

February 3, 2023

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As of February 2, the CDC listed 16 Virginian localities, with a total 260k residents, as having “High” COVID19 community levels. A further 62 locales, with 3 million residents, were at “Medium” community levels.
- Cases and hospital admissions continue to decline from early January peaks. 24 of 35 health districts are in declining trajectories and 6 are in slow growth. However, 29 were in declining trajectories last week, with just one in slow growth.
- Short-term models forecast stable hospital admission levels over the next few weeks.
- XBB.1.5 has quickly become dominant in HHS Region 3, now representing 73% of sequenced cases. This has not been accompanied with case increases, however.
- Vaccine administrations continue to decline, with the 7-day average of daily administrations below 5,000 since mid-January.
- So far, COVID-19 has been much milder than in previous winters. Nevertheless, COVID-19 hospital admissions have far exceeded those from flu, with much higher peaks and high sustained admission rates.

**1,425,557**

Total Bivalent Booster Doses Administered by Feb. 2, 2023

**16.7% / 41.2%**

Of eligible Virginians / Seniors have received a Bivalent Booster as of February 2, 2023

**34.4% / 62.5%**

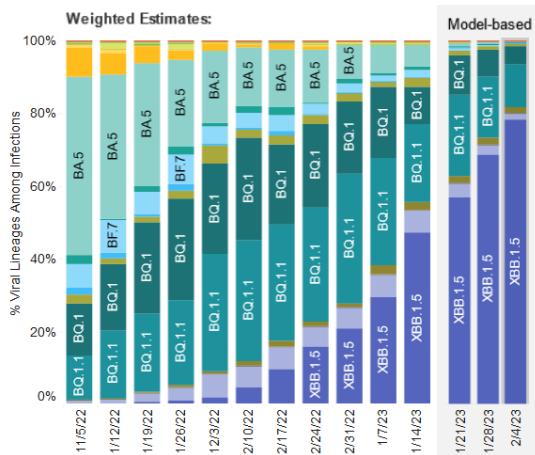
Of Virginians / Seniors have received an annual Flu shot as of February 2, 2023

**16 / 62**

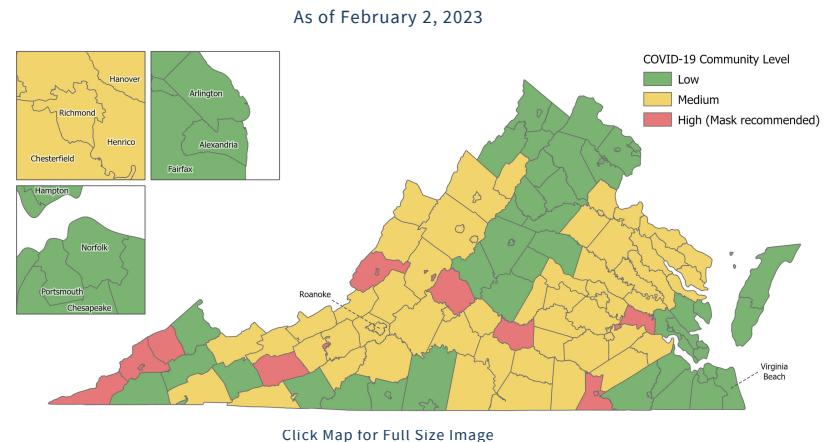
Virginia Localities at High / Medium Community Levels as of February 2, 2023

