

## Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

Issue 31, published September 6, 2022

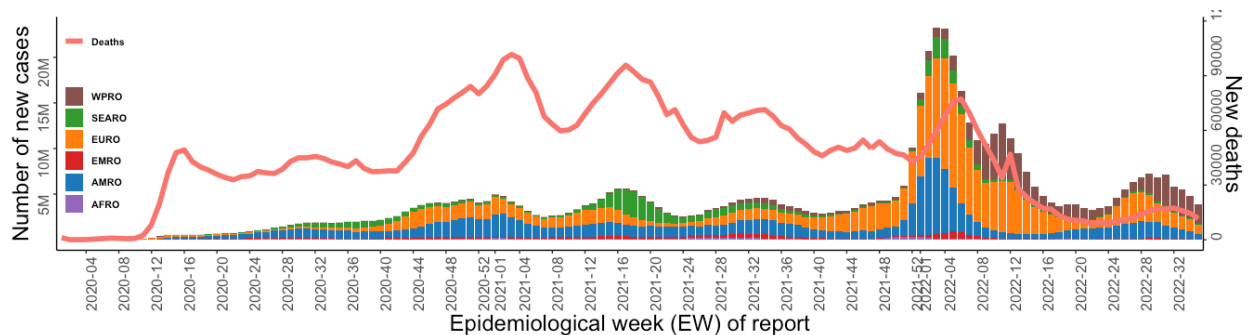
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### Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to September 06, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 603 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.5 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 35, cases decreased in all six WHO regions (range: -29.4 - -10.2%), and deaths decreased in four WHO regions while they increased in WPRO (4.5%) and AFRO (15.9%).
- **Globally**, approximately 4,232,319 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 35 (August 28, 2022-September 03, 2022) - a -11.6% decrease compared to EW 34 (August 21, 2022-August 27, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 13,077 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a -10.4% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 814,573 cases and 4,954 deaths were reported in EW 35 - a -12.9% decrease in cases and -10.1% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases decreased in all (range: -28.5 - -8%) but one subregion – Central America (9.7%). Similarly, COVID-19 Deaths increased in Central America (7.9%) while they decreased in the remaining three subregions (range: -14.1 - -8.7%)
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 79.6 cases per 100,000 population during EW 35 (91.4 the previous week). Between EW 35 and 34, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 10.2 deaths per 1 million population (11.3 the previous two weeks).
- Among 30 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 7 countries and territories (range: 0.8% - 200%) during EW 35 compared to the previous week. Among 23 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 4 countries and territories (range: 25% - 200%).

**Figure 1:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 35, 2022.

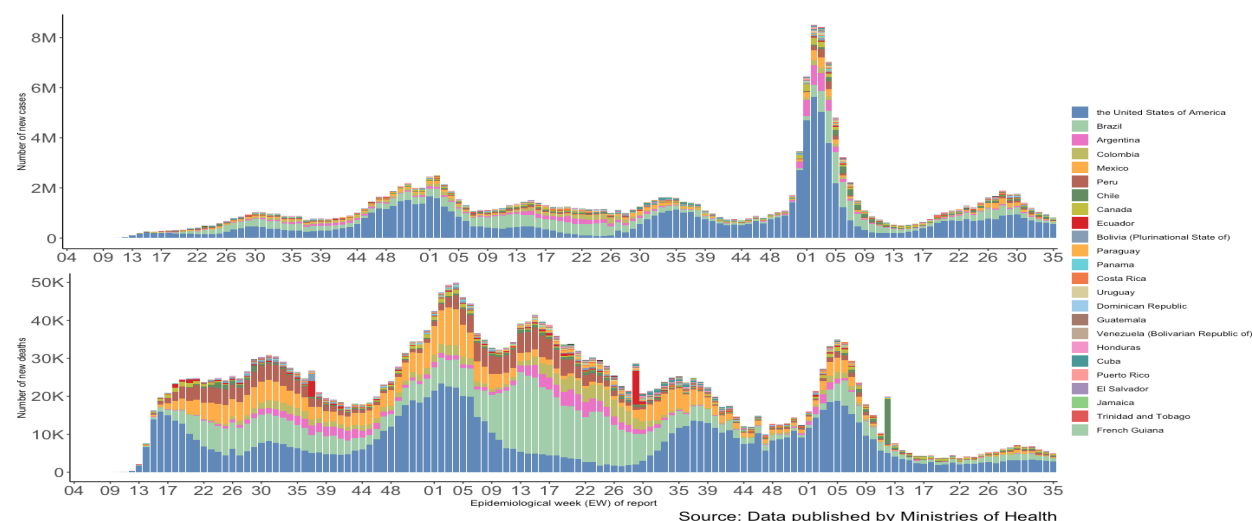


Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

Data are retro-adjusted every week and the numbers and percent changes of COVID-19 cumulative cases and deaths may not match with the previous COVID-19 weekly situational reports.

## Region of the Americas - An overview

**Figure 2:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and country/territory. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - 35, 2022.



