

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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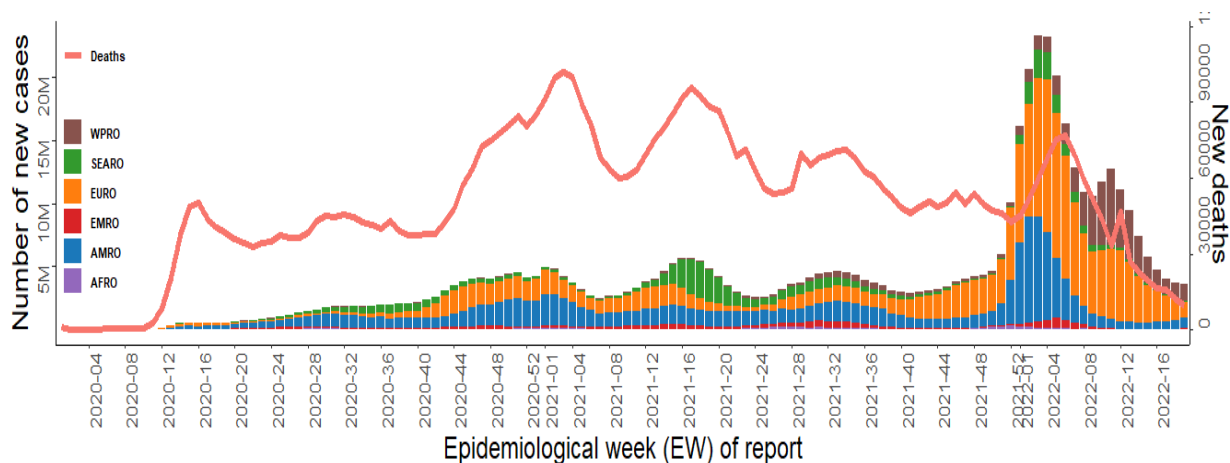
Contents:

- Executive summary including global overview
- Regional and sub-regional trends
- Immunisation
- Genomic Surveillance

Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to May 17, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 519.2 million COVID-19 cases including nearly 6.3 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During EW 19, COVID-19 weekly cases increased in the regions of Western Pacific (14.1%), Eastern Mediterranean (62.8%), the Americas (27.2%), and Africa (5.9%), while they decreased in Europe and South-East Asia. COVID-19 deaths increased in Africa by 48.3% while they decreased in the remaining five WHO regions (range: -28.5 - -9.9%).
- **Globally**, 3,705,498 COVID-19 cases were reported in epidemiological week (EW) 19 (May 08, 2022-May 14, 2022) – a 1% increase compared to EW 18 (May 01, 2022-May 07, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 9,808 COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 20.6% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 918,425 cases including 3,585 deaths were reported in EW 19 – a 27.2% increase in cases and 16.2% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, **COVID-19 cases increased in all four subregions** (range: 9.3 – 80%). During EW 19, the trends for weekly deaths increased in Central America (2.1%) and the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (49.4%) while it declined in North America (-5%) and South America (-22.3%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 89.8 cases per 100,000 population during EW 19 (70.6 the previous week). Between EW 19 and 18, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 7.7 deaths per 1 million population (8.3 the previous two weeks).
- Among 33 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 18 countries and territories (range: 0.3% - 400%) during EW 19 compared to the previous week. Among 27 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 Intensive Care Unit (**ICU admissions**) increased in 13 countries and territories (range: 6.7% - 300%).

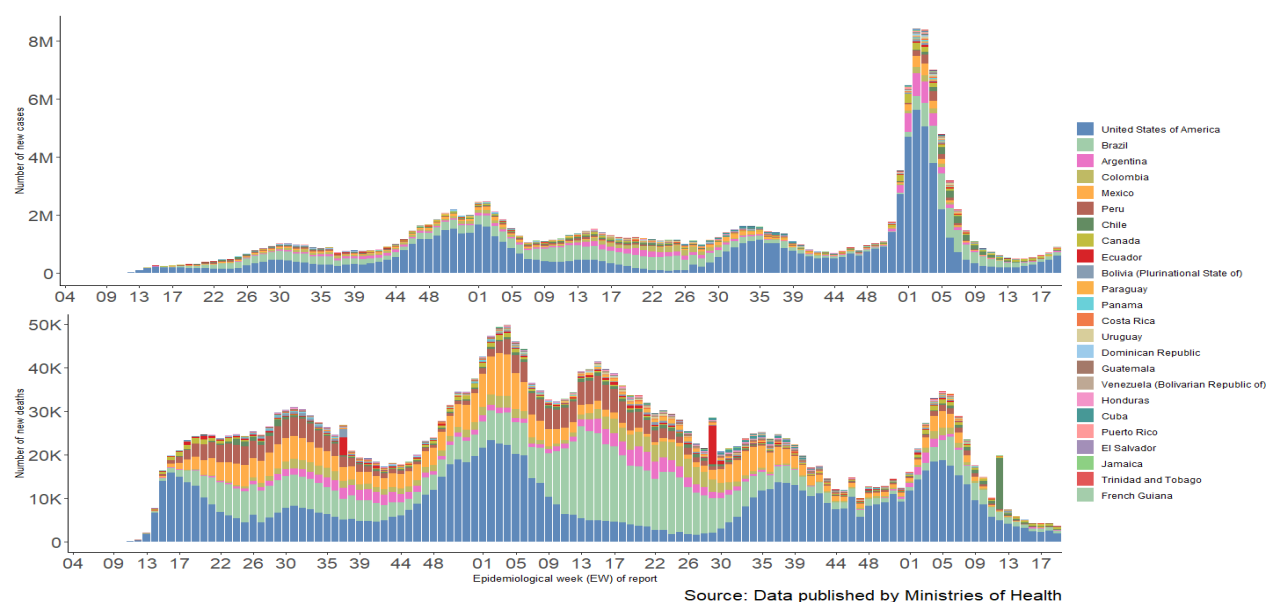
Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 – EW 19, 2022.



Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

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 4 2020 – EW 19 2022



During EW 19, the region of the Americas reported 918,425 **COVID-19 cases** – a 27.2% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 2**), and continuing with the upward trend in weekly cases for the fifth consecutive week. The highest number of COVID-19 cases was reported in the North American subregion (642,134 cases, 28.7% increase), while the largest relative increase in weekly cases was observed in the Central American subregion (31,860 cases, 80% increase) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (605,547 cases, 33.3% increase), Brazil (120,831 cases, 9% increase), Argentina (33,989 cases, 92.6% increase).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 18 and EW 19 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 18	Deaths EW 18	Cases EW 19	Deaths EW 19	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,555,399	32,924	48,459	77	52,973	115	9.3%	49.4%
Central America	3,183,934	50,411	17,699	143	31,860	146	80.0%	2.1%
North America	91,220,539	1,359,683	499,092	3,052	642,134	2,370	28.7%	-22.3%
South America	56,968,871	1,293,601	156,942	1,004	191,458	954	22.0%	-5.0%

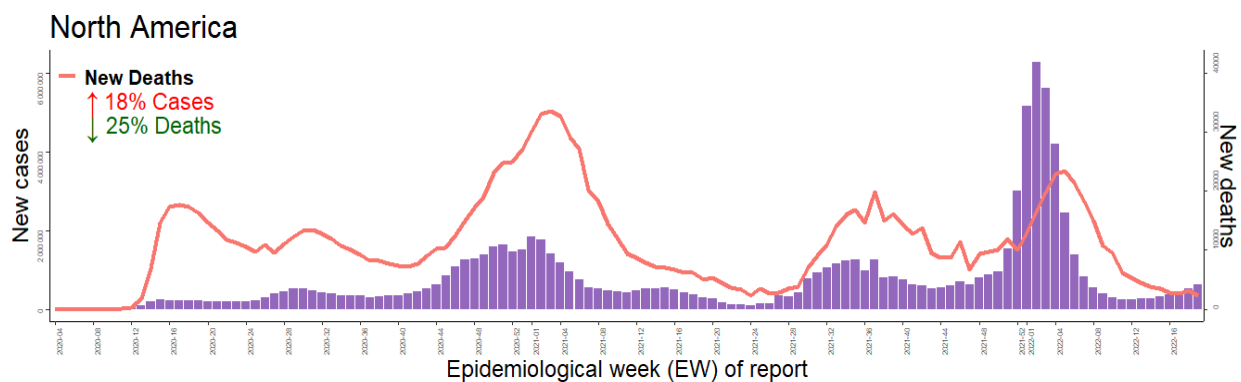
During EW 19, a total of 3,585 **weekly COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of 16.2% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The subregion reporting the the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was North America (2,370 deaths, -22% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the national level, countries/territories with the highest proportion of weekly deaths were the United States of America (1,849 new deaths, -27% decrease), Brazil (689 new deaths, 1.2% increase), and Canada (501 new deaths, 3.1% increase).

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

North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have been increasing in North America for the last seven consecutive weeks as of EW 19 – primarily due to increases observed in the United States of America since EW 13. This coincided with the week when the proportion of Omicron variant of concern (VOC) sub lineage BA.2 peaked (75%) and the proportion of sub lineage BA.2.12.1 began increasing¹. During EW 19, the United States reported 605,547 cases of COVID-19 – a 33.3 % increase compared to the previous week. Of the total weekly sequenced samples, 47.5% were Omicron sub lineage BA.2.12.1 and 50.9% were Omicron sub lineage BA.2.¹ For the same period, Mexico has been observing an increase in their incidence for the last four weeks with 4,169 cases during EW 19, a 14.3% increase. On the other hand, COVID-19 cases appear to be on a downward trend in Canada since EW 15 – a total of 32,418 cases were reported in EW 19 – a 21.1 % decrease compared to EW 18.

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



During the same period, **the overall weekly COVID-19 deaths** decreased by 22.3% in the North American subregion and the largest decline was observed in the United States (1,849 new deaths, 27% decrease) and Mexico (20 new deaths, 37.5% decrease). Canada observed an increase in its weekly deaths for the sixth consecutive week during EW 19 – a total of 501 weekly deaths representing a 3.1% increase compared to the previous week was reported.

COVID-19 hospitalizations and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions: While Canada continued to report a decline in both weekly hospitalizations (6,755 hospitalizations, 1% decline) and ICU admissions (434 ICU admissions, 5.9% decrease) during EW 19, the United States continued to report an increasing trend for both – 21,936 hospitalizations (16.8% increase) and 2,291 ICU admissions (6.7% increase).

Important increases in severity trends for the subregion for EW 19 continue to be observed in the United States of America. While weekly deaths continue to decline as of EW 19, the increasing trends in other COVID-19 indicators (case, hospitalizations and ICU admissions), eased or lifted public health measures in many jurisdictions, and smaller proportion of fully vaccinated² individuals in the population (65.5%) could all once again, test the health care system in the United States and potentially, lead to an increasing trend in deaths. Finally, though there continues to be an increase in deaths in Canada for the sixth consecutive week, a small but sustained decrease in hospitalizations and ICU admissions has been observed for the third consecutive week during EW 19.

