



COVID-19 Emergency Response Strategy Update

January 19, 2022

Tina Rivera

Interim Director

Sonoma County Department of Health Services

Dr. Sundari Mase

Sonoma County Health Officer

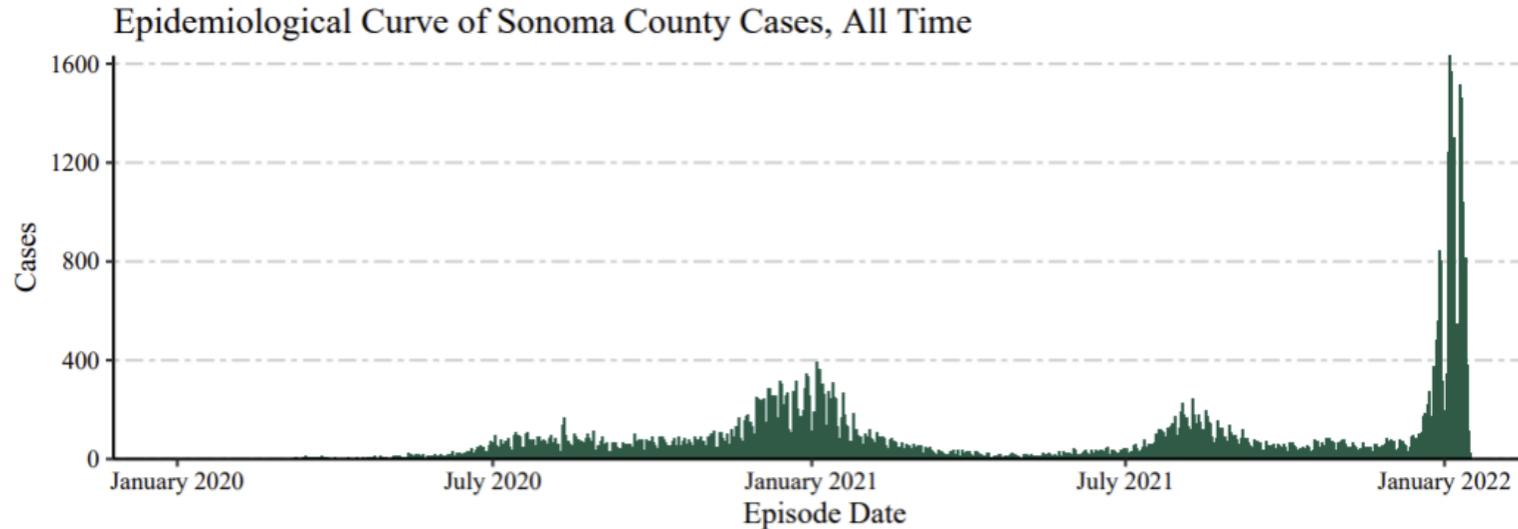


sonoma county
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Overview

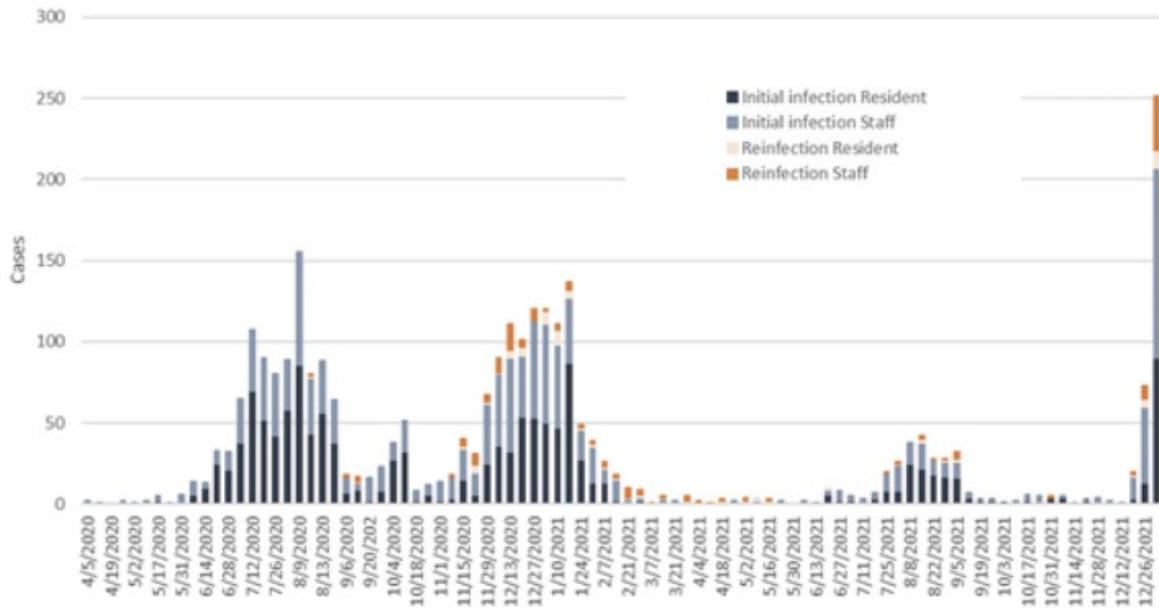
- Substantial community risk of COVID-19 infection
- Impacts on vulnerable populations
 - Senior care facility residents, school children, incarcerated, and communities of color
- Reduction of spread as a core equity issue
- Critical lack of health care capacity to manage surge
- Mitigation measures necessary to protect vulnerable populations, promote equity, and preserve hospitals' ability to care for all patients

Risk of transmission is high