During EW 35, 814,573 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -12.9% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases in the last week was reported from North American subregion (593,508 cases, -8% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). During EW 35, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (560,797 new cases, -6.8% decrease), Brazil (87,236 new cases, -16.7% decrease), Chile (40,080 new cases, -27% decrease).

**Table 1:** Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 34 and EW 35 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 34	Deaths EW 34	Cases EW 35	Deaths EW 35	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,175,271	34,733	24,159	112	19,483	97	-19.4%	-13.4%
Central America	3,919,983	53,068	29,612	164	32,476	177	9.7%	7.9%
North America	104,684,384	1,412,896	645,002	3,434	593,508	3,134	-8.0%	-8.7%
South America	63,466,621	1,323,138	236,516	1,800	169,106	1,546	-28.5%	-14.1%

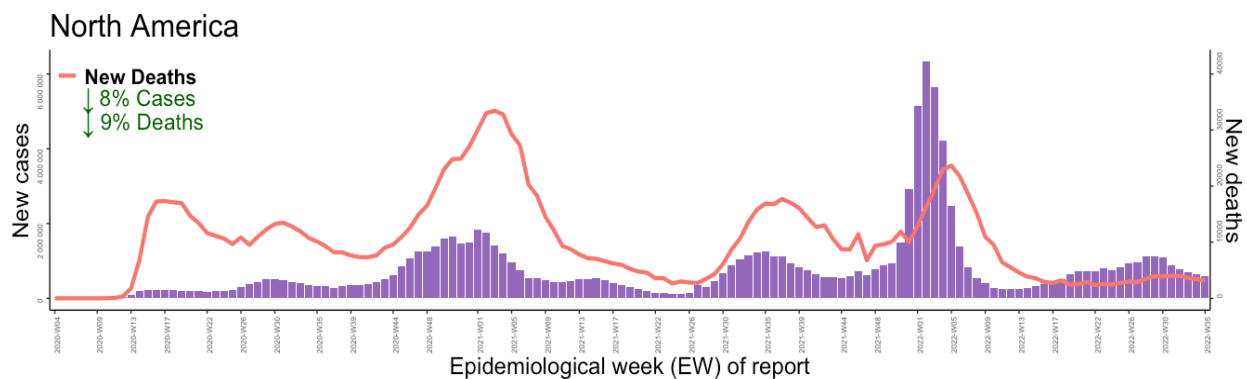
For the same period, 4,954 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -10.1% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was North America (3134 deaths, -8% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the country level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from the United States of America (2,762 new deaths, -7.5% decrease), Brazil (865 new deaths, -16.7% decrease), and Canada (261 new deaths, -1.5% decrease).

**A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 35 by subregion is presented below.**

## North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have been decreasing in North America since mid-July 2022 with a total of 593,508 new cases (-8% decrease) being reported during EW 35 as compared to the previous week. All three countries in the subregion reported a decline in weekly cases – the largest decline in cases were reported by Mexico (11,868 cases, -41.1 % decrease), followed by Canada (20,843 cases, -9.1 % decrease), and the United States of America (560,797 cases, -6.8 % decrease).

**Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 35, 2022.



For the same period, **Weekly COVID-19 deaths** in North America have decreased since early August 2022 – a total of 3,134 new deaths (-8.7% decrease) being reported relative to the previous week. Similar to weekly cases, two countries in the subregion reported a decline in weekly deaths – Mexico (111 new deaths, -39.7% decrease) and the United States of America (2,762 new deaths, -7.5% decrease) – while there were no substantial changes in deaths observed in Canada (261 new deaths, -1.5% decrease) as compared to the previous week.

During EW 35, among the two countries in North America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, both countries – the United States of America and Canada – did not report any substantial changes in weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions compared to the previous week. The United States of America reported a slight decline in hospitalizations (n=37,111, -4.9% decrease) and ICU admissions (n=2,762, -3.4% decrease). Similarly, Canada reported a 1% decline in weekly hospitalizations (n=5,337) and a 1% decrease in ICU admissions (n=284) during EW 35 compared to the previous week.

The Omicron variant of concern (VOC) sub-lineages of BA.4 and BA.5 are predominant in all three countries in the subregion, and there were no substantial changes in proportions of the two sub-lineages compared to the previous week. The BA.5 and BA.4 sub-lineages made up about 88.6% and 11.2% of cases for the week ending on 3 September 2022 in the United States of America<sup>1</sup>, 88% and 8.3% for the week of 14 August 2022 in Canada<sup>2</sup>, and 90% and 6.5% as of EW 33 in Mexico, respectively.