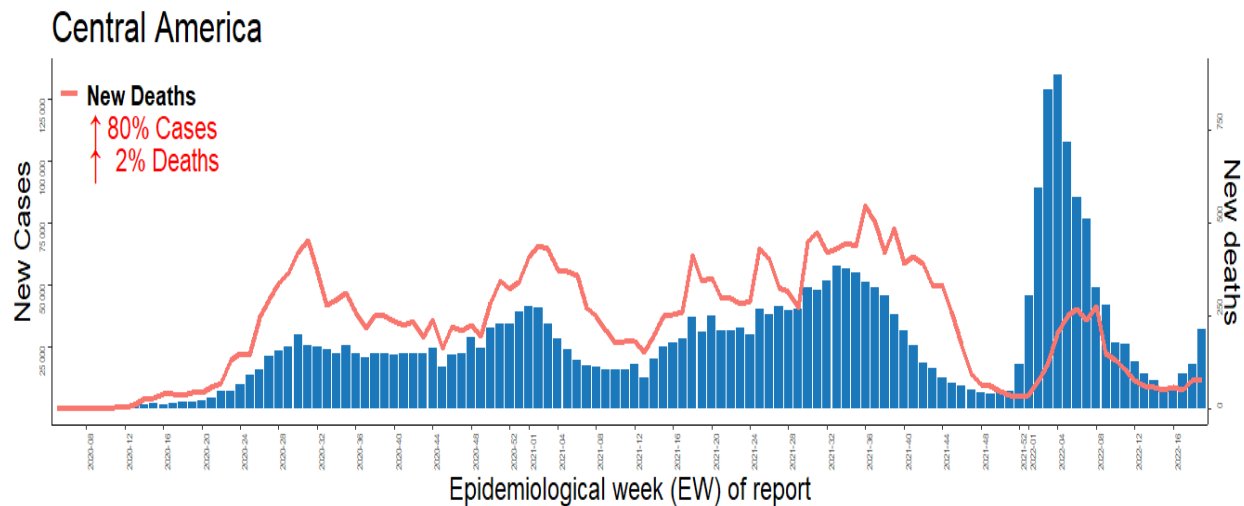
1 United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). COVID-19 Data Tracker. Variant Proportions. Available at: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>

2 Fully vaccinated: % of people who received the last recommended dose of any vaccine or completed their schedule. This includes the second dose if the schedule is a two-dose schedule and the single dose in a single dose schedule.

Central America

In Central America, the overall **COVID-19 incidence** for the sub-region has been on an upward trend for the last four consecutive weeks with 31,860 new cases reported during EW 19 – an 80.0% 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 19, 2022.



Out of the seven countries and territories in the subregion, four countries reported an increase in **weekly new COVID-19 cases**. The biggest relative percent increase in new cases among the four countries was observed in Belize (284 cases, 134.7% increase), followed by Panama (19,039 new cases, 118.9% increase), Costa Rica (8,874 new cases, 70.1% increase), and Guatemala (3,070 new cases, 4.5% increase).

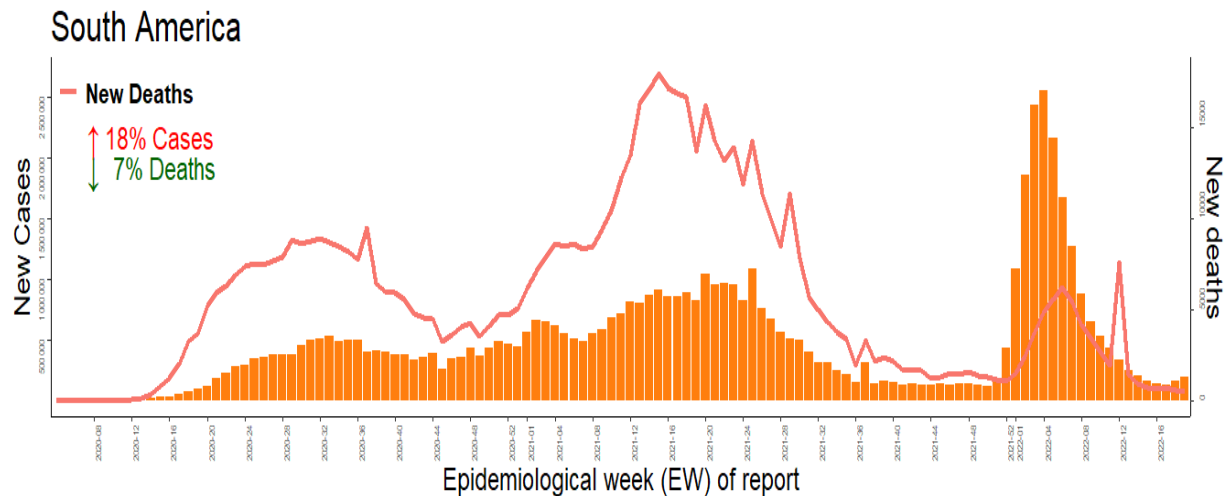
During the same period, **weekly deaths** in the subregion increased by approximately 2.1% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**), primarily in three out of the seven countries/territories. The major increases were observed in Panama (11 deaths, 57.1% increase) and in Costa Rica (23 deaths, 43.8% increase) during EW 19

Among four countries and territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations**, two reported an increase in COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations – Panama (185 hospitalizations, 36% increase) and Honduras (49 hospitalizations, 58.1% increase) – while the trends declined in Belize and Costa Rica by 33% and 9%, respectively, compared to the previous week. With respect to **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, all three countries with data available (Costa Rica, Panama, and Honduras) observed an increase in their ICU admissions during EW 19 (range: 6.7 – 100% increase).

