

Request for Legislative Action

Ord. #5591
 Sponsors: Scott Burnett,
 Crystal Williams,
 Jalen Anderson
 Date: January 18, 2022

Completed by County Counselor's Office			
Action Requested:	Ordinance	Res.Ord No.:	5591
Sponsor(s):	Scott Burnett JACKSON COUNTY;Crystal J. Williams;Jalen Anderson	Legislature Meeting Date:	1/18/2022

Introduction
Action Items: ['Authorize']
Project/Title:
Establishing a requirement for face coverings or masks at schools where children in grades K-12 attend class and on school buses with certain exceptions;

Request Summary
To ensure that schools may operate as safely as possible, a face covering or mask is required for all children, faculty, staff, and visitors while inside a school building where any students through and including 12th grade attend class, unless actively eating or drinking. All persons must wear a face covering or mask when riding on a school bus.

Contact Information			
Department:	County Executive Office	Submitted Date:	1/13/2022
Name:	Caleb Clifford	Email:	Cclifford@jacksongov.org
Title:	Chief of Staff	Phone:	816-588-7941

Budget Information			
Amount authorized by this legislation this fiscal year:	\$ 0		
Amount previously authorized this fiscal year:	\$ 0		
Total amount authorized after this legislative action:	\$		
Is it transferring fund?	No		
Single Source Funding:			
Fund:	Department:	Line Item Account:	Amount:
			!Unexpected End of Formula

Request for Legislative Action

Prior Legislation	
Prior Ordinances	
Ordinance:	Ordinance date:
Prior Resolution	
Resolution:	Resolution date:

Purchasing	
Does this RLA include the purchase or lease of supplies, materials, equipment or services?	No
Chapter 10 Justification:	
Core 4 Tax Clearance Completed:	
Certificate of Foreign Corporation Received:	
Have all required attachments been included in this RLA?	

Compliance	
Certificate of Compliance	
Not Applicable	
Minority, Women and Veteran Owned Business Program	
Goals Not Applicable for following reason: not spending money	
MBE:	.00%
WBE:	.00%
VBE:	.00%
Prevailing Wage	
Not Applicable	

Fiscal Information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This legislative action does not impact the County financially and does not require Finance/Budget approval. 	

Request for Legislative Action

History

Caleb Clifford at 1/13/2022 10:09:58 AM - [Submitted |]
Department Director: Sylvya Stevenson at 1/13/2022 10:42:39 AM - [Approved |]
Finance (Purchasing): Barbara J. Casamento at 1/13/2022 10:53:16 AM - [Not applicable |]
Compliance: Katie M. Bartle at 1/13/2022 12:05:58 PM - [Approved |]
Finance (Budget): Mark Lang at 1/13/2022 12:35:03 PM - [Not applicable |]
Executive: Sylvya Stevenson at 1/13/2022 1:10:58 PM - [Approved |]
Legal: Elizabeth Freeland at 1/13/2022 1:21:36 PM - [Approved |]



An Examination of COVID-19 Status and Mitigation Measures in Jackson County, Missouri

Prepared for the Jackson County Legislature

1/13/2022

Introduction:

This report is submitted to provide the data and research necessary to make an evidence-based decision on mitigation measures like masking in places of public accommodation. By providing this report, the Jackson County Health Department (JACOHD) seeks to inform officials of Jackson County, Missouri of the impact of mitigation measures on reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Background:¹

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was discovered in 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is very contagious and has spread quickly around the world.

COVID-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, flu, or pneumonia. COVID-19 may attack more than the lungs and respiratory system.

- Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some people become severely ill.
- Some people, including those with minor or no symptoms, may suffer from post-COVID conditions – also known as “long COVID”.
- Older adults and people who have certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- Hundreds of thousands of people have died from COVID-19 in the United States.
- Vaccines against COVID-19 are safe and effective.

Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. These symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficult breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

¹ Background is sourced directly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19/basics-covid-19.html> Date Accessed 1/6/2022

This list is not all-inclusive. Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

Transmission

COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people or land on their eyes, nose, or mouth. In some circumstances, they may contaminate surfaces they touch. People who are closer than 6 feet from the infected person are most likely to get infected.

COVID-19 is spread in three main ways:

- Breathing in air when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus.
- Having these small droplets and particles that contain virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze.
- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them.

Anyone infected with COVID-19 can spread it, even if they do NOT have symptoms.

Variants (Delta & Omicron)

Delta

- Delta spreads more easily than other previously identified variants and may cause more severe cases when compared to other variants. Breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated are expected, but vaccines remain effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvariants%2Fvariant.html
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- The Viral load is roughly 1,000 times higher in people infected with the Delta variant than those infected with the original coronavirus strain. In addition, the Delta variant replicates much faster – being first detectable an average of four days after exposure, compared with an average of six days among people with the original strain.
 - Baisheng, L., Aiping, D., Kuibiao, L., Yao, H., Zhencui, L., & et al. (2021, July 23). Viral infection and transmission in a large, well-traced outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant. Retrieved from MEDRXIV: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.07.07.21260122v2>
- The estimated R0 (average number of persons each new case will infect) for the delta variant of COVID-19 is estimated at 6.4, meaning that each individual infected with COVID-19 Delta will transmit the disease to 6.4 additional people on average. Sewer shed data show that 100% of collection sites in Missouri show a small amount of Delta variant, although Omicron appears to be the dominant strain.
 - R0 data source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02259-2>

- Sewershed data source:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f7f5492486114da6b5d6fdc07f81aacf>
- Data Accessed: 1/13/2022