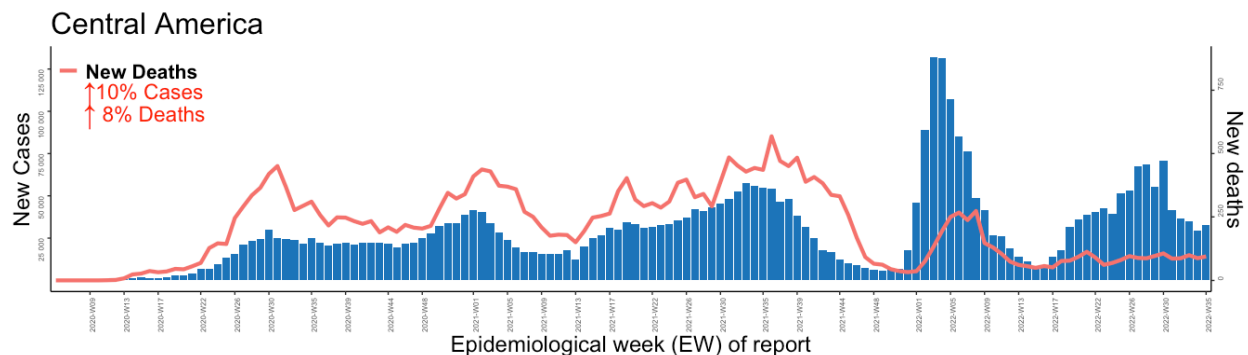
<sup>1</sup> The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 6 September 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 6 September 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

## Central America

In Central America, COVID-19 incidence for the sub-region has increased during EW 35 with 32,476 new cases being reported during EW 35 – a 9.7% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**).

**Figure 4:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Central America. Region of the Americas.** EW 6, 2020 - EW 35, 2022.



During EW 35, one country in the subregion reported an increase in **weekly cases** – El Salvador (10,967 new cases, 100% increase), one reported no substantial changes – Costa Rica (8,913 new cases, 0.2% increase). Please note that the percent change in cases of El Salvador is a result of data artifact since no cases had been reported during EW 34. The remaining five countries and territories reported a decline in weekly cases (range: -100 - -29.8% decrease) during EW 35 relative to the previous week.

For the same period, **weekly deaths** have increased by approximately 7.9% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**) with four out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase (range: 3.6% – 100%). The highest proportion of weekly deaths in the subregion was reported from Guatemala (116 new deaths, 3.6% increase), followed by Costa Rica (31 new deaths, 4.2% increase). The remaining three countries either did not report deaths (Nicaragua, Belize) or reported a decline in weekly deaths during EW 35 – Panama (10 new deaths, -28.6% decrease) compared to the previous week.

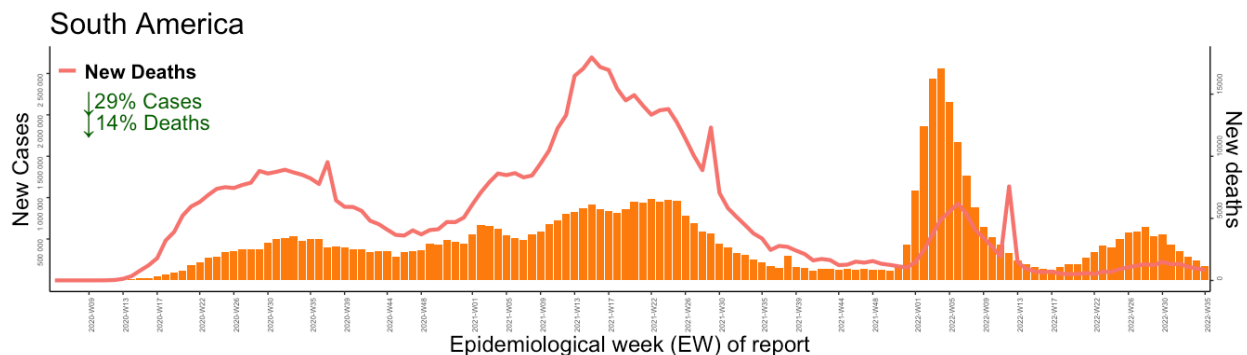
Among four countries and territories with available data in the Central American sub-region, one country reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations – Costa Rica (295 hospitalizations, 4.2% increase) – while remaining three countries and territories either remained the same (Belize, 0% change) or reported a decline – Honduras (52 hospitalizations, -5.5% decrease) and Panama (101 hospitalizations, -27.9% decrease). With regards to **ICU admissions**, all three countries with data available for weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions reported a decline during EW 35 (range: -50 - -3.9% decrease) compared to the previous week.

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from four and five of the seven countries and territories in the subregion respectively – Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, El Salvador (BA.4 only), Nicaragua (BA.5 only), and Belize (BA.5 only).

## South America

In South America, **COVID-19 incidence** has decreased for the fifth consecutive week, with a total of 169,106 new COVID-19 cases being reported during EW 35 – a -28.5% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**).

**Figure 5:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **South America. Region of the Americas.** EW 3, 2020 - EW 35, 2022.



Out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region, one experienced an increase in cases during EW 35 – Uruguay (2,026 new cases, 9.2% increase) – while the remaining nine countries and territories reported a decline (range: -53.5 - -16.7% decrease) compared to the previous week. The largest decline in cases was reported from Ecuador (2,927 new cases, -53.5% decrease), followed by Peru (16,393 new cases, -50.8% decrease), and Paraguay (407 new cases, -50.5% decrease).