Important increases in severity trends for the subregion were observed in Panama where in addition an explosive increase in weekly cases (19K cases, 119% increase), there has been a sustained increase in weekly deaths (11 deaths, 57.1% increase) and hospital admissions (185 hospitalizations; 36% increase & 25 ICU admissions; 56.3% increase) or the last three weeks. Lastly, Costa Rica observed a 43.8% increase in deaths (23 new deaths) during EW 19, along with an 6.7% increase in its ICU admissions. To date, the percentage of fully vaccinated² people in Panama and in Costa Rica is about 65.5% and 80.2%, respectively, and the percentage of people with an additional dose^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} among fully vaccinated people is about 46% and 53.9%, respectively.

South America

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



In South America, a total of 191,458 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 19 – a 22.0% increase compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**).

Out of the 10 countries and territories in the sub-region, five experienced an increase in **COVID-19 weekly cases** during EW 19. The largest increase among was observed in Uruguay (5,538 new cases, 96.6% increase), followed by Argentina (33,989 new cases, 92.6% increase), Chile (24,757 new cases, 41.4% increase), Colombia (1,671 cases, 34.5% increase). The highest proportion of cases in the subregion was reported by Brazil (120,831 cases, 9% increase). The remaining five countries/territories showed a decrease in weekly cases (range: -44.3 - -1.5% decrease).

During EW 19, a total of 954 **COVID-19 deaths** was reported in South America – a 5.0% decrease compared to the previous week. The largest decline in deaths were reported by Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (1 new deaths, 93.3% decrease), followed by Argentina (47 new deaths, 38.2% decrease), Uruguay (2 new deaths, 33.3% decrease). On the other hand, three countries/territories reported an increase in weekly deaths during EW 19 – Paraguay (9 deaths, 350% increase), Venezuela (2 deaths, 100% increase), and Brazil (689 deaths, 1.2% increase). Ecuador reported 7 deaths during EW 19 – representing 40% more deaths than the previous week – however most of the recent deaths published by the Ministry of Health have been reclassified historical deaths.

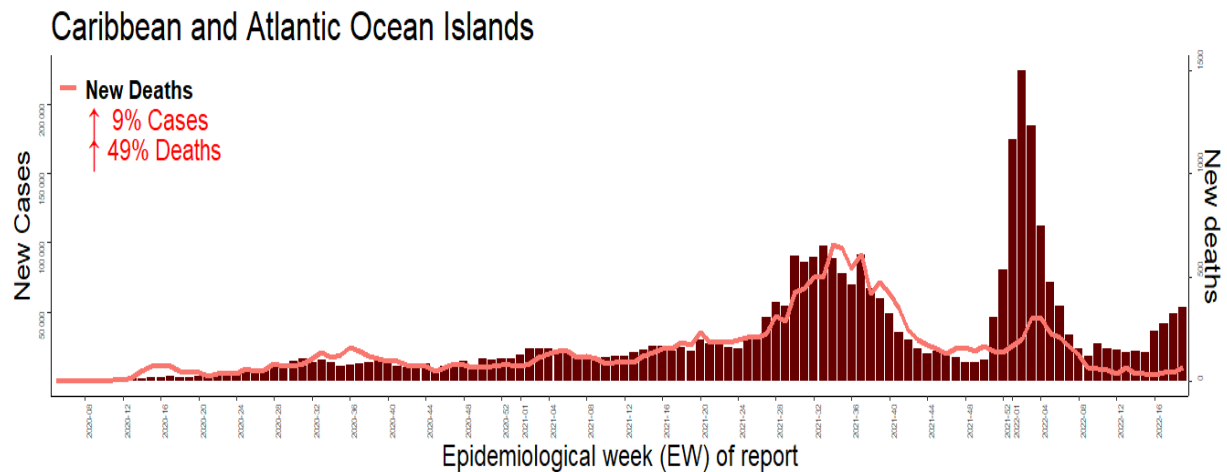
Among five countries and territories with available data for **COVID-19 hospitalizations**, weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations declined in four countries/territories (range: -14.7 - -0.6%) and no substantial change was observed in one country compared to the previous week – Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (301 hospitalizations, 0.3% increase). In terms of **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, Uruguay was the only country reporting an increase (20 ICU admissions, 17.6% increase) among seven countries/territories with available data for COVID-19 ICU admissions, while the remaining six countries reported a decline ranging from 81.4 to 3.2%.

Increases in severity trends for the subregion were observed in Uruguay where its COVID-19 ICU admissions increased by 17.5% (20 ICU admissions) along with elevated new cases (96.6% increase) during EW 19 compared to the previous week. As of EW19, Uruguay reported about 82.3% of its populations with fully vaccinated² status and about 70% of them received an additional dose²**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **COVID-19 weekly cases** have been increasing for the last five consecutive weeks. During EW 19, cases increased by 9.3%, and deaths by 49.4% compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 27 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 0.6% - 978.9%), while it declined in the remaining seven countries and territories (range: -53.8% - -1.4%).

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



During the same period, there was a sharp increase in **COVID-19 weekly deaths** in the subregion (115 new deaths, 49.4% increase) – primarily due to deaths reported from the Barbados (29 deaths, 163.6% increase), Jamaica (24 deaths, 118.2% increase), Puerto Rico (22 deaths, 8.3% decrease), Trinidad and Tobago (21 deaths, 0% change), and Suriname (9 deaths, 100% increase). However, more than 80% of the weekly deaths reported from Barbados, Jamaica, and Suriname during EW 19 were historical deaths that the respective ministries of health published retroactively. Overall, eight countries/territories in the subregion observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths (range: 100% - 163.6% increase), six observed a decline (range: -100 – -8.3%), 20 reported no change (Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago) in their COVID-19 weekly deaths.