Omicron

- Omicron spreads more rapidly than any other variant, although preliminary evidence suggests that the variant is not as severe as Delta. Breakthrough infections in people who are fully vaccinated are expected, but vaccines remain effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/about-variants.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fvariants%2Fvariant.html
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- While Omicron has been reported to be less severe than Delta, findings suggest that once an individual is hospitalized with COVID-19 infection from Omicron, the odds of the disease becoming as severe as someone with an infection from Delta were the same.
 - <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.12.21.21268116v1>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- The estimated R0 (average number of persons each new case will infect) for the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is estimated at 4, meaning that each individual infected with COVID-19 Omicron will transmit the disease to 4 other people on average. Although with Omicron, unlike Delta, the amount of immune escape appears to be much higher (66%). Sewer shed data shows that 100% of collection sites in Missouri show the Omicron variant. This variant appears to be the dominant strain.
 - R0 data source: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-02259-2>
 - Sewershed data source:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/f7f5492486114da6b5d6fdc07f81aacf>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

Local Trends:²

- The case rate for the week of 1/2 is 1,101.58 per 100k a 248% increase in case rate compared to 4 weeks ago and is **the highest case rate at any point in the pandemic**, beating out the previous highest case rate, set the previous week.
 - 590 cases reported with an event date of 1/3/22, the highest one-day total in the pandemic, beating out the previous record of 589 set on 12/29/21
- The COVID-19 case rate for unvaccinated individuals for the week of 1/2 was **2.6 times higher** than the case rate for vaccinated and boosted individuals.
- The COVID-19 case rate for vaccinated (but not boosted) individuals for the week of 12/26 was **1.9 times higher** than the case rate for vaccinated and boosted individuals.
- The week of 1/2 had the most test results reported for the entire pandemic (11,360) with the **highest percent positive since testing was widely available (35.5%)**.

² Jackson County Health Department Analysis – 1/12/2022

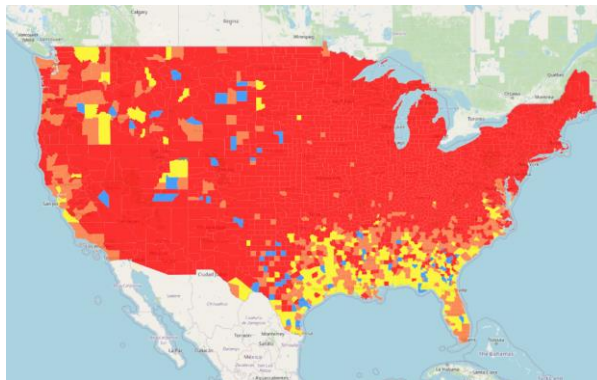
- Daily Average of New Hospitalizations remain very high – at 238 per day. This figure has **increased 20.30%** from the previous week.

Pandemic Update

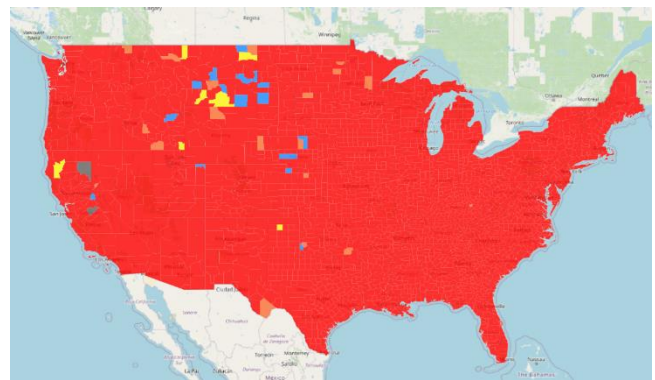
COVID-19 Status in Missouri

- The total count of Missouri cases statewide is increasing, with hotspots in the Kansas City and St. Louis regions.
 - <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/data/public-health/health-metrics/#>
 - Date Accessed: 1/7/2022
- As of January 13, 2022, the 7-Day Case Rate in Missouri is 963 per 100,000 people. There has been an 38% increase in cases over the past 7 days.
 - <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/data/public-health/health-metrics/#>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) designates 100% of Missouri counties as experiencing “High” levels of community transmission. High Transmission – the highest category is defined as having a “Total New Cases per 100,000 Population in the Last 7 Days” over 100 per 100,000 and a “Percentage of NAATs that are Positive in the Last 7 Days” over 10.0%. Eastern Jackson County’s 7-Day Case Rate is 1,101.58 per 100,000 and the percent positivity is 35.50%, well above the highest level of classification.
 - <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/data/public-health/health-metrics/#>
 - <https://jacohtd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