- With the highly transmissible Omicron variant present and case rates at **230 cases per 100,000** residents per day, **risk of transmission has never been higher in Sonoma County**
- Note that these rates should be considered an underestimate as these figures do not count antigen positives

Senior Residential Care Facility Cases and Deaths



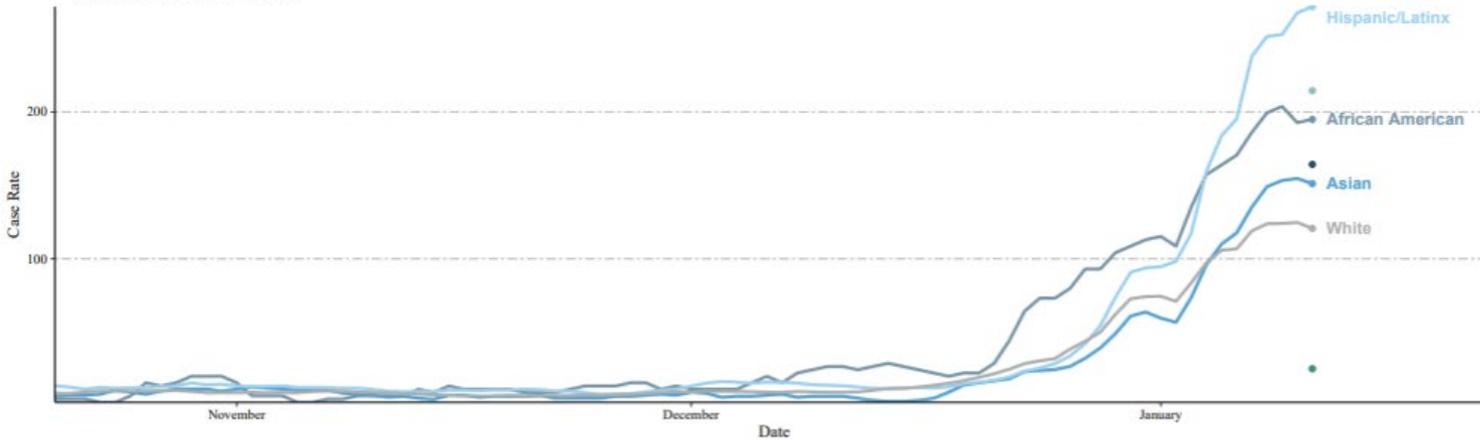
- Since January 01, 2022, there have been at least **348 cases across 36 senior residential care facilities**, surpassing all prior surges
- Residents at these facilities have accounted for 171 (40%) of all pandemic deaths
- There have been at least **2 COVID-19 deaths confirmed among skilled nursing facility residents since January 1st**, with more deaths expected to be confirmed soon
- County-wide, 65+ year olds are experiencing higher rates of hospitalization than any other age group, and 10 deaths have occurred in this age group since December