During EW 35, a total of 1546 **weekly COVID-19 deaths** were reported in South America – representing a -14.1% decrease compared to the previous week. At the national level, COVID-19 deaths increased in three countries (range: 12.4 – 66.7% increase) while the remaining seven countries and territories reported a decline relative to the previous week. The largest decline in deaths were reported by Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (3 new deaths, -62.5% decrease), followed by Paraguay (16 new deaths, -46.7% decrease), and Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (14 new deaths, -41.7% decrease).

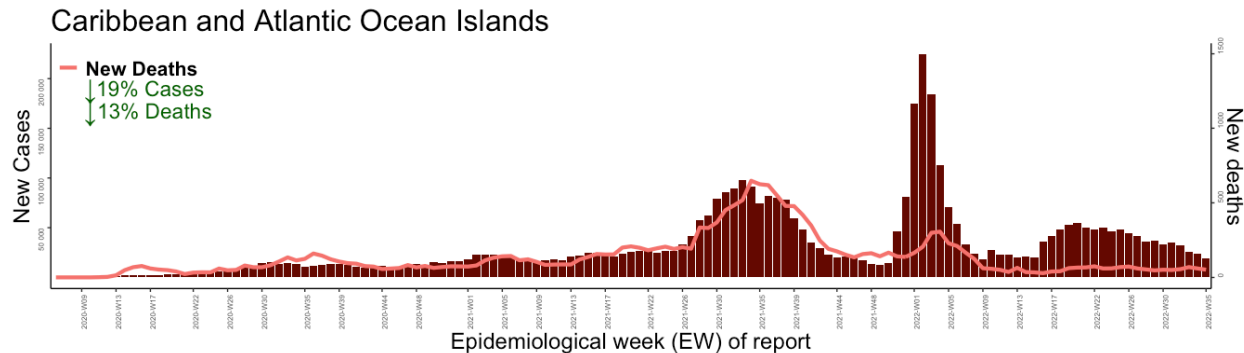
For the same period, among five countries and territories in the subregion with data available for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, Colombia is the only country reported a slight increase in weekly hospitalizations (981 hospitalizations, 0.8% increase) while the remaining four countries reported a decline (range: -48 - -1.4% decrease) during EW 35 compared to the previous week. Similarly, all six countries and territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** in this subregion either reported a decline (n=5; range: -44.7 - -2.6% decrease) or remained the same (Ecuador; 0% change).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from seven and eight out of the 10 countries in the subregion respectively – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (BA.5 only).

## Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **weekly cases** decreased by -19.4% during EW 35 compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in eight out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 4.7% - 220%) while it declined in the remaining 2 countries and territories (range: -100% - -0.3%).

**Figure 6:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands.** Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 35, 2022.



During EW 35, **COVID-19 weekly deaths** decreased by -13.4% (n=97 deaths) in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion compared to the previous week. Five countries and territories observed a relative increase (range: 2.3 – 100% increase), ten reported a decline (range: -100 - -7.7% decrease) in their weekly deaths in EW 35 compared to the previous week. The remaining countries and territories either remained the same (Curaçao, 0% change) or had not reported any deaths during EW 35 (n=18).