Figure 1: Transmission Level by County in the United States – A Comparison



December 2, 2021

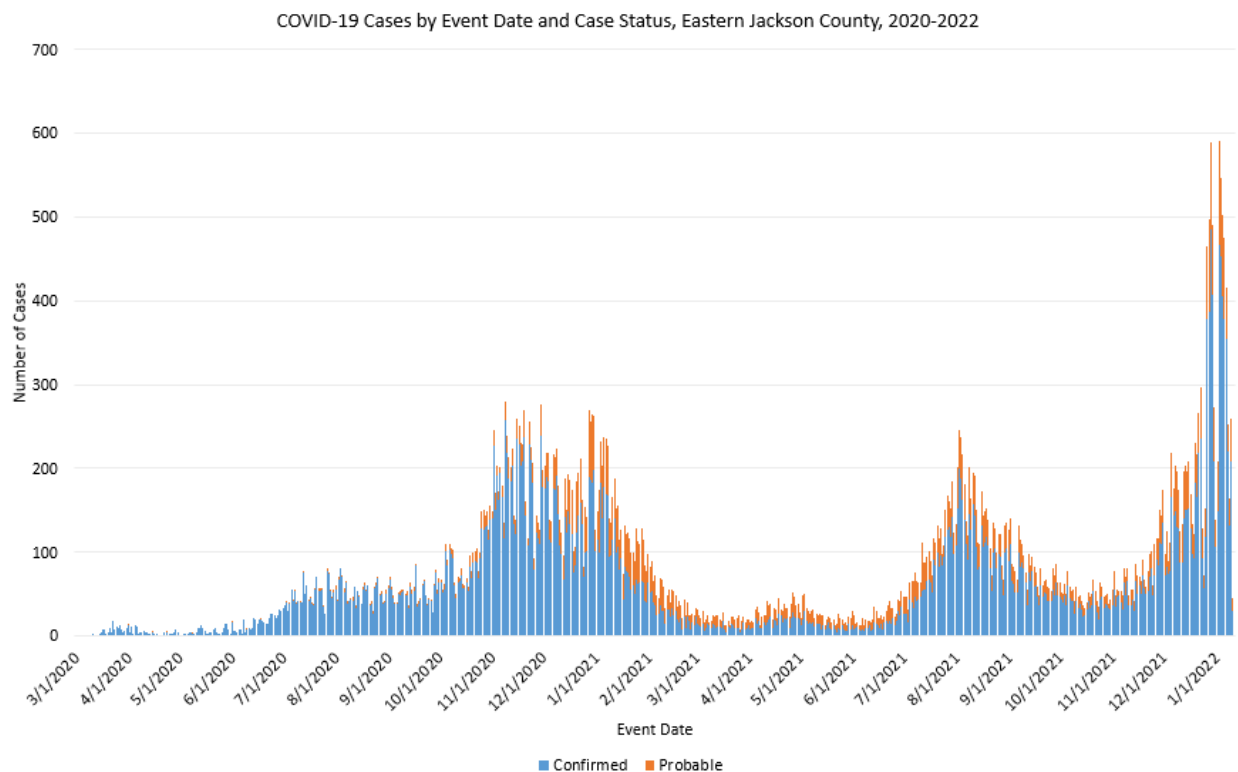


January 6, 2022

COVID-19 Status in Jackson County, Missouri

- As of January 13, 2022, Jackson County had the 11th highest 7-Day case rate (1012 cases per 100,000 people) in the state of Missouri. This is the first time in the pandemic that Jackson County has experienced a case rate over 1000 cases per 100,000 people. The current case rate is over ten times higher than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention classification of high transmission at 100 cases per 100,000 people.
 - <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/data/public-health/health-metrics/#>
- As of January 4, 2022, the Kansas City region reported 4,885 daily new cases of COVID-19, compared to 898 daily new cases of COVID-19 on December 6, 2021.
 - <https://marc2.org/covidhub/>

Figure 2: COVID-19 Cases by Event Date and Case Status, Eastern Jackson County 2020 – 2022



- As of January 13, 2022, the 7-Day Case Rate per 100,000 people for Eastern Jackson County on January 2, 2022 was 1,101.58 cases per 100,000 people compared to 444.17 cases per 100,000 people on December 5, 2021. See graph above.
 - <https://jaco hd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- As of January 13, 2022, the Jackson County Health Department reported 41,546 confirmed cases (an increase of 2,731 from the previous week), 11,528 probable cases (an increase of 680 from the previous week), and 614 deaths (an increase of 18 from the previous week) for Eastern Jackson County.
 - <https://jaco hd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

Figure 3: Percent Positive and Number of COVID-19 Specimens Collected by Week, Eastern Jackson County, 2020 -2022

- As of January 13, 2022, the percent positivity for Eastern Jackson County is 35.50%, an increase from 15.17% on December 5, 2021. See graph above.
 - <https://jaco hd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