Among 23 countries/territories with available data, 14 reported an increase in their **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 14.3 – 400% increase), four reported a decline (range: -100 - -31.4%), and the remaining five countries/territories observed no change during EW 19 compared to EW18. For 15 countries/territories with available data for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, eight observed an increase in their weekly ICU admissions (range: 33.3 – 300%) and seven reported either a decline (n=3) or remained the same (n=4) as the previous week.

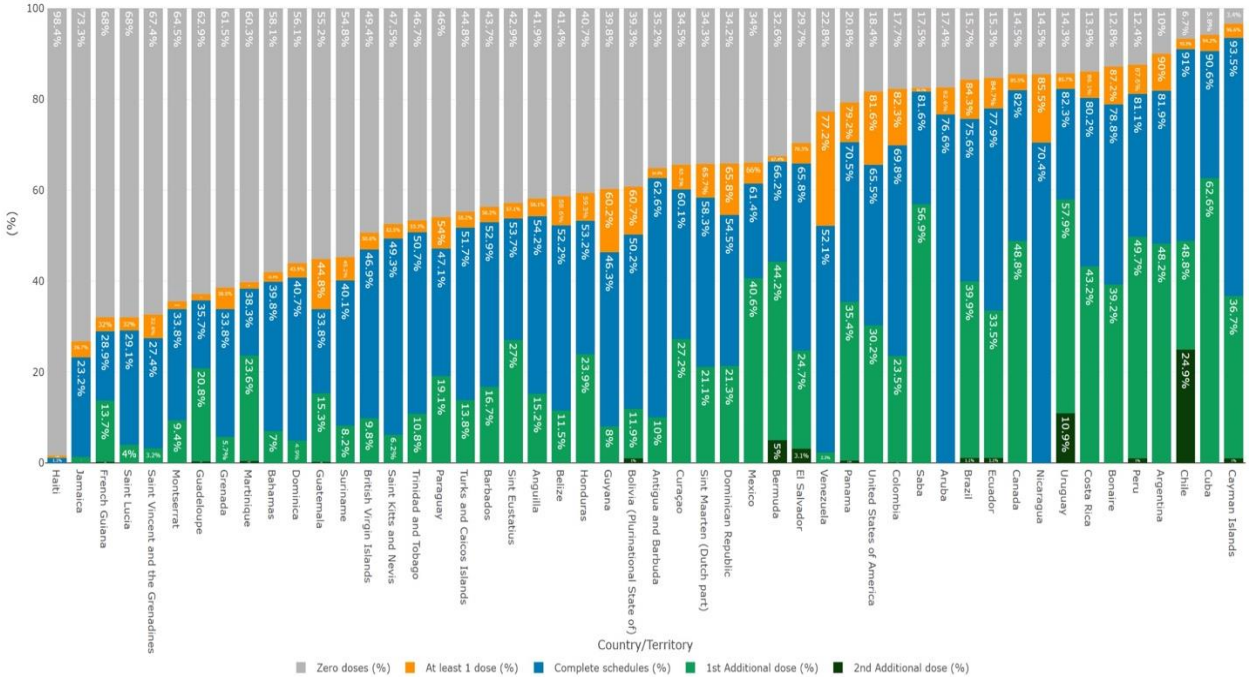
During EW19, **significant increases in new cases** for the subregion were observed in Suriname (615 cases, 978.9% increase), Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (734 cases, 247.9% increase), Guyana (233 cases, 184.1% increase), and Saint Lucia (529 cases, 119.5% increase).

In the same period, **significant increases in severity trends** were observed in Jamaica. Although reported deaths (24 deaths, 118.2% increase) from Jamaica during EW19 included mostly historical deaths like in recent weeks, the number of hospitalizations increased by nearly 84% (79 hospitalizations) compared to the previous week. Severity trends also remained elevated in Puerto Rico (367 hospitalizations; 25.7% increase & 41 ICU admissions; 57.7 increase) though there was a slight decrease in the weekly deaths (22 deaths, -8.3% decrease) relative to EW 18. To date, the percentages of fully vaccinated² population in Jamaica and Puerto Rico are around 23.2% and 94%, respectively, while approximately 5.5% and 58.4% of the fully vaccinated population received an additional dose² in each country respectively.

Immunization

Figure 7 shows the COVID-19 vaccination coverage grouped by countries/territories in the region of the Americas as of EW 19, 2022.

Figure 7. COVID-19 vaccination coverage grouped by countries/territories. Region of the Americas. As of EW 19, 2022.



Reports on COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the Americas demonstrate that countries and territories continue to make significant efforts to offer additional doses of a COVID-19 vaccine to the population*. Based on reports from 50** countries/territories, 47 begun administering a third dose (1st additional dose) of the vaccine, while 15 begun the application of a fourth dose (2nd additional dose). Despite these efforts, as noted in the PAHO Weekly Summary for 3 May 2022, the monthly COVID-19 vaccination coverage rate for the Americas has been declining since November 2021. WHO continues to consider a person to be “fully vaccinated” if he/she received at least 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Therefore, as long as the proportion of persons with incomplete vaccination series remains high, the overall coverage rate of a country remains subpar regardless of the number of booster doses administered. We encourage countries to continue promoting COVID-19 vaccination operations, with renewed focus on the administration of the primary series (i.e., first 2 doses). These efforts increase the size of the eligible population who can receive additional doses, and thereby maximize protection against the SARS-CoV-2 virus as well as lower the national hospitalization and mortality rates.

* All percentages in the figure, including zero doses, are calculated considering the total country population, according to the 2021 UN Population and U.S. Census Bureau for countries/territories with populations below 100,000 inhabitants.