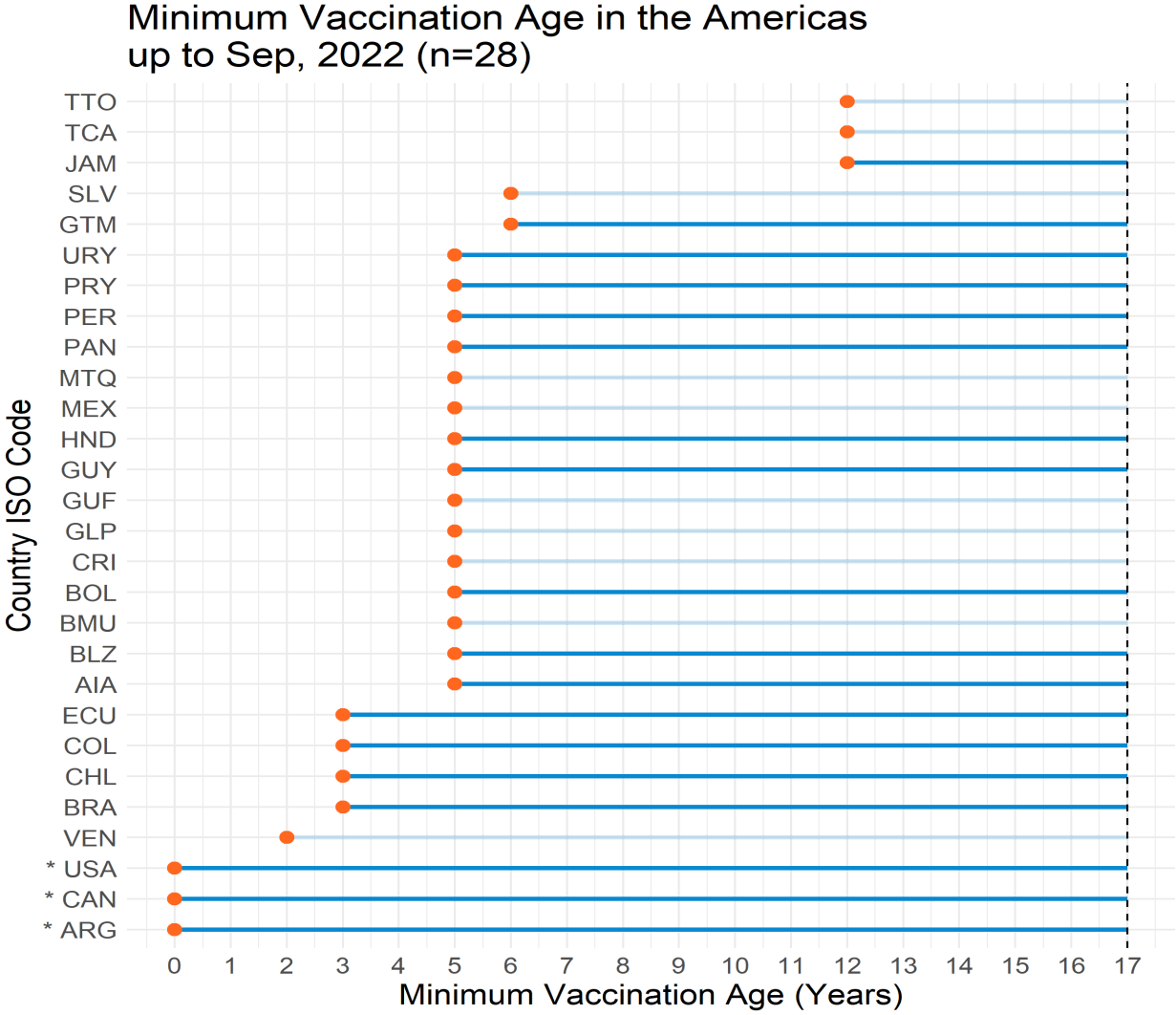
Among 19 countries and territories with available data, five countries and territories reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 8.3 – 200% increase), with the highest relative increase being reported from Suriname (4 hospitalizations, 100% increase), followed by United States Virgin Island (11 hospitalizations, 57.1% increase). Among 12 countries and territories with data available, **COVID-19 ICU admissions** increased in four countries and territories – Cuba (3 ICU admissions, 200% increase), the Bahamas (2 ICU admission, 100% increase), and Jamaica (5 ICU admissions, 25% increase) during EW 35 compared to the previous week.

Notable increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 35 were reported from Montserrat (64 new cases, 220% increase), United States Virgin Island (290 new cases, 60.2% increase), and Turks and Caicos Islands (10 new cases, 25% increase).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from 17 out of 34 countries and territories in the subregion, respectively, including the overseas territories of either France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, or the United States of America. However, these trends should be interpreted with caution due to presence in differences in sequencing capacity and sampling strategies between countries and territories.

# Immunization

**Figure 7.** Minimum Vaccination Age by Country/Territory (n=28). The region of the Americas. As of EW 35, 2022.



COVID-19 vaccination data for children and adolescents are available from the 28 countries/territories of the Americas. Of these, 15 offer vaccination to children ages 5 or older. Eight additional countries offer vaccination to children ages 3 or younger. Please note:

Three countries/territories (marked with "\*" in the figure) are offering COVID-19 vaccine doses to infants aged 6 months or older. The SAGE recently published updated recommendations for the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, expanding their eligibility to all persons aged 6 months or older.

11 countries/territories have not updated their pediatric vaccination data on their national dashboards for three months or more. These countries are marked with a faded line.