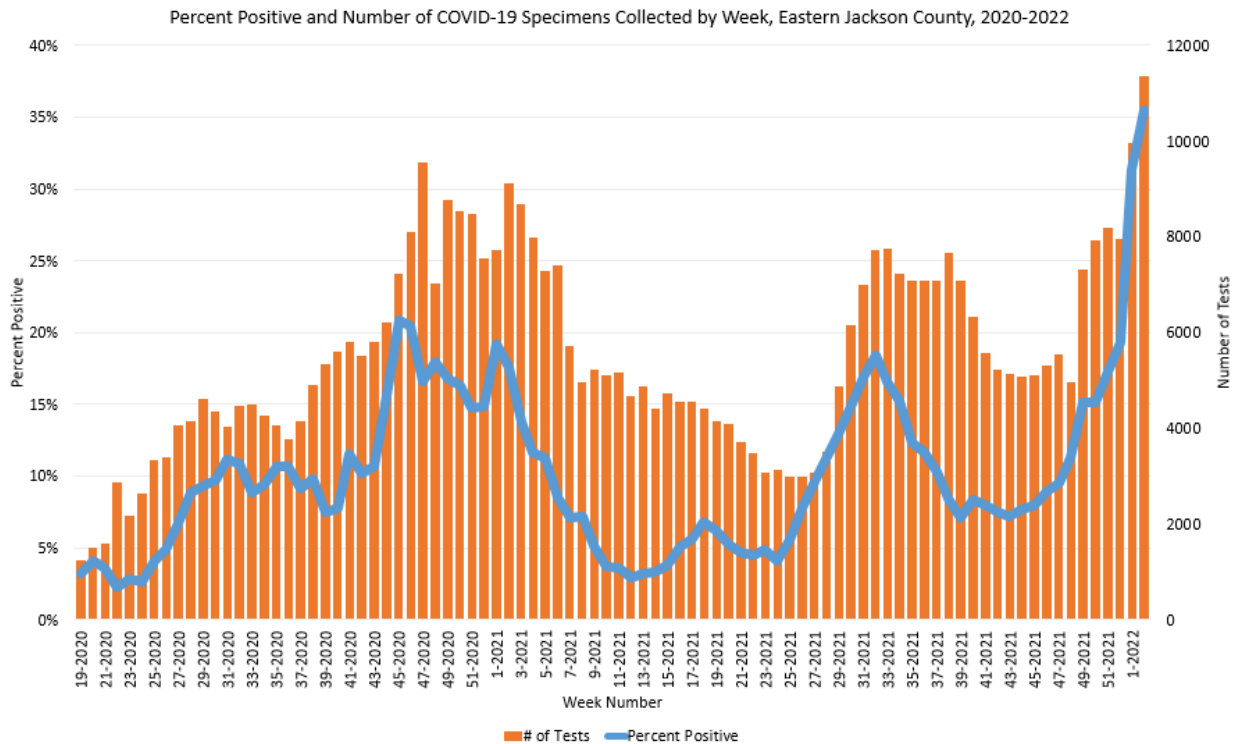
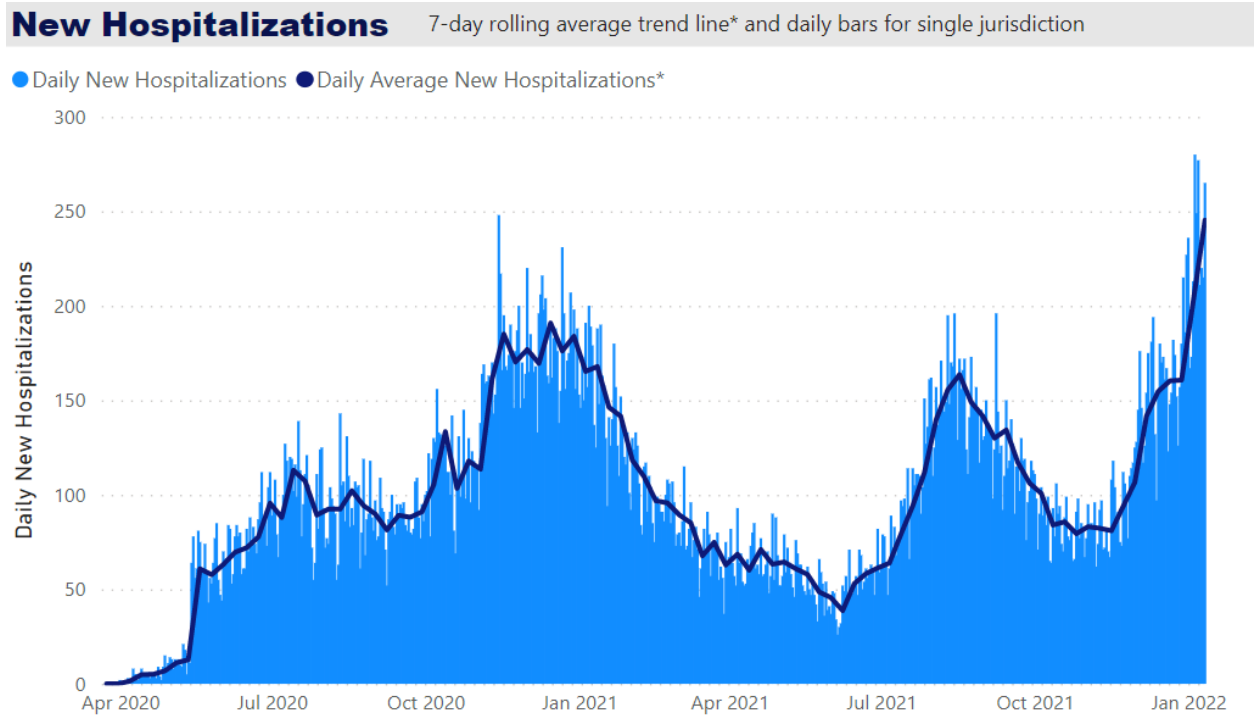


Figure 4: Daily Average of New Hospitalizations, Mid-America Regional Council Region, 2020 – 2022



- The Daily Average of New Hospitalizations for the MARC region increased substantially, from 155 daily new hospitalizations on December 14, 2021 to 265 daily new hospitalizations on January 11, 2022. See graph above.
 - <https://marc2.org/covidhub/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

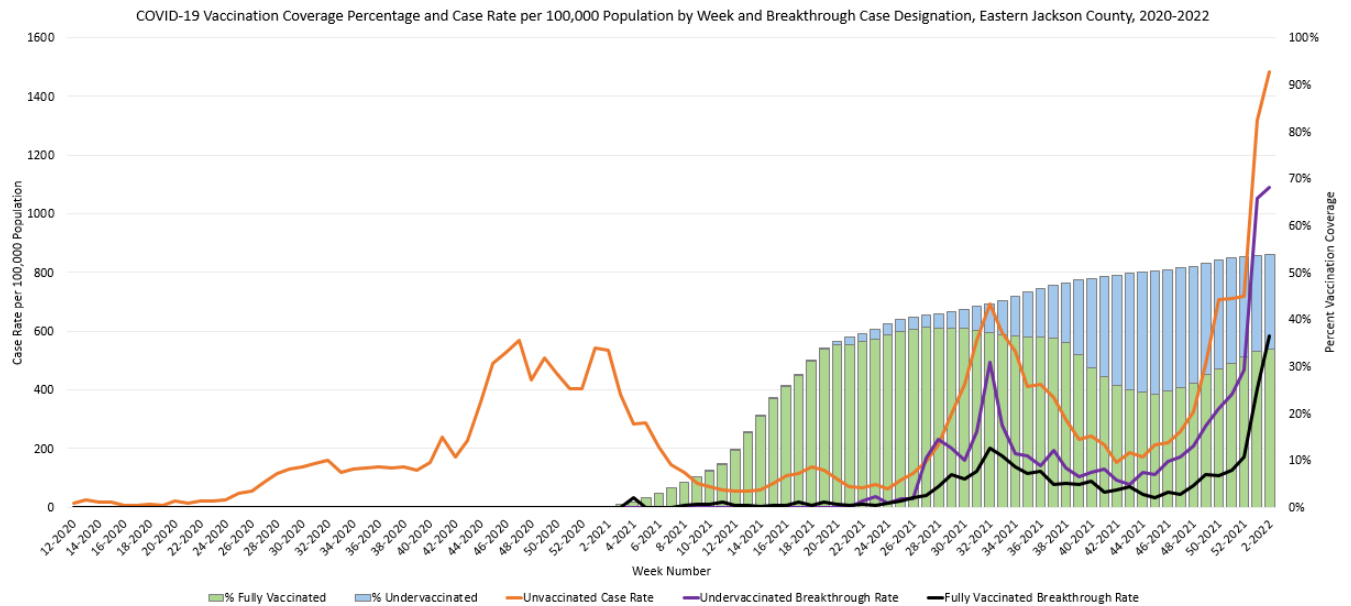
Mitigating COVID-19 Transmission and Disease Severity

Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective and can reduce the risk of getting and spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. In addition, vaccines can prevent both children and adults from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19. As vaccination has been shown to reduce the risk of severe illness and death, a high vaccination rate can help to alleviate strain on the health care system in communities.

- As of January 13, 2022, 54.4% of Missourians have completed their vaccination series and 61.6% have initiated vaccination. In Eastern Jackson County, 53.63% of residents have completed their vaccination series and 60.47% have initiated vaccination. In Eastern Jackson County, only 33.77% of those eligible for a booster series have received one.
 - State Data: <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/data/public-health/vaccine.php#>
 - Eastern Jackson County Data: <https://jacohd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- The 25-34 age group has the lowest vaccination completion percentage of all fully eligible age groups (49.37%), with the exception of the newly authorized 5-11 year olds. The 25-34 age group continuously maintains among the highest case rates as well, currently holding the highest COVID-19 case rate for the month of December.
 - <https://jacohd.org/data-dashboard/>
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

Figure 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Percentage and Case Rate per 100,000 Population by Week and Breakthrough Case Designation, Eastern Jackson County, 2020 – 2022.



- The COVID-19 case rate for unvaccinated individuals for the week for the week of January 2, 2022 was 2.6 times higher than the case rate for vaccinated and boosted individuals. The COVID-19 case rate for vaccinated, but not boosted, individuals for the week of January 2, 2022 was 1.9 times higher than the case rate for vaccinated and boosted individuals. See graph above.
 - Jackson County Health Department Data Analysis
 - Data Accessed: 1/13/2022
- “In the absence of a vaccination program, there would have been approximately 1.1 million additional COVID-19 deaths and more than 10.3 million additional COVID-19 hospitalizations in the U.S. by November, 2021.”
 - The Commonwealth Fund
 - <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2021/dec/us-covid-19-vaccination-program-one-year-how-many-deaths-and>
 - Report Published: December 14, 2021

Mask Wearing

SARS-CoV-2 infection is transmitted predominately by inhalation of respiratory droplets generated when people cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the community use of masks, specifically non-valved and multi-layer, to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Masks are primarily intended to reduce the emission of virus-laden droplets (“source control”), which is especially relevant for asymptomatic or presymptomatic infected wearers who feel well and may be unaware of their infectiousness to others, and who are estimated to account for roughly 50% of transmissions.

Masks also help to reduce inhalation of droplets by the wearer (“filtration for wearer protection”). The community benefit of masking for SARS-CoV-2 control is due to the combination of these effects; individual prevention benefit increases with increasing numbers of people using proper masks consistently and correctly. Adopting universal masking can help avert future lockdowns, especially if combined with other non-pharmaceutical interventions such as social distancing, hand hygiene, and adequate ventilation.

- In areas of “high” or “substantial” levels of transmission, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all people over the age of two (both vaccinated and unvaccinated) wear masks in indoor public settings.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/aboutcovidcountycheck/index.html>
- As of January 13, 2022, Jackson County, as well as every county adjacent to Jackson County in Missouri and Kansas met the designation for high transmission. Jackson County’s case rate is currently ten times higher than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s classification of high transmission.
- In a meta-analysis that reviewed 72 studies to assess the effectiveness of different public health mitigation measures, authors found that mask wearing (relative risk 0.47, 0.29 to 0.75, $I^2 = 84%$) was an effective strategy to reduce the incidence of COVID-19. Overall pooled analysis showed a 53% reduction in COVID-19 incidence.
 - <https://www.bmj.com/content/375/bmj-2021-068302>

Evidence Demonstrating the Impact of Community Masking

- “After implementation of mask mandates in 24 Kansas counties, the increasing trend in COVID-19 incidence reversed. Although rates were considerably higher in mandated counties than in nonmandated counties by the executive order, rates in mandated counties declined markedly after July 3, compared with those in nonmandated counties. Kansas counties that had mask mandates in place appear to have mitigated the transmission of COVID-19, whereas counties that did not have mask mandates continued to experience increases in cases.”
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6947e2.htm>
- “Mask requirements were also implemented as part of a multicomponent approach in Arizona, where COVID-19 incidence stabilized and then decreased after implementation of a combination of voluntary and enforceable community-level mitigation strategies, including mask requirements, limitations on public events, enhanced sanitation practices, and closure of certain services and businesses.”
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6947e2.htm>
- “Counties that adopted the July mask mandate in Kansas experienced significantly lower rates of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths compared with those that did not. These findings corroborate previous studies that found that mask mandates slowed the growth of COVID-19 cases in Kansas counties and reduced the spread in states. Results of this study suggest that mask mandates may provide an effective way to reduce cases of COVID-19, hospitalizations, and deaths.”
 - <https://www.jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2781283>
- “Leffler et al. used a multiple regression approach, including a range of policy interventions and country and population characteristics, to infer the relationship between mask use and SARS-

CoV-2 transmission. They found that transmission was 7.5 times higher in countries that did not have a mask mandate or universal mask use, a result similar to that found in an analogous study of fewer countries. Another study looked at the differences between US states with mask mandates and those without, and found that the daily growth rate was 2.0 percentage points lower in states with mask mandates, estimating that the mandates had prevented 230,000 to 450,000 COVID-19 cases by May 22, 2020.”