** Four countries/territories did not report data for the current epidemiological week: Bahamas, Suriname, Turks and Caicos, Venezuela.

Genomic Surveillance

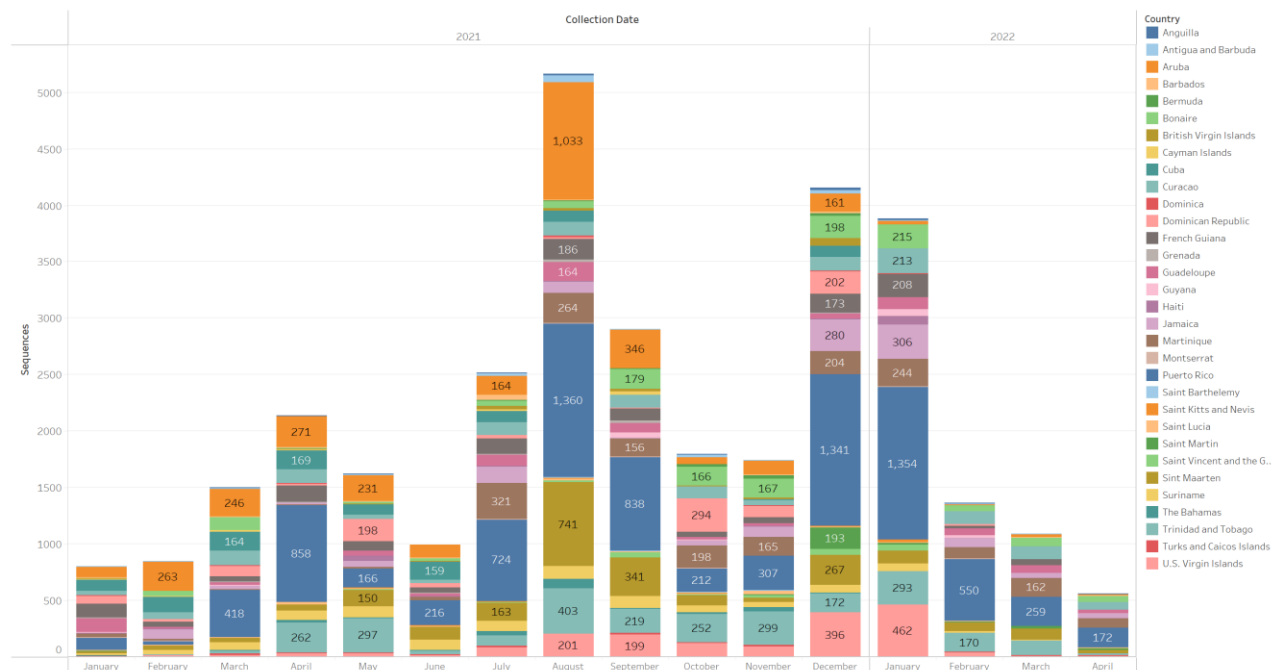
Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 338 412 full genome sequences of SARS-CoV-2 from Latin America and the Caribbean have been uploaded to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) platform up to 6 May 2022.

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 53 countries or territories. Omicron now represents the vast majority of sequences detected in the PAHO Region and has outcompeted Delta and other lineages. In fact, the last documented detection of Delta in the Region was on 28 April 2022 in North America.

Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Caribbean

From January 2021 to 27 April 2022, 175,064 whole genome sequences from the Caribbean countries and territories have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 8**). The “previously circulating” VOCs (**Alpha** - last detected 15 December 2021; **Beta** - last detected 9 June 2021; **Gamma** - last detected 17 December 2021) and the “currently circulating” VOCs (**Delta** - last detected 17 February 2022; and **Omicron**) have been detected in the subregion, in addition to “previously circulating” VOIs (**Lambda** - last detected 2 November 2021 and **Mu** - last detected 19 October 2021) and other lineages/variants (**Figure 9, 10**).

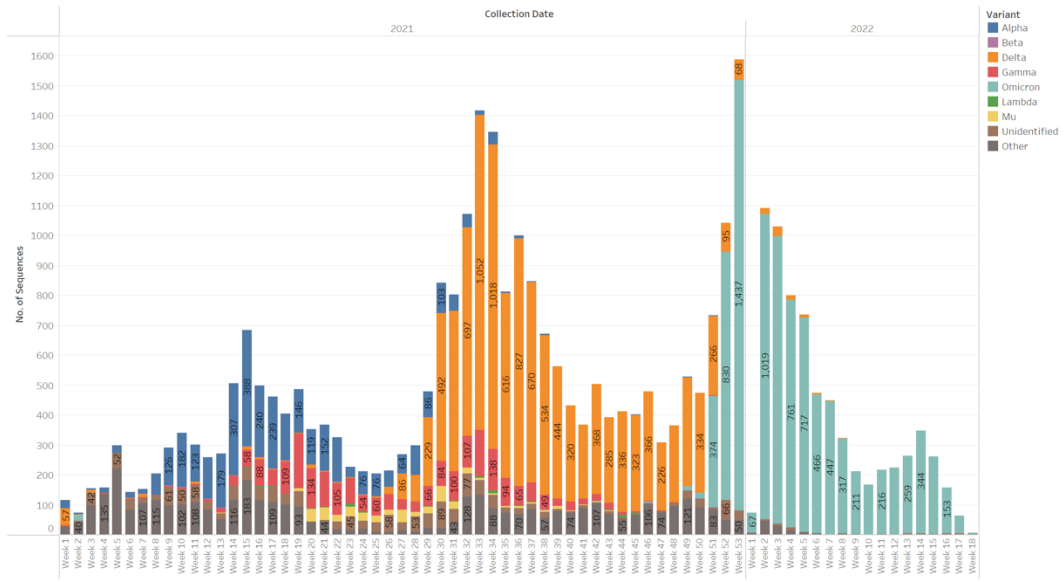
Figure 8. Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Caribbean subregion (January 2021 – April 2022)



