

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

Issue 23, published July 12, 2022

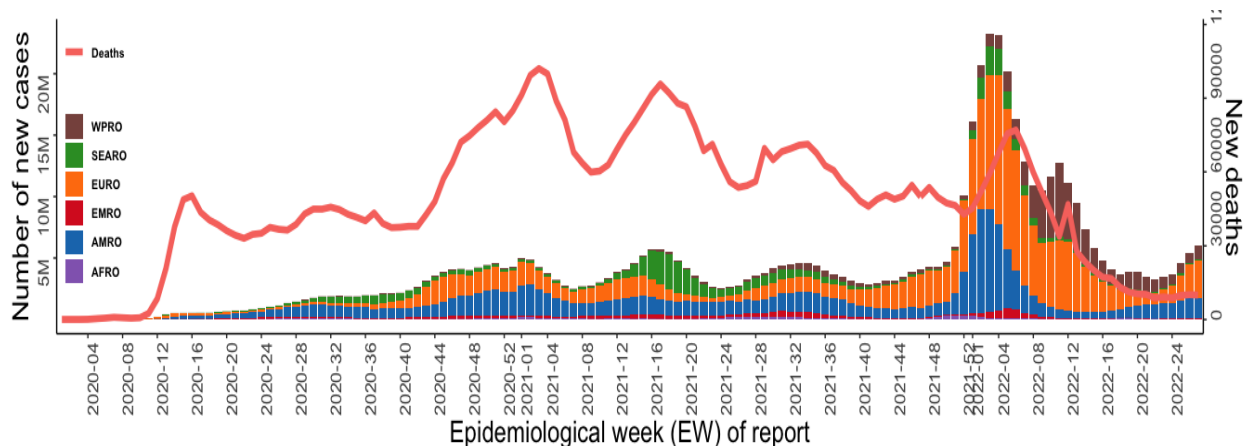
### Contents:

- 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 July 12, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 553 COVID-19 cases including nearly 6.4 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 27 (03 – 09 July 2022), cases decreased in 3 regions while they increased in the regions of Western Pacific (27.9%), South-East Asia (4.8%), and Europe (4.4%). COVID-19 deaths increased in four WHO regions they increased in the regions of Africa (-16.8%) and the Americas (-3.5%).
- **Globally**, approximately 5,738,215 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 27 – a 5.8% increase compared to EW 26 (June 26, 2022-July 02, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 9,953 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a 0.4% relative increase compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 1,562,967 cases and 4,789 deaths were reported in EW 27 - a 0.9% decrease in cases and 3.5% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases increased in 2 subregions - South America (2%) and Central America (54.9%) while they decreased in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (-5.2%) and North America (-4.5%). COVID-19 Deaths increased in the South American subregion (14.2%) while they decreased in the remaining three subregions (range: -17.6 - -1.4%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 152.8 cases per 100,000 population during EW 27 (154.2 the previous week). Between EW 27 and 26, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 9.5 deaths per 1 million population (9.3 the previous two weeks).
- Among 33 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 14 countries and territories (range: 3.9% - 100%) during EW 27 compared to the previous week. Among 27 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 12 countries and territories (range: 2.5% - 100%).

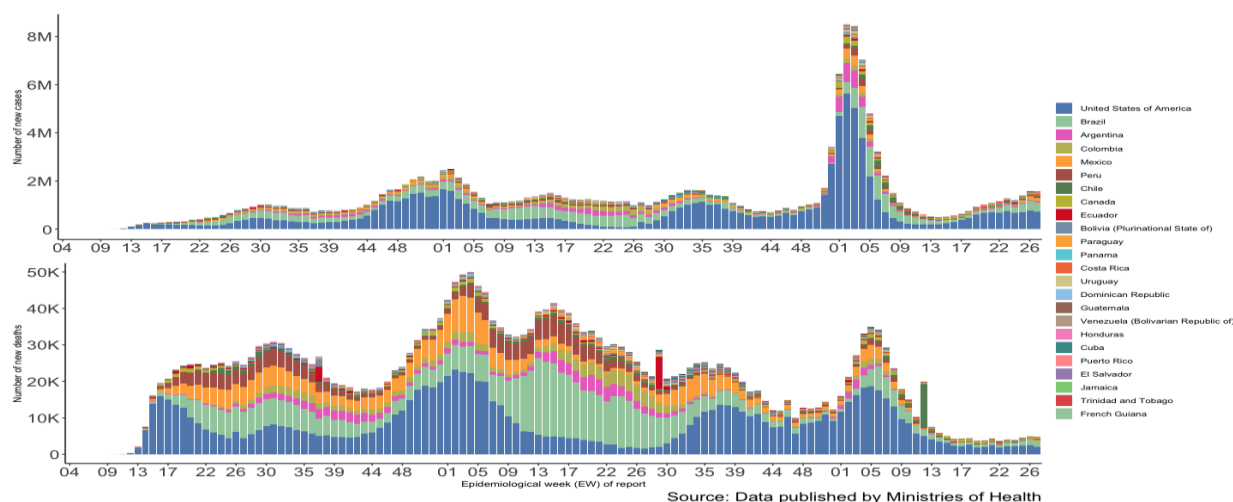
**Figure 1:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 27, 2022.