- <https://www.pnas.org/content/118/4/e2014564118#sec-2>
- During March 22 – October 17, 2020, 10 sites participating in the COVID-19-Associated Hospitalization Surveillance Network in states with statewide mask mandates reported a decline in weekly COVID-19-associated hospitalization growth rates by up to 5.6 percentage points for adults aged 18-64 after mandate implementation, compared with growth rates during the 4 weeks preceding implementation of the mandate.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7006e2.htm#T1_down
- “Counties without school mask requirements experienced larger increases in pediatric COVID-19 case rates after the start of school compared with counties that had school mask requirements ($p < 0.001$).”
 - https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e3.htm?s_cid=mm7039e3_e&ACSTrackingID=USCDC_921-DM66537&ACSTrackingLabel=MMWR%20Early%20Release%20-%20Vol.%2070%2C%20September%2024%2C%202021&deliveryName=USCDC_921-DM66537

Additional Studies Demonstrating the Effectiveness of Proper Mask Wearing

- Moghadas SM, Fitzpatrick MC, Sah P, et al. The implications of silent transmission for the control of COVID-19 outbreaks. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. Jul 28 2020;117(30):17513-17515. doi:10.1073/pnas.2008373117
- Lindsley WG, Blachere FM, Law BF, Beezhold DH, Noti JD. Efficacy of face masks, neck gaiters and face shields for reducing the expulsion of simulated cough-generated aerosols. *Aerosol Sci Technol*. 2020; in press
- Leung NHL, Chu DKW, Shiu EYC, et al. Respiratory virus shedding in exhaled breath and efficacy of face masks. *Nature medicine*. Apr 03 2020;26(5):676-680. doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0843-2
- Ueki H, Furusawa Y, Iwatsuki-Horimoto K, et al. Effectiveness of Face Masks in Preventing Airborne Transmission of SARS-CoV-2. *mSphere*. Oct 21 2020;5(5)doi:10.1128/mSphere.00637-20
- Brooks JT, Beezhold DH, Noti JD, et al. Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance and Reduce SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Exposure. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2021
- Hendrix MJ, Walde C, Findley K, Trotman R. Absence of Apparent Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from Two Stylists After Exposure at a Hair Salon with a Universal Face Covering Policy – Springfield, Missouri, May 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. Jul 17 2020;69(28):930-932. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm6928e2
- Van Dyke ME, Rogers TM, Pevzner E, et al. Trends in County-Level COVID-19 Incidence in Counties With and Without a Mask Mandate – Kansas, June 1-August 23, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. Nov 27 2020;69(47):1777-1781. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm6947e2

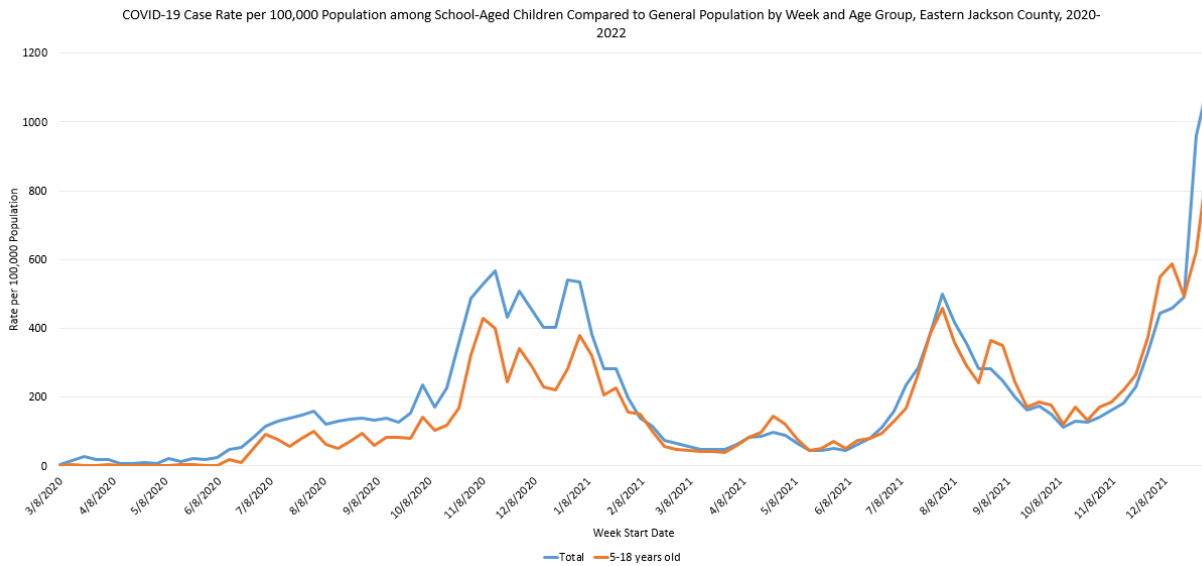
COVID-19 Impacts to Community Systems & Structures

Schools

Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities. Though COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred in school settings, multiple studies have shown that transmission rates within school settings, when multiple prevention strategies are in place, are typically lower than – or similar to – community transmission levels. Because of the highly transmissible nature of SARS-CoV-2, along with mixing of vaccinated and unvaccinated people in schools, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends universal indoor masking for all students (ages 2 years and older), teachers, staff, and visitors to K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. The current incidence of COVID-19 transmission in Eastern Jackson County is likely to have substantial impact on the health and availability of teachers and staff unless adequate mitigation measures are employed.

