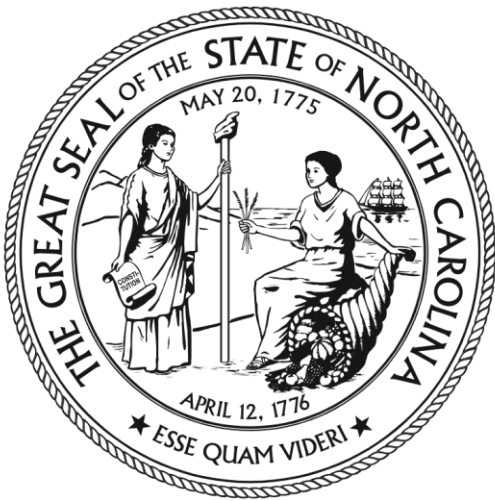
## Impact on Vaccines and Therapeutics

- **Decreased protection from primary series of vaccination or past infection.**
- **Boosters provide increase protection.** A COVID-19 vaccine booster dose restores vaccine effectiveness against infection to 75%. Boosters reduce risk of hospitalization by 81%.
- **Decreased protection from some therapeutics:** Decreased effectiveness of monoclonal antibodies, except Sotrovimab. Other Antivirals (remdesivir, molnupiravir, and PAXLOVID™) still appear to be effective.

# COVID-19 Admissions Mostly Among Unvaccinated







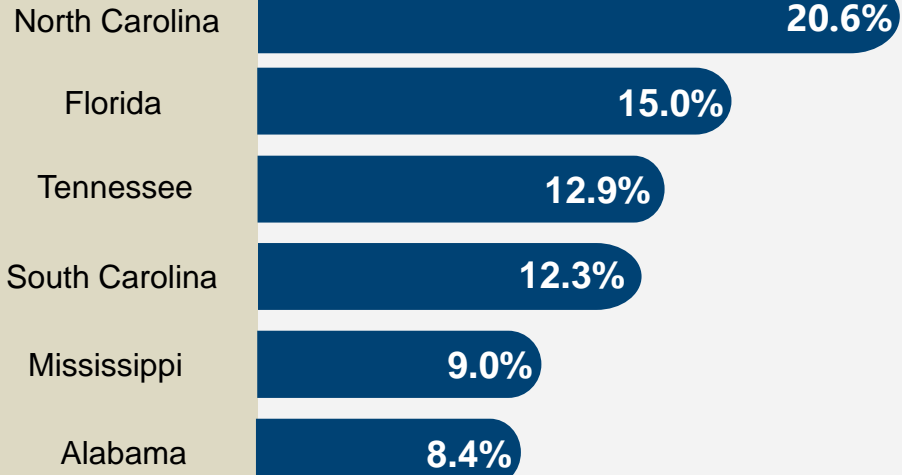
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# Vaccination Update

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# PEDIATRIC VACCINATION RATES

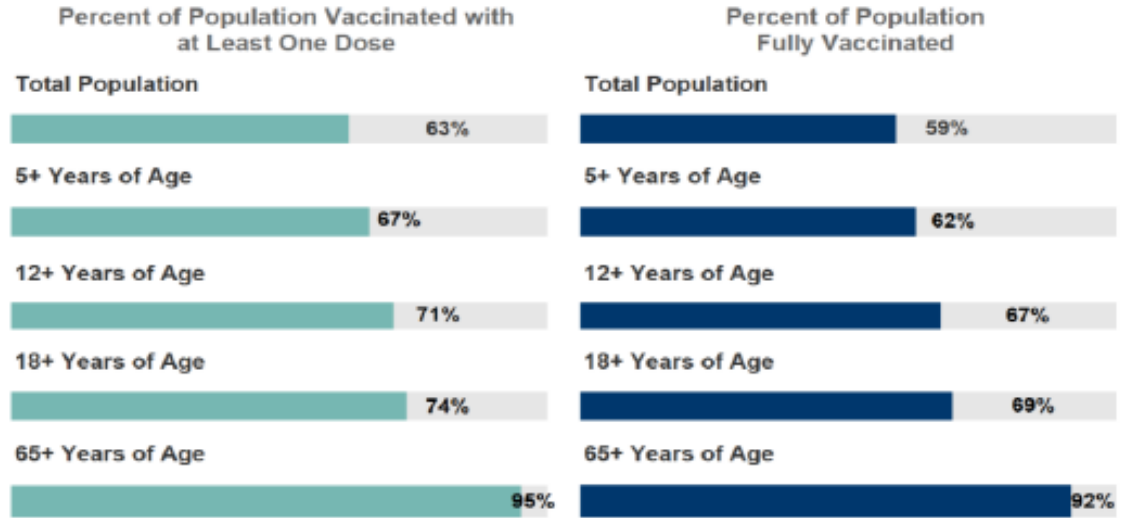
North Carolina has the highest pediatric vaccination rate of FEMA IV States