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 3, 2020 - 27, 2022.



During EW 27, 1,562,967 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of 0.9% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases during EW 27 was reported from the North American subregion (881,667 cases, 4% decrease) while the largest relative increase was observed from the Central American subregion (54,075 cases, 54.9%) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). During EW 27, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported by the United States of America (722,924 new cases, 6.1% decrease), Brazil (396,781 new cases, 3.4% decrease), and Mexico (137,426 new cases, 0.3% increase).

**Table 1:** Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 26 and EW 27 by subregion. Region of the Americas.

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 26	Deaths EW 26	Cases EW 27	Deaths EW 27	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,934,528	33,914	44,114	136	41,817	112	-5.2%	-17.6%
Central America	3,477,462	51,619	34,903	141	54,075	139	54.9%	-1.4%
North America	97,646,965	1,381,431	923,627	2,724	881,667	2,295	-4.5%	-15.7%
South America	60,302,887	1,305,280	574,121	1,964	585,408	2,243	2.0%	14.2%

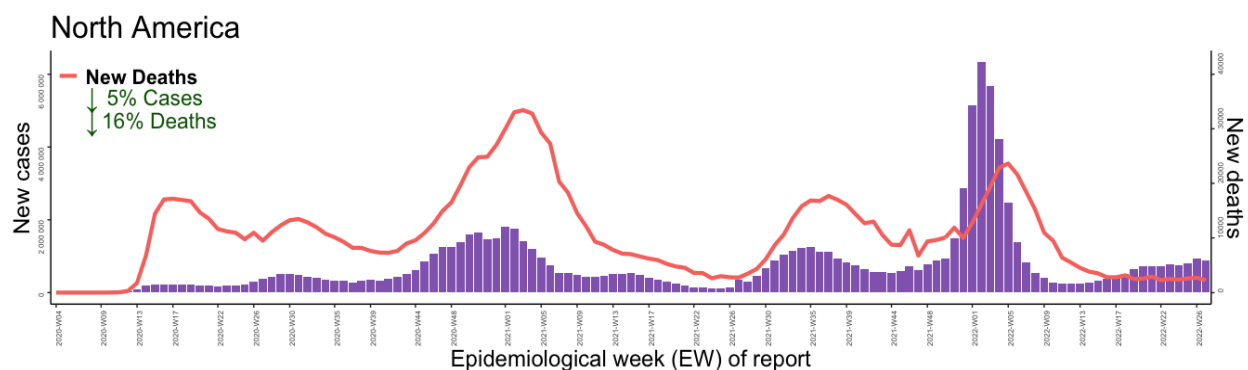
For the same period, 4,789 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of 3.5% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 deaths was observed in North America (2,295 deaths, 15% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the country level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from the United States of America (1,987 deaths, 18.8% decrease), Brazil (1,639 deaths, 11.4% increase), and Chile (224 deaths, 25.8% increase).

**A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 27 by subregion is presented below.**

## North America

After the three weeks of an increasing trend, **COVID-19 cases** have decreased in the North American subregion during EW 27 (881,667 cases, -4.5% decrease), primarily due to a decrease observed in the United States of America. During EW 27, the United States of America observed a 6.1% decrease in weekly cases (722,924 cases) compared to the previous week – though the overall weekly trends for cases have remained consistent since EW 20. For the same period, Mexico reported 137,426 new cases (0.3% increase) – similar to the weekly numbers reported in EW 26 – and the highest levels in case numbers since EW 5, 2022. Lastly, after 10 weeks of consistent decline in weekly cases between EW 15 and EW 25, 2022, Canada reported a 