Source: GISAID

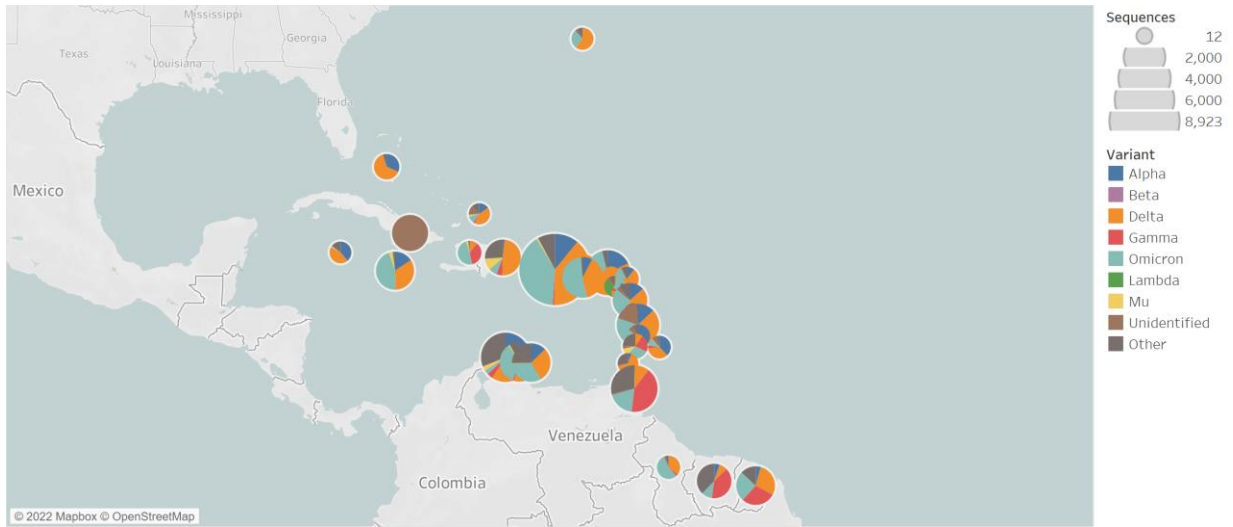
After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in the subregion, being detected in 1,473 samples (98%) sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 8 weeks of available data (6 March to 30 April). Since Omicron's first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (86%) of sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 14% of the sequences with 6 samples of BA.3 detected while BA.4 and BA.5 have not been detected. However, the proportion of sequences identified as BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages) has been decreasing for the past 8 weeks where data is available (6 March to 30 April) while BA.2 (and BA.2 sublineages) has been increasing during the same period (**Figure 11**). In EW 15-2022, BA.2 and its sublineages increased to 87% of sequences submitted.

Figure 9. Variants detected and reported by the Countries in the Caribbean Subregion (January 2021 - April 2022)



Source: GISAID
 Country-specific data is available at: https://ais.paho.org/php/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp

Figure 10. Distribution of VOC and VOI identified by the Countries in the Caribbean Subregion (January 2021 – April 2022)