Outbreaks Occurring Across Settings

- **School Transmission Spike:**
 - Public health nurses estimate receiving reports of over **2,000** cases among school children in the past week
 - This figure is **double the amount of student cases that occurred over the entire school year experienced in just seven days**
 - To date, at least three schools have closed due to high case numbers
- **Widespread Correctional Facility Outbreaks**
 - At least **170 inmates** are infected in active outbreaks
- **Multiple outbreaks across other settings, including:**
 - health care facilities, worksites, sports teams, restaurants, grocery stores

Reducing Transmission is an Equity Issue

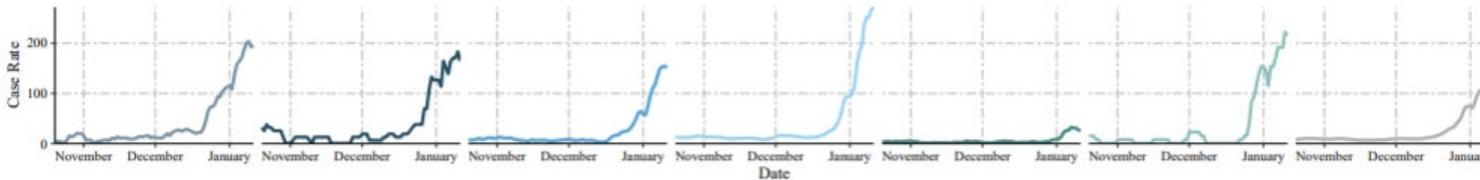
Sonoma County Case Rate by Race, 90-Day History
New Cases per 100,000 Population
7-Day Mean Case Rate, 7-Day Lag



- The highest case rates are again occurring among communities of color, essential workers, and residents with the least access to resources to support their health
- Latinx residents are experiencing the highest rate of cases with 272 new cases per day/100,000 followed by Pacific Islander residents at 215 new cases per day/100,000

Current Case Rate:

African American	American Indian / Alaskan Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latinx	Multiple Race	Pacific Islander	White
195	164.35	151.25	271.84	25.13	214.59	120.67



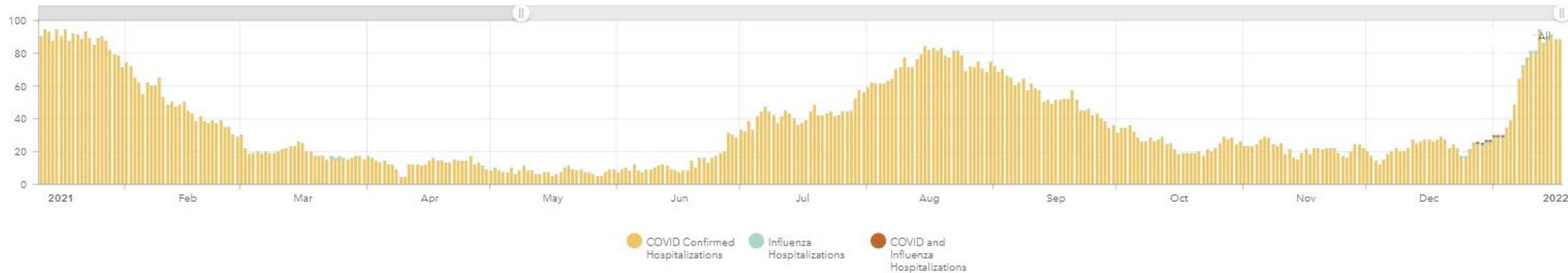
Reducing Transmission is an Equity Issue