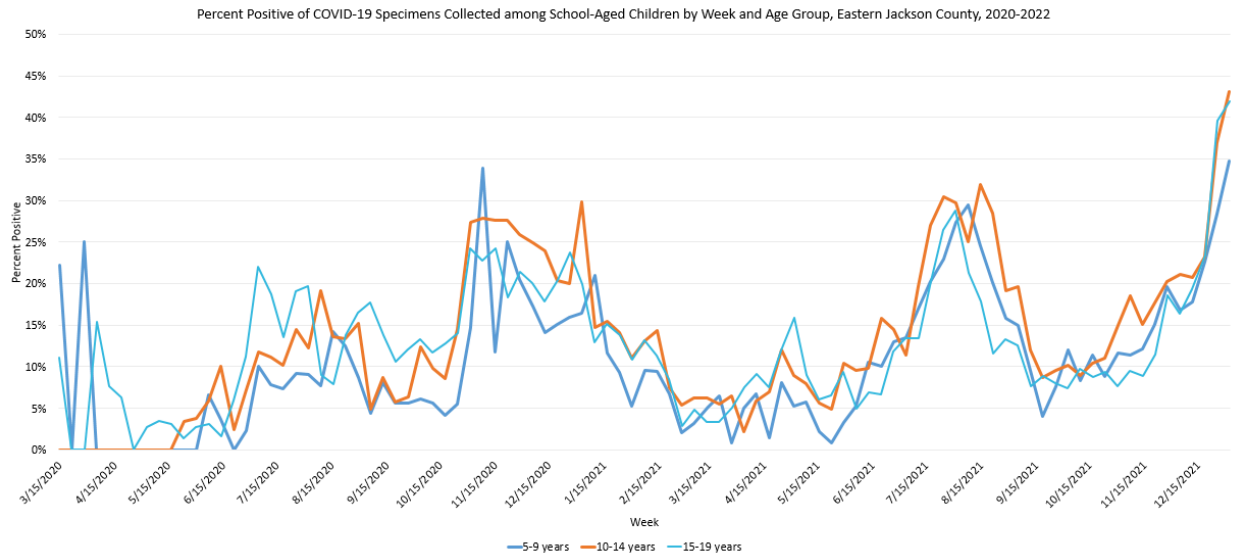
- The odds of a school-associated COVID-19 outbreak in schools without a mask requirement were 3.5 times higher than those in schools with an early mask requirement (OR=3.5; 95% CI =1.8-6.9)
 - https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e1.htm?s_cid=mm7039e1_w
- National surveillance data from the United Kingdom (UK) showed an association between regional COVID-19 incidence and incidence in schools. For every five additional cases per 100,000 population in regional incidence, the risk of a school outbreak increased by 72%.
 - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html# covid-19-children-adolescents
- Reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in the community to alleviate burden on the health care system is dependent upon limiting transmission among youth in the school setting. Studies suggest that the proportion of index cases increased with age. For example, 12% of 89,191 households in a JAMA study had an index case aged 0 to 3 and 38% had an index case aged 14 to 17 years.
 - <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2783022>

Figure 6: COVID-19 Case Rate per 100,000 Population Among School-Aged Children Compared to General Population by Week and Age Group, Eastern Jackson County, 2020 – 2022



- Through much of the pandemic, the case rate for school-aged children remained below that of public. In September 2021, the case rate for 5-18 year olds eclipsed the case rate for the public and remained elevated through December 2021. The graph above displays the sudden increase in the case rate for the 5-18 year old population in sync with the larger population. It is important to acknowledge that high transmission levels and a lack of community-wide mitigation strategies will continue to drive case rates in school-aged children unless more widespread mitigation measures are employed.
 - Jackson County Health Department Analysis
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022

Figure 7: Percent Positive of COVID-19 Specimens Collected Among School-Aged Children by Week and Age Group, Eastern Jackson County, 2020 – 2022