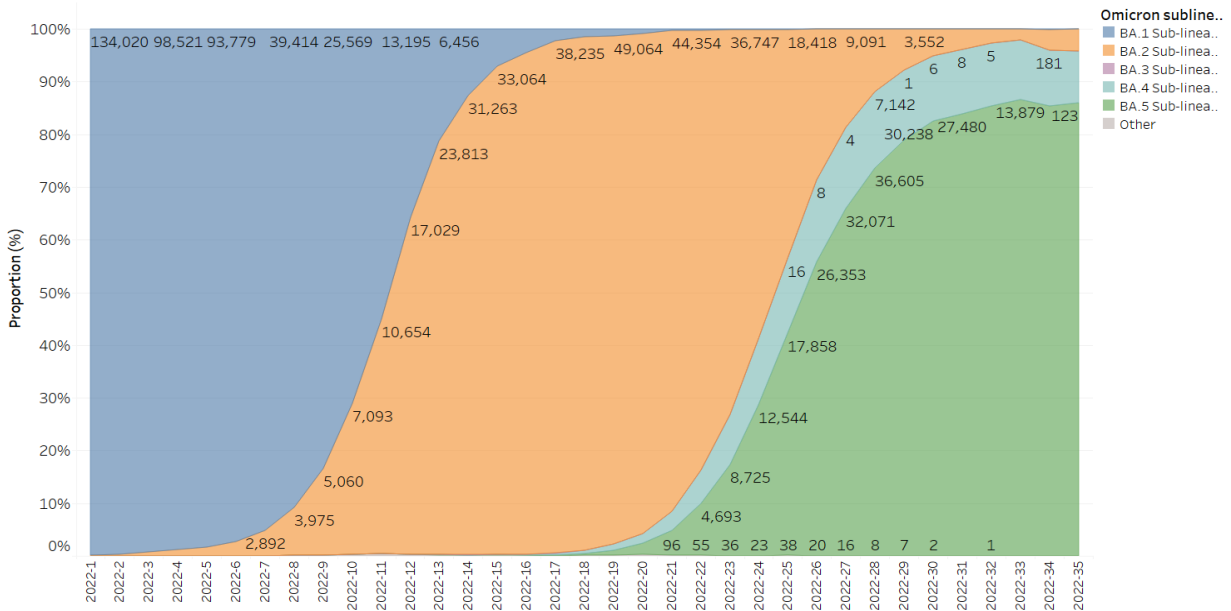
# Genomic surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 441,236 full genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2 from Latin America and the Caribbean have been uploaded to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) platform up to 6 September 2022.

After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas at the end of 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 54 countries or territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries, and few other lineages are currently detected in the Region. Omicron comprises the BA.1 to BA.5 sublineages (or subvariants), which are also subdivided into diverse sublineages based on additional mutations that slightly change the genomic profile but not enough to define a new Variant. These sublineages of BA.1 to BA.5 include those denominated as BC.x to BH.x. Important to notice, there is not (so far) sufficient evidence to infer increased severity or phenotypic impact in either of the sublineages, besides the already established for Omicron.

The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 53.7% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 28.7% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 3.3% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 14.2% BA.5 (and BA.5 sublineages). Although BA.1 accounts for the majority of cumulative sequences, BA.2 became predominant in all subregions between weeks 12 and 15 of 2022, and BA.4 and BA.5 became predominant between weeks 25 and 34 (**Figure 8**). The proportion of BA.4 and in particular BA.5 continues to increase throughout the Region. Notably, in the past four weeks, the BA.4 and BA.5 combined represent 97.7%, 98.3%, 99.2%, and 95.7% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, respectively.

**Figure 8.** Proportions of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Region of the Americas (January-September 2022)