- **The Latinx community has experienced more cumulative cases than any other racial/ethnic group and consistently been over-represented in hospitalizations and deaths**
- In 2020, **Life expectancy decreased by 2.1 years** among Latinx residents in Sonoma County, as compared to 0.7 years among White, non-Hispanic residents
- **Mental health impacts of the pandemic in Sonoma County**
 - The **death rate from drug overdose increased by over 200%** among Latinx residents as compared to a 77% increase for White, non-Hispanic residents.
 - Latinx residents were also the only racial ethnic group that experienced **significantly greater than expected suicide deaths in 2020** as compared to the prior three-year average
 - 2021 life expectancy and death analyses are still pending finalization of coroner reports
- **Reducing spread is essential to mitigating further medical, mental and economic harm to low-income communities of color**

COVID-19 Hospitalizations are Increasing

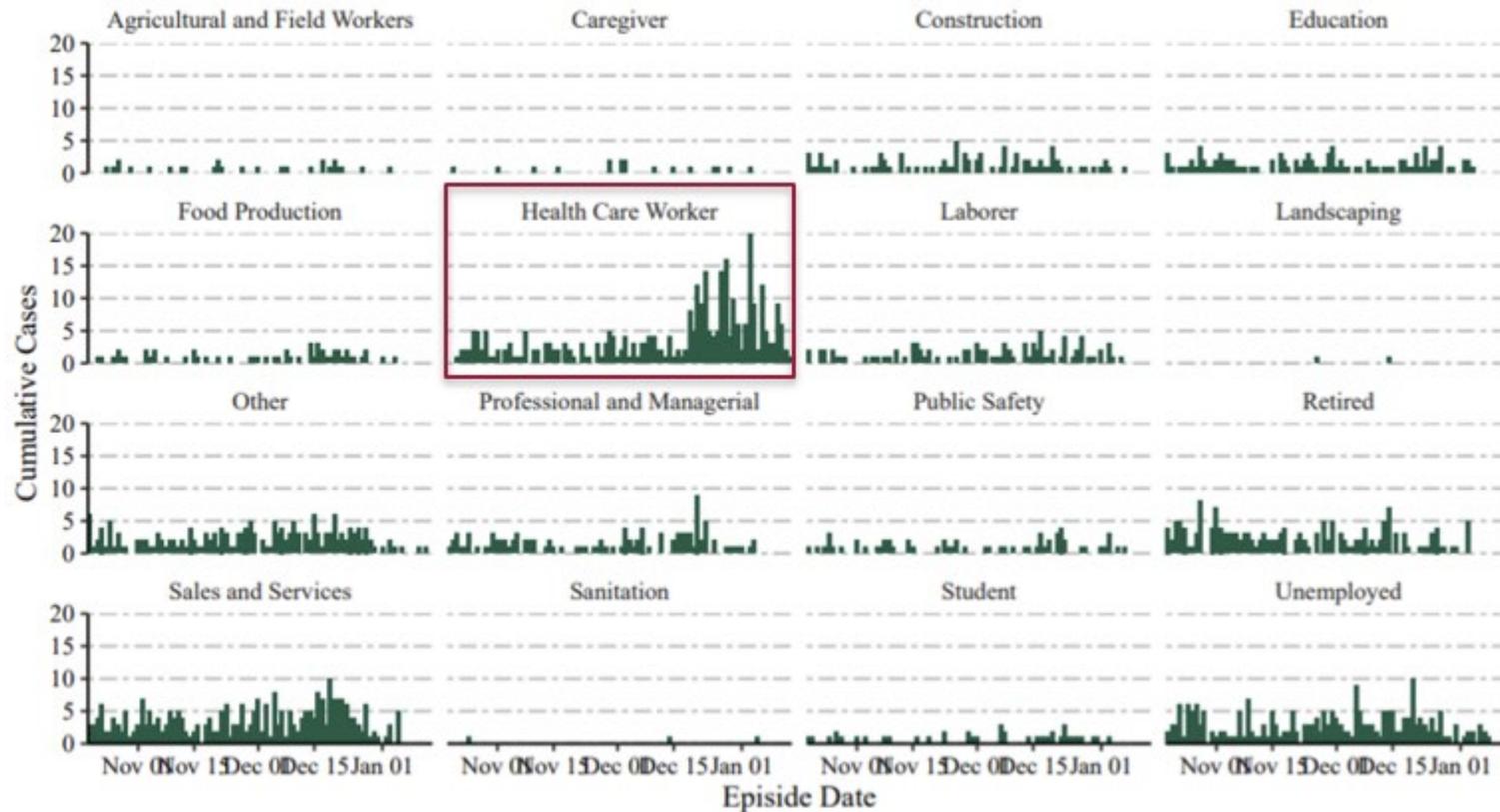
88 COVID-19 positive hospitalized; 14 in ICU