## KEY FIGURES

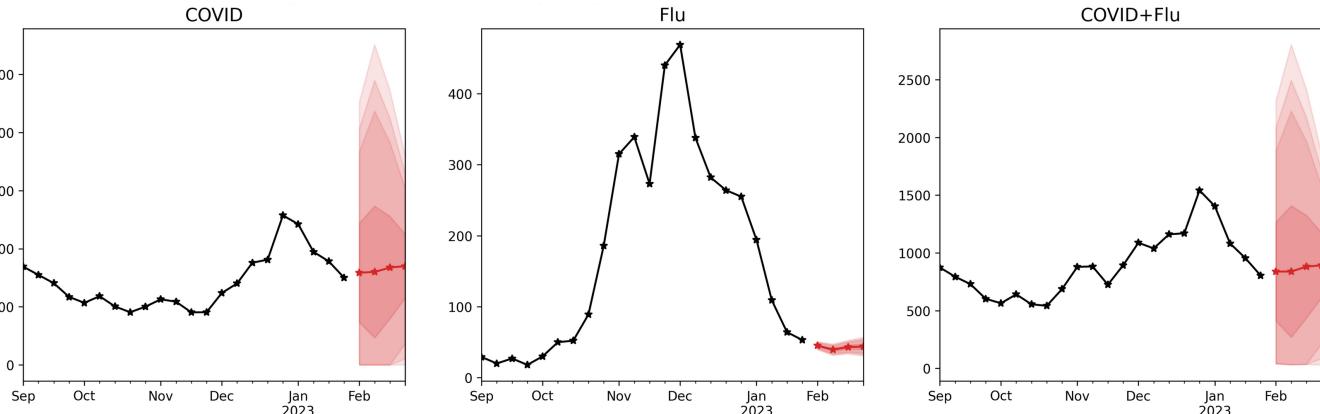
### Variant Mix – HHS Region 3



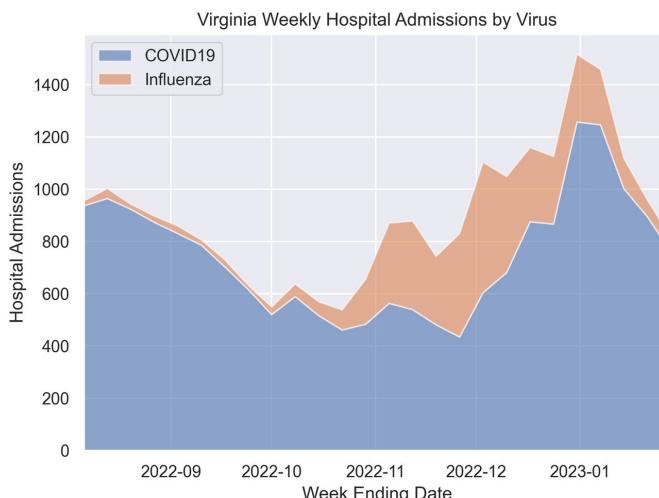
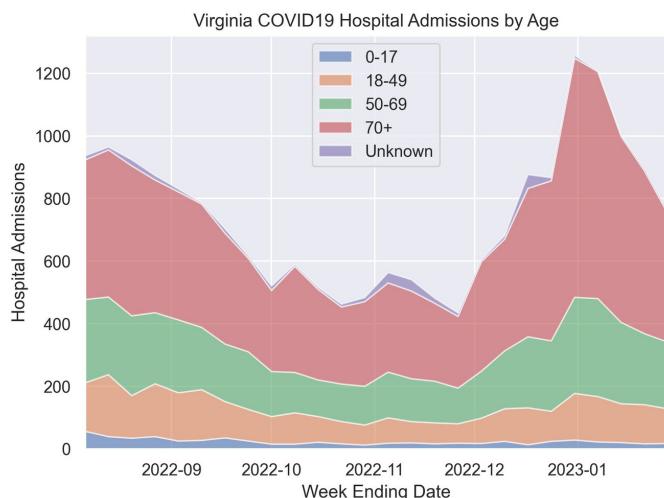
### CDC Community Levels



### UVA Model of Weekly Hospital Admissions



## Hospital Admissions



- COVID19 hospitalizations continue their decline for the fifth week in a row. Last week saw 760 new admissions in Virginia.
- Those "Over 70" remain the most likely to be hospitalized. Among children, 0-4 year olds were most often hospitalized.
- Influenza rates have declined significantly. Last week flu represented only about 7% of respiratory hospitalizations.