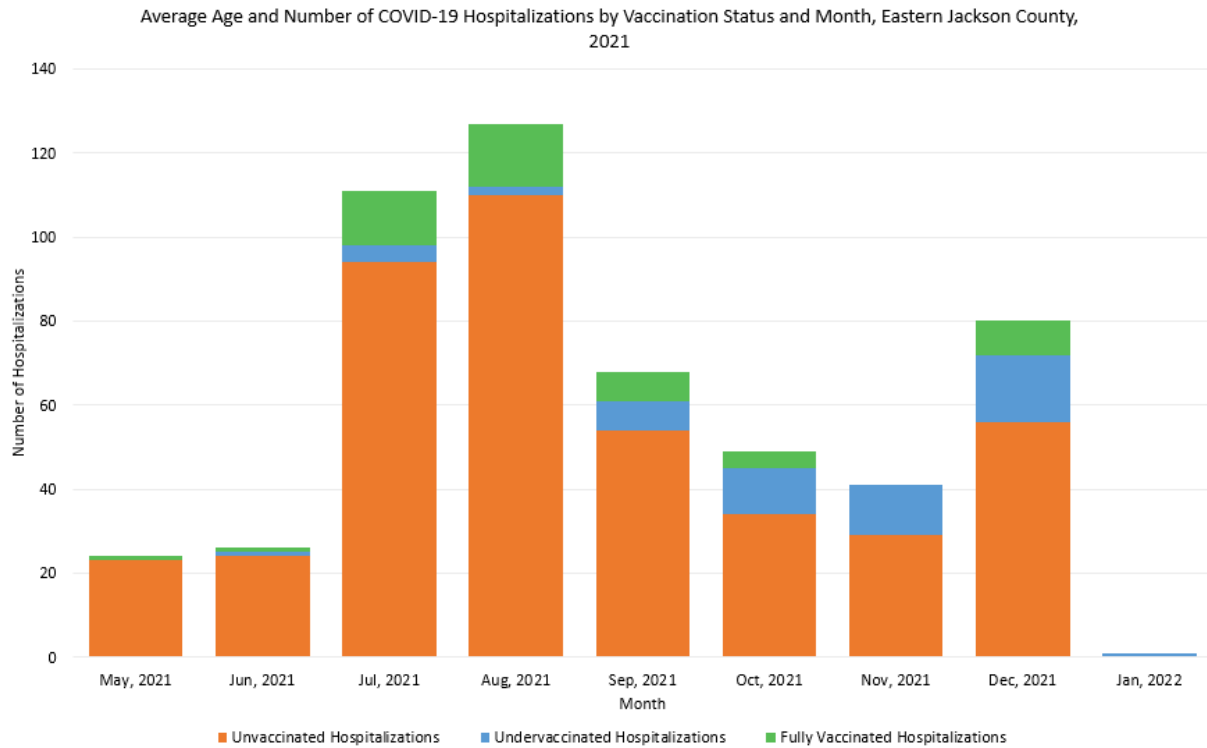


- The percent positive for school-aged children remains extremely high. While the overall percent positivity is 35.5% for the week of January 2, 2022, the percent positivity for both the 10-14 year-olds and the 15-19 year-olds are above 40%. See graph above.
 - Jackson County Health Department Analysis
 - Date Accessed: 1/13/2022
- The recommendations of the Jackson County Health Department, American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Children’s Mercy align in that schools must employ a multi-layered approach of mitigation strategies including universal masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . (Accessed January 13, 2022). Schools and Child Care Programs. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
 - Children's Mercy. (Accessed January 13, 2022). Guidance for Keeping Schools Safe for Students and Staff. Retrieved from Returning to School and the Community Safely: <https://www.childrensmc.org/siteassets/media/covid-19/guidance-for-school-re-opening-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>
 - American Academy of Pediatrics. (Accessed January 13, 2022). COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools. Retrieved from American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>
- “We were heroes last year, and people asked us for our opinions and asked us for our advice. And people listened to the medical experts,” Watts said. “We have come an entire 180 (degrees) now, and we are reacting to this. ... So yeah, we are devastated that kids are not wearing masks in school.”
 - Dr. Jennifer Watts, Children’s Mercy Hospitals
 - January 13, 2022
 - University of Kansas Health System Weekly Update

The usage of clinical care resources to manage patients with COVID-19 reflect underlying community disease incidence and can signal when urgent implementation of layered prevention strategies might be necessary to prevent overloading the health care and public safety systems. Strains on critical care capacity can increase COVID-19 mortality while also decreasing the availability and use of health care resources for non-COVID-19 related medical care. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that community leaders, public health professionals, and health care institutions monitor the available number and fraction of staffed inpatient and intensive care unit beds to adequate supply.

- Hospital admissions in the Kansas City region are at their highest level during any point in the pandemic (previous high was Dec. 2020), resulting in: Increased emergency room wait times and limited capability to treat patients in hospitals, increased difficulty transferring critical patients, and limited capacity to accept new and treat existing patients due to bed and staffing limitations.
 - Mid America Regional County MAC-G Report
 - Report Date: 1/5/2022
- Health care leaders reported a 5-fold increase in the number of patients who expired in Emergency Department waiting rooms waiting for transfer in the state of Kansas when compared to previous months.
 - University of Kansas Medical Center Statewide CMO News Conference
 - https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=2734096916899965
 - Date Accessed: 1/7/2022
- Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) in the region have reported worsening capacity driven by staffing shortages. Hospitals that are reporting an anticipated staffing shortage within the week is 37%, up from the 33% two weeks prior. However, this metric does not capture the increasing severity of the shortage. Limited federal resources are being brought in to assist with staffing shortages in the region.
 - Mid America Regional Council – Regional Risk Assessment
 - Report Accessed: 1/5/2022
- Hospital resource utilization remains high, with hospitals reporting 91.25% of adult ICU Hospital beds occupied. This number fluctuates throughout the day and is not an indicator of availability at the time of publication. Hospitals are reaching out to the state for additional resources to support growing patient care demands.
 - Mid America Regional Council – Regional Risk Assessment
 - Report Accessed: 1/5/2022
- Fire and EMS Agencies are experiencing 20-50% work force interference associated with isolation and quarantines. Agencies are being forced to utilize adaptive strategies to manage impacts of a reduced workforce. EMS is reporting increased demand for service, increased 911 calls, increased emergency and non-emergency interfacility transfers, extended transport time to reach available specialty care (time critical diagnosis) facilities, and increased mutual aid utilization to respond to calls within the jurisdiction.
 - Mid America Regional Council – MAC-G Update Report
 - Report Accessed 1/11/2022

Figure 8: Average Age and Number of COVID-19 Hospitalizations by Vaccination Status and Month, Eastern Jackson County, 2021



- The overwhelming majority of hospitalization in Eastern Jackson County residents occur in those who are unvaccinated, followed by those who are not fully boosted. See graph above.
 - Jackson County Health Department Analysis
 - Data Assessed: 1/13/2022

Conclusion:

Following the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and based on the high levels of community transmission and hospitalizations, the Jackson County Health Department recommends mask wearing, regardless of vaccination status, in all indoor places within Eastern Jackson County. This action is necessary to reduce the burden on the education, public safety, and health care systems within the community.