Hospitalizations



- **COVID-19 hospitalizations have more than tripled in the past two weeks** (increasing from a seven-day average of 27 to 88 patients) and more than 30% of ICU patients are now COVID positive
- Over the last two weeks, Sonoma County had the **3rd highest percent increase in hospitalizations out of the 58 counties in the State** (Source: New York Times)

Health Care Worker Infections have Spiked



- **Health Care Workers are becoming infected at high rates creating staffing shortages in hospitals**
- Hospitals also report many health care workers are out to care for their children due to the increase in infections among students since school re-opening

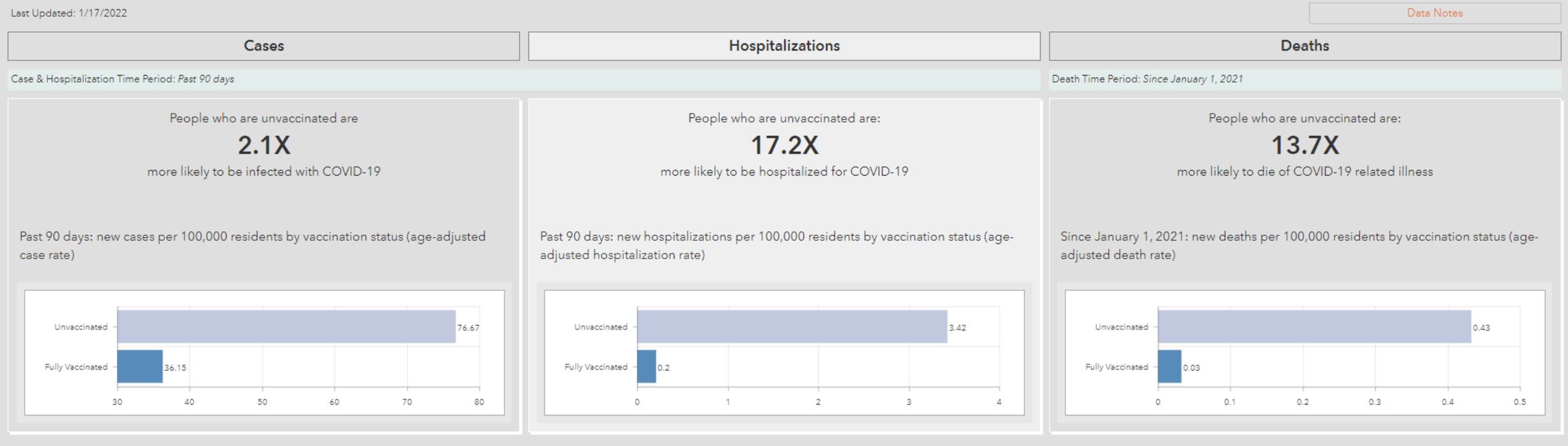
Hospital Capacity is Limited

- As compared to winter of 2021, the hospitals have a higher census of non-COVID patients and much less room to adapt to a surge
- The growing number of COVID-19 patients, even patients admitted for other reasons who happen to test positive, limit hospital capacity:
 - **Inability to transfer patients out and bed capacity concerns:**
 - Cannot transfer COVID positive patients to homeless shelters, acute psychiatric care and skilled nursing facilities. This is creating a large bottleneck of patients and growing bed capacity issues
 - Special precautions and bed space (e.g., isolation) are needed for COVID positive patients to avoid further spread and/or outbreaks
 - **Staffing**
 - Positive patients increase risk of health care worker infection and staffing shortages

Must Reduce Spread to Preserve Health Care Capacity

- **Sonoma County has the 5th lowest hospital capacity of the 58 counties in the State** (Source: Stacker, January 14, 2022)