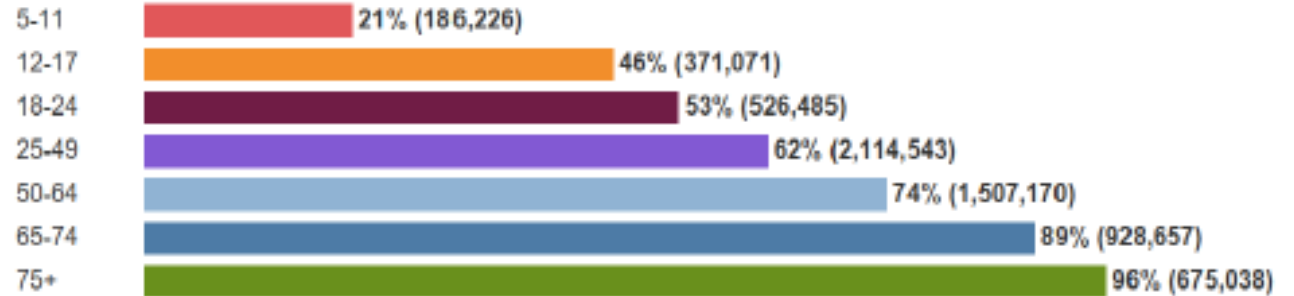
Source: All metrics are from state's public dashboards with update dates ranging from 12/30-1/3.

Note: FEMA IV states shown are states with comparable vaccine programs. Kentucky and Georgia have been excluded due to lack of data.

Vaccinated population regarded as at least one dose received.



## Percent of Population Vaccinated with at Least One Dose by Age Group



# FDA EXPANDS BOOSTER ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PFIZER BIONTECH COVID-19 VACCINE

**The FDA has expanded its emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine**

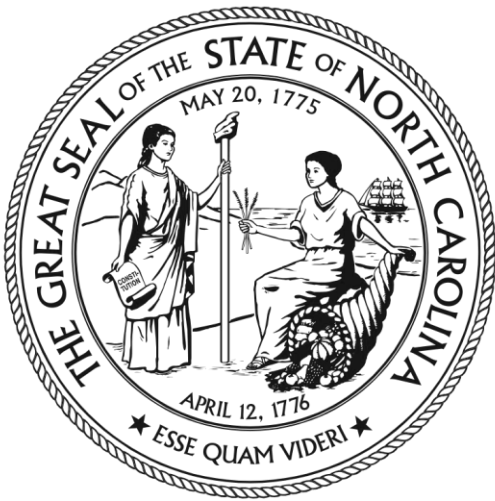


The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [amended the emergency use authorization \(EUA\) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) to and the CDC has recommended:

- Shorten the time recommended between the completion of primary vaccination of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and use of a booster dose to at least **five months** after second dose
- Allow for a third primary series dose for certain immunocompromised children 5 through 11 years of age.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has also [amended the emergency use authorization \(EUA\) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) to

- Expand the use of a single booster dose to include use in individuals 12 through 15 years of age.
- CDC meeting to consider recommendation scheduled for 1/5/22



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## Updated Scientific Studies

January 6, 2022

# UPDATED SCIENCE BRIEF: COMMUNITY USE OF MASKS TO CONTROL THE SPREAD OF SARS-COV-2

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

- **Updated review on data on masks**

- Summarize findings of **21 different studies that showed benefit of masks.**

- Including new study among eight public K-12 school districts in Massachusetts

- 70 schools (with >33,000 enrolled students) during the 2020–21 school year

- Secondary attack rate of 11.7% for unmasked versus 1.7% for masked interactions.