Source: GISAID

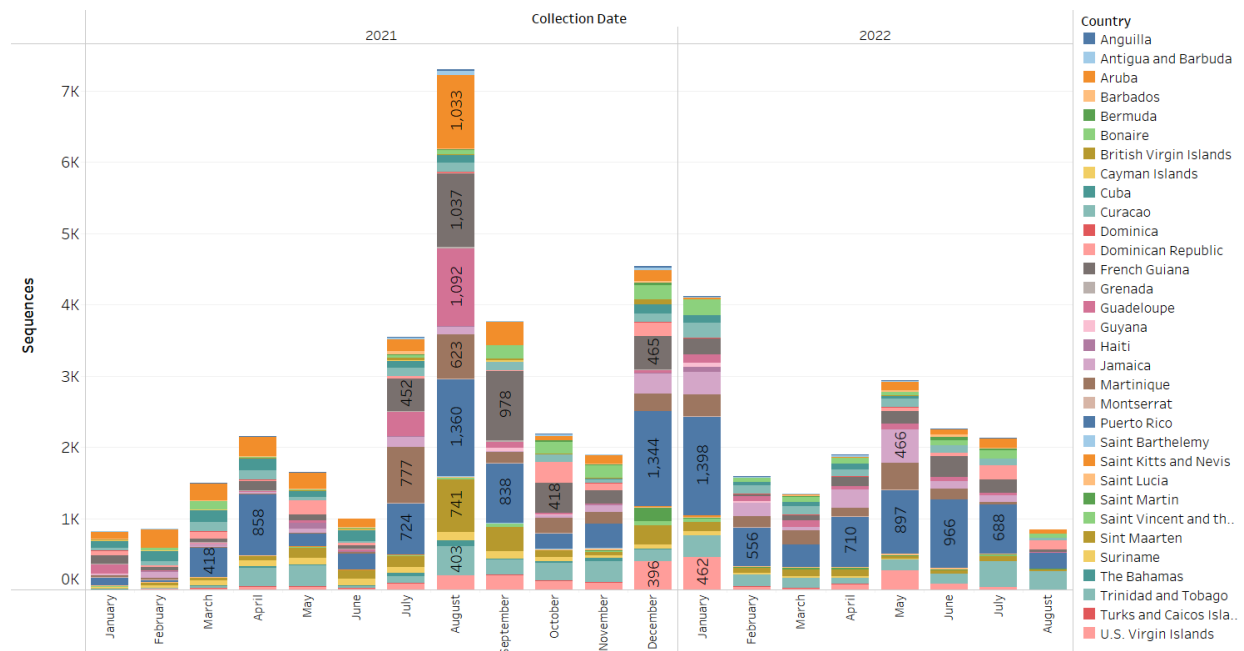


## Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Caribbean subregion

During the last 18 months (January 2021 to 3 September 2022), 48,178 whole genome sequences from the Caribbean countries and territories have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 9**). As in other subregions, Omicron is vastly predominant with no other “previously circulating” VOC/VOI detected in the past four weeks (**Figure 10**). Since Omicron’s first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (44.0%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 36.6% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 (with their respective sublineages) represent 0.01%, 4.7%, and 14.7% of cumulative sequences, respectively (**Figure 11**). However, BA.1 was progressively replaced by BA.2 in weeks 10 to 15, and the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 have been increasing since week 19 (**Figure 12**). When focusing on the past four weeks, BA.5 is the predominant sublineage (72.2%) while BA.4 accounts for 26.1% of the sequences. In the same period, BA.2 and BA.3 only represent 0.6% of the sequences each and BA.1 was not identified in any of the sequences. It is important to note that the majority of sequences for the 4-week period was contributed by the Trinidad and Tobago (25%).

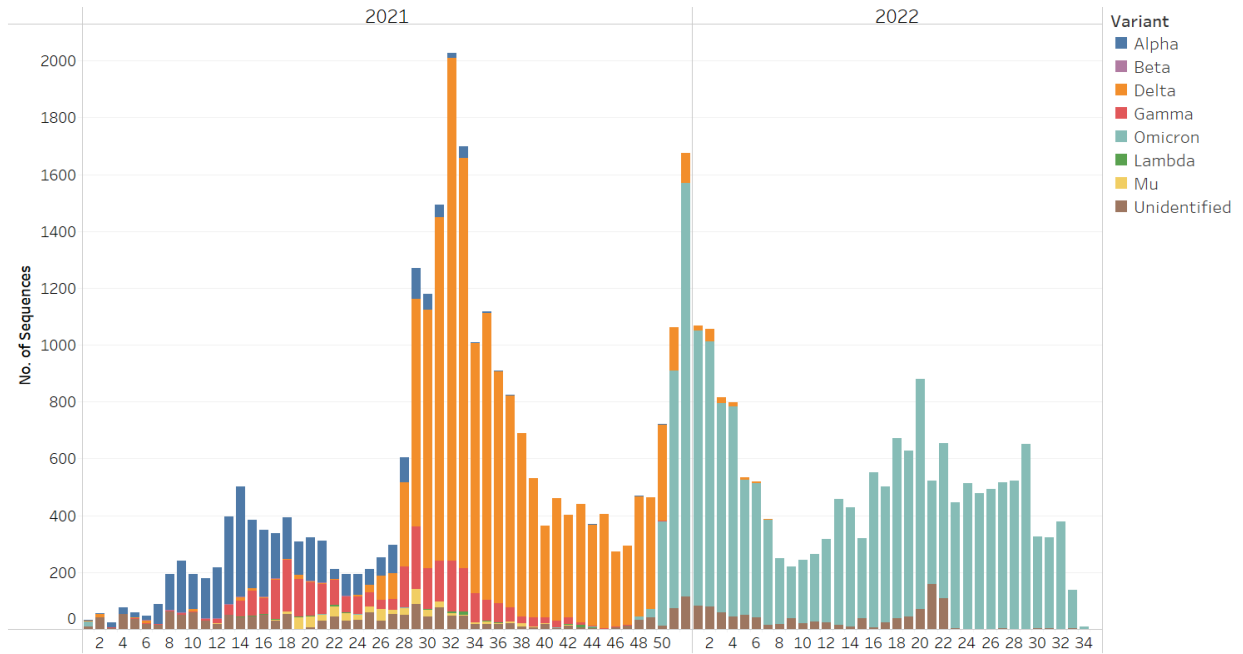
**It is important that all countries in the PAHO Region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and maintain appropriate COVID-19 genomic surveillance.**