## Reproduction Rate (Based on Confirmation Date)

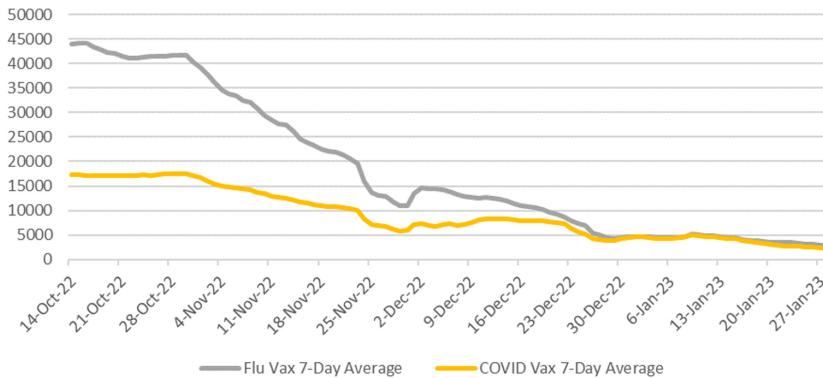
Region	R <sub>e</sub> Jan 31st	Weekly Change
Statewide	0.856	-0.064
Central	0.885	-0.043
Eastern	0.860	-0.080
Far SW	0.880	-0.090
Near SW	0.879	-0.018
Northern	0.833	-0.095
Northwest	0.865	-0.101

- The reproduction number is below one in all regions as well as statewide. This implies a continued decline in case rates.
- Vaccine administrations for both COVID19 and flu have plateaued at a low level, remaining constant since the start of 2023.

## Vaccine Administrations

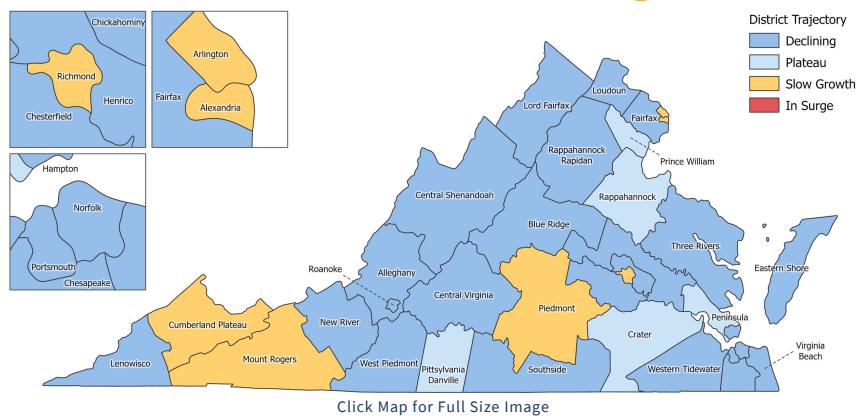
Note: This week's vaccination estimates are preliminary and subject to change.

7-Day Average of Flu Vax vs Covid Vax



## Growth Trajectories: No Health Districts in Surge

Status	# Districts (prev week)
Declining	24 (29)
Plateau	5 (2)
Slow Growth	6 (1)
In Surge	0 (2)

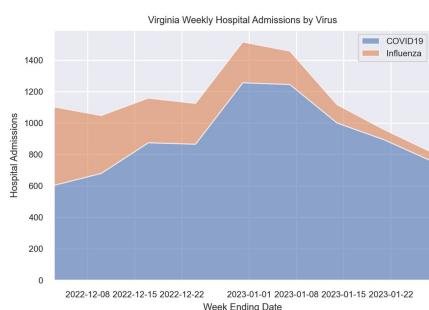
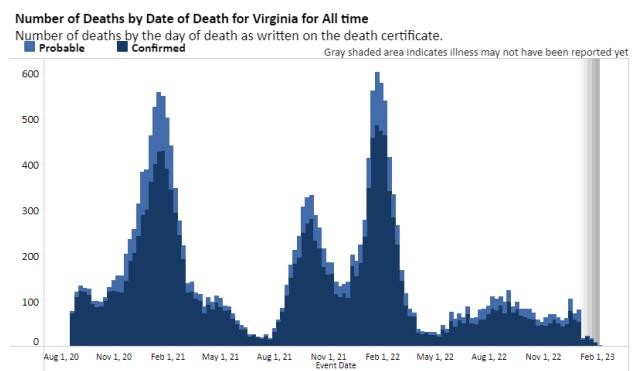


- Only six districts are in growth trajectories, and none in surge. Most districts are in a sustained declining trajectory.