# NC Reported K-12 Clusters (October 10 – December 7, 2021) According to Face Mask Policies

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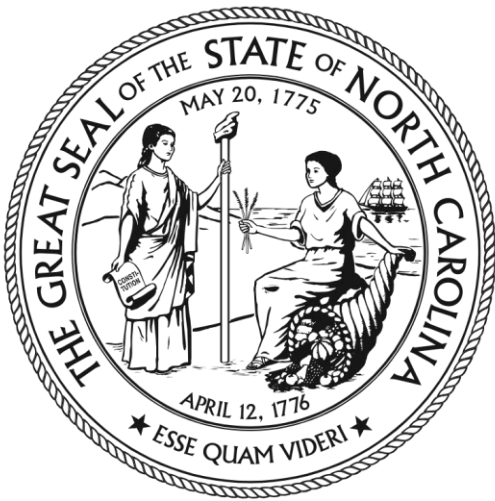
- **21 of 46 districts (45%) with optional mask policies** reported a cluster during this time frame, compared with **6 of 65 districts (9%) with mandatory mask policies**
- Among counties that reported a K-12 clusters during this period, there was an average of **7.2 clusters/100 schools** in **mask optional** counties (**n=21**) and **2.4 clusters/100 schools** in masks required counties (**n=6**)
  - This represents a 3-fold difference comparing counties by school mask policy
  - 71 counties did not report a cluster during this time period; 2 were excluded due to changes in policy

## Notes:

1. This analysis is based solely on K-12 clusters reported to public health during an 8-week period. Jurisdictions were considered mask optional if they had a mask optional policy for at least one week during the 8-week timeframe.
2. This analysis does not account for other factors that could affect cluster occurrence or reporting – e.g., incidence rates among school-age cases or vaccine uptake.
3. This data also includes private schools that may have different mask policies than the district.

## TEST TO STAY PILOTS

- CDC reported data on test to stay pilots in two school districts (CA, IL)
  - Limited to universally masked settings with fully masked exposures for both person with infection and person exposed
  - Secondary attack rate 0.7-1.5%. No increase in transmission in test to stay environments
- NC – ABC collaborative Test to stay research pilot.
  - Over six weeks, enrolled 367 participants from five North Carolina school districts and one charter school. Data through December 13, 2021
  - All masked required schools. Test to stay for brief unmasked exposures in mask required settings (e.g., lunch, athletics)
  - In-school secondary transmission rate 1.7%. No documented transmission from study participant to another person
  - While still low, exposure during athletics higher risk than other exposures
    - Most exposures occurred during lunch (39%). Only 13% of exposures occurred during athletics; however, these exposures accounted for 50% of all individuals with positive tests.



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# StrongSchoolsNC K-12 Toolkit Updates

January 6, 2022



## **CONSISTENT GUIDANCE**

**Data continues to support importance of two key prevention strategies**

- **Vaccination and Boosters**
- **Masking**

Based on evolving data on COVID-19 and the Omicron variant, CDC revised isolation and quarantine guidance.

## High Level Major Changes

- **People with COVID-19** - Isolate for at least 5 full days and wear a mask for an additional 5 days.
- **People exposed to COVID-19** - Quarantine for 5 days and wear a mask for an additional 5 days. People do not need to quarantine if they are vaccinated against COVID-19. For adults, this includes boosters.

## NEW GUIDANCE ON TEST TO STAY

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- **In mask required school settings only**, unvaccinated and individuals who are eligible for a booster and have not received it, do not need to be excluded from school after an unmasked exposures (e.g. during lunch or extracurricular).
  - Individuals should get tested on the day of notification of exposure and as close to 5 days as possible after exposure and wear a mask in school settings.
  - If tests are limited, exposures during athletics should be prioritized
  - This applies to exposures in or out of school but does not apply to in-home exposures.
  - Outside of school, individuals should stay home, not attend non-school activities and wear a mask anytime they leave the house.
- Will continue to monitor data with Omicron spread.
- ABC collaborative has enrolled 7 mask optional school districts in the next phase of the pilot. Can consider change in guidance for those settings based on forthcoming data.

# Links to Key Resources

Check back often as files are regularly updated (links stay the same):

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#schools>

For a summary of all key K12 updates, please see the link below:

<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/k-12-public-health-guidance-key-updates/download>

- [Strong Schools NC K-12 Public Health Toolkit](#)
- [StrongSchoolsNC FAQ](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Expanded Screening Testing](#)
- [K12 Communications Toolkit](#)
- [Reference Guide for Suspected, Presumptive, or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 \(K-12\)](#)
- [CDC Science Brief on Community Use of Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2](#)
- [Abbott BinaxNOW training modules](#)
- K12 Office Hours TBD, 9:30-10:30am
- [NCDHHS Find My Testing Site](#) (for PCR testing)

**Questions? Email [K12COVIDTesting@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:K12COVIDTesting@dhhs.nc.gov)**