- Emergency departments are already overwhelmed due to COVID-19 concerns and patient wait times are reported to be up to 4 hours
- Ambulance patient offload times at hospitals are now an average of 37 minutes (17 minutes above the state benchmark) due to staffing/capacity shortages
- **Care for critical non-COVID health care needs (urgent procedures, cancer, heart conditions, etc.) will be negatively impacted as COVID reduces bed and staff capacity**

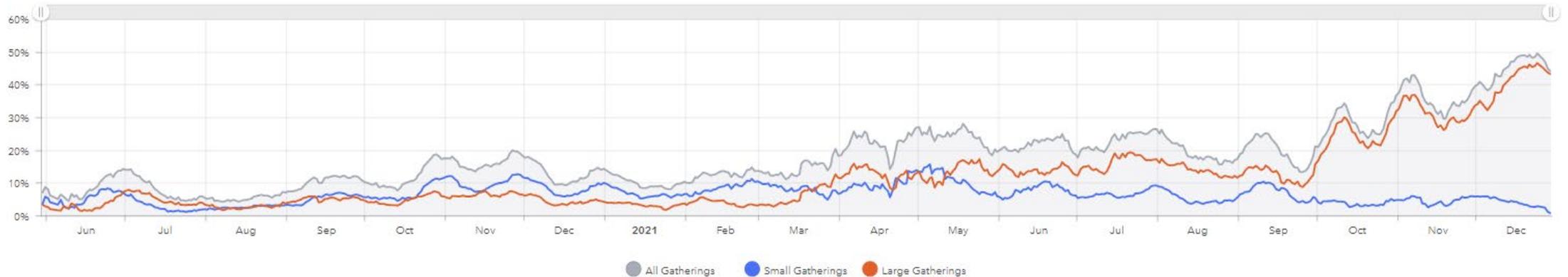
Mitigation Strategy: Promote Vaccination



- **Getting vaccinated and staying fully updated with a booster dose remains the best protection against hospitalization and death from COVID-19**

Mitigation Strategy: Limit Gatherings

Proportion of Cases in Sonoma County Attributed to Large and Small Gatherings



- Up to 50% of our recent cases with known source of transmission have been due to gatherings, with nearly all of these being large gatherings involving more than 12 people
- High levels of transmission occurred at these events, even among the fully vaccinated, with half or more of attendees becoming infected
- **Aside from vaccination, reducing spread due to gatherings is the most strategic and immediate action our county could take to address the critical strain on our health care system**

Health Order and Recommendations

- The 30-day health order implemented on January 10, 2022 limits gatherings to no more than 50 people indoors and no more than 100 people outdoors when social distancing is not feasible
- Recommendations were also made that residents limit non-essential activities to reduce spread
- **These steps were taken to protect the community, support equity and preserve the capacity of our hospitals to serve the COVID and non-COVID related medical needs of our county**