## COVID-19 EMERGENCIES

In early 2020, the White House declared two emergencies to deal with COVID-19: a public health emergency beginning January 27, 2020 and a national emergency beginning March 1. The public health emergency supported America's health system as it dealt directly with the COVID-19 threat, while the national emergency dealt with the economic and social fallout. In a January 30, 2023 letter to Congress, the White House signaled its intent to end both emergencies on May 11, 2023. A separate declaration allowing Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of medical countermeasures (e.g., tests, treatments, and vaccines) remains in effect and will not end on May 11 with the other declarations. Virginia declared its own COVID-19 related emergencies, with the last one being lifted over a year ago on January 21, 2022.

The planned end of the emergencies includes a shift in rules and resources. It also marks an new phase in the effort to combat COVID-19. COVID-19 remains a threat - it killed 316 Virginians in the four weeks ending Dec 31 - but that threat has changed. Even with the highly transmissible XBB1.5 variant becoming dominant, COVID-19 hospital admissions and deaths did not approach levels seen in previous winters. In fact, they did not approach levels seen during the Delta wave.



Rather than an acute emergency with surges and peaks that threaten to overwhelm our hospitals, COVID-19 has settled into a steady baseline. This is a high baseline, however. During this relatively calm winter, COVID-19 hospital admissions far surpassed admissions for influenza. Flu admissions peaked at ~500, while COVID-19's peaked at ~1,200. COVID-19 admissions are also persistently high. They have been near or above 500 since at least April and remain above 500 as of the end of January. It is still unclear whether or how seasonal COVID-19 will become. COVID-19 hospitalizations at winter-flu like levels may be a year-long phenomena. To protect yourself and your community, stay up-to-date on vaccinations and be aware of COVID-19 levels in your community.

## KEEP VIRGINIA SAFE II FORECASTING TOURNAMENT

Regardless of emergency status, VDH is continuing to leverage partnerships to protect Virginians from COVID-19 and other emerging public health threats. The inaugural Keep Virginia Safe Tournament was a first-of-its-kind partnership between a public health agency and a community forecasting platform: More than 200 participating forecasters on Metaculus contributed nearly 15,000 individual forecasts, providing assistance with design and resource planning for programs that included vaccination, testing, and contact tracing. On Monday, the Virginia Department of Health, the University of Virginia's Biocomplexity Institute, and Metaculus announced the opening of the Keep Virginia Safe II Forecasting Tournament, a year-long competition building on previous tournaments to deliver actionable, informative forecasts that support the decision making of officials in Virginia.

"Virginia has been a leader in foresight during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our partnership with Metaculus has been a significant part of that; their work helps us respond proactively to emerging public health threats beyond COVID-19." said Robert Mauskapf, VDH's Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

"Community forecasting platforms like Metaculus have shown considerable promise in providing robust actionable forecasts for policymakers," said Srini Venkatramanan, Research Assistant Professor at UVA's Biocomplexity Institute. "Through our earlier Real Time Pandemic Decision Making Tournament we have also seen that such forecasts could greatly benefit computational models and vice versa. We are excited to continue this unique partnership with the goal of strengthening modeling and foresight systems for the Commonwealth of Virginia."

The tournament will award \$20,000 to the most accurate forecasters after it concludes in January, 2024. Round 1 began Monday, with new questions launching over the next 12 months. The tournament is open to the public. Learn more and participate here.