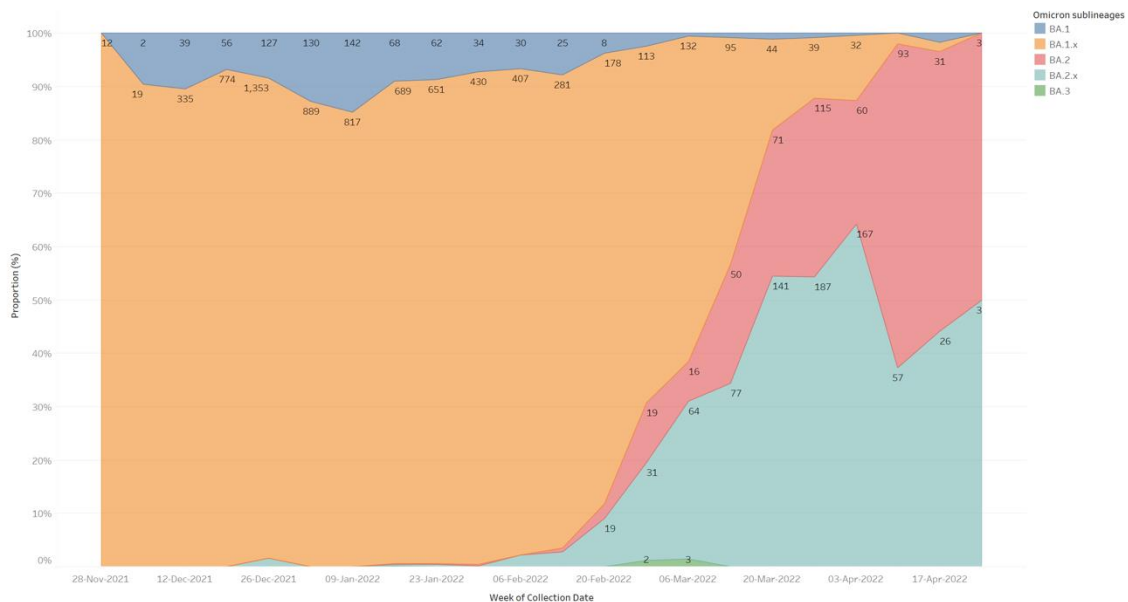


Country	Variant						
	Alpha	Beta	Delta	Gamma	Omicron	Lambda	Mu
Anguilla	+		+		+	+	
Antigua and Barbuda	+	+	+	+	+		
Aruba	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Barbados	+		+	+	+		+
Bermuda	+		+		+		
Bonaire	+		+	+	+		+
British Virgin Islands	+		+	+	+		+
Cayman Islands	+	+	+	+			+
Cuba		+	+				
Curacao	+		+	+	+		+
Dominica	+		+		+		
Dominican Republic	+		+	+	+	+	+
French Guiana	+	+	+	+	+		
Grenada	+		+	+			
Guadeloupe	+	+	+		+		
Guyana	+		+	+	+		
Haiti	+		+	+	+		+
Jamaica	+		+	+	+		+
Martinique	+	+	+	+	+		
Montserrat	+		+	+	+		
Puerto Rico	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Saint Barthelemy			+				
Saint Kitts and Nevis			+		+	+	
Saint Lucia	+		+		+		
Saint Martin			+		+		
Saint Vincent and the G..			+	+	+		+
Sint Maarten	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Suriname	+	+	+	+	+		
The Bahamas	+		+	+	+		
Trinidad and Tobago	+		+	+	+		
Turks and Caicos Islands	+		+	+	+		+
U.S. Virgin Islands	+		+	+	+		+

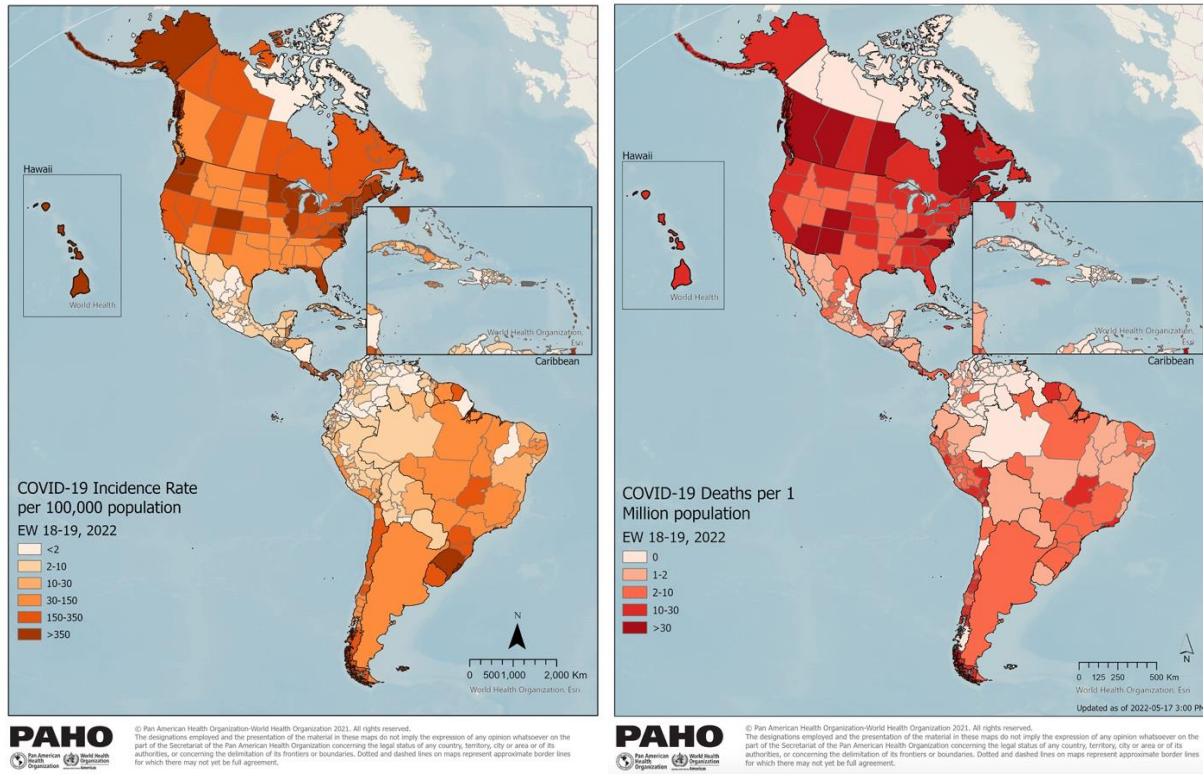
Source: GISAID

*Cuba has also officially reported Alpha, Beta, Delta and Omicron detection and circulation. Nevertheless, up to May 13, whole genome sequences were not yet available at GISAID.

Figure 11. Distribution of VOC Omicron sublineages identified by the Countries in the Caribbean Subregion (December 2021 – April 2022)



Annex 1. COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,00 population and the mortality rate from COVID-19 per 1 million population. The Region of the Americas. As of EW 19, 2022.



The maps (**Annex 1**) the COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,00 population and the mortality rate from COVID-19 per 1 million population in the Region of the Americas reported during EW 18 and 19, 2022. Over the past two weeks, the highest incidence rates were observed in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Chile, Panama, Costa Rica, French Guiana, and several Caribbean countries and territories including Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St Lucia, and Puerto Rico. The highest mortality rates were observed in Canada, the U.S., Peru, Chile, Guatemala, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The largest increases in cases compared to the previous two weeks were observed in Central America (mostly in Panama and Belize), followed by North and South America (with largest incidence change seen in Argentina, Chile, and the U.S.).

The largest increases in deaths compared to the previous two weeks were observed in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (mostly in Barbados, Grenada, Bermuda, and Trinidad and Tobago), followed by Central America (especially in Panama and Honduras). Deaths slightly decreased in North and South America compared to the previous two weeks.