**Figure 9.** Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Caribbean subregion (January 2021–September 2022)



Source: GISAID

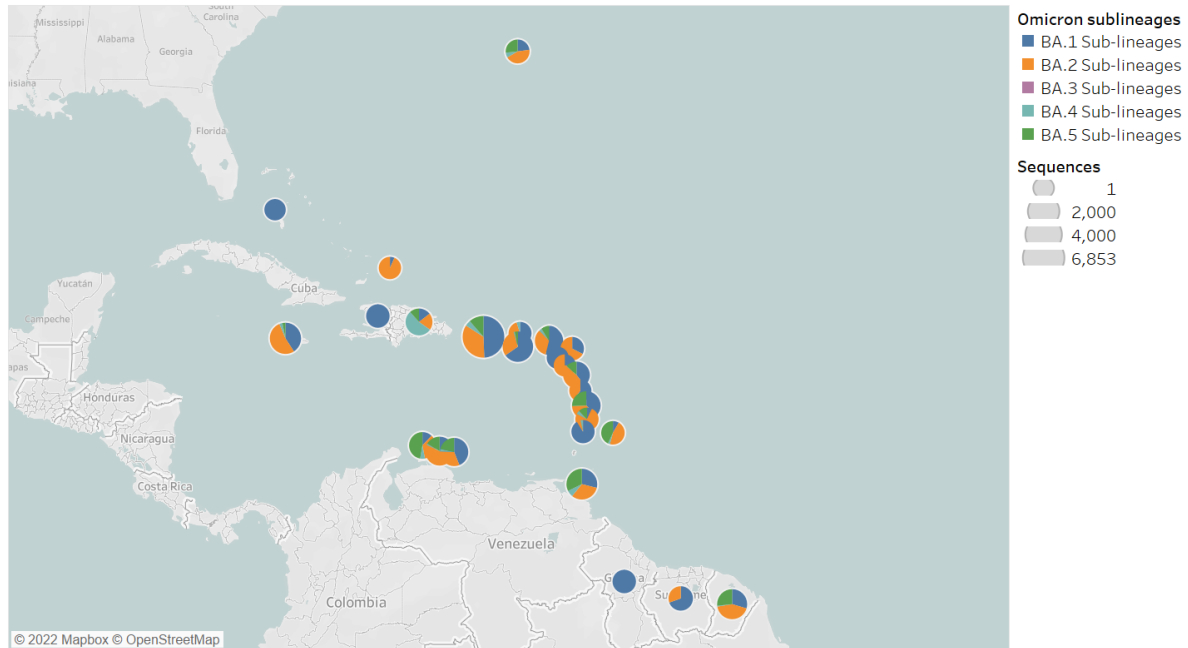
**Figure 10.** Variants detected and reported by the countries in the Caribbean (January 2021-September 2022)



Source: GISAID

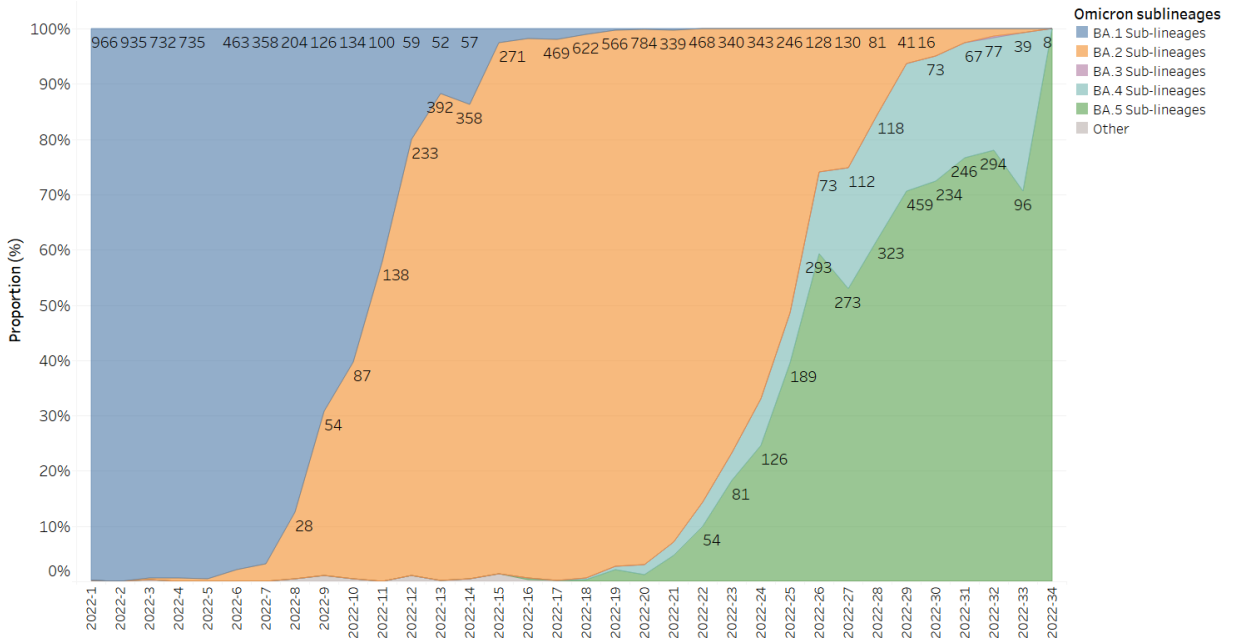
Country-specific data is available at: [https://ais.paho.org/phil/viz/SARS\\_CoV2\\_variants\\_regional.asp](https://ais.paho.org/phil/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp)

**Figure 11.** Distribution of Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Caribbean subregion (November 2021-September 2022)



Source: GISAID

**Figure 12.** Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in the Caribbean subregion (January-September 2022)



Source: GISAID



**Annex 1.** Map of the COVID-19 cumulative incidence rate per 100,000 population in the Region of the Americas reported as of EW 35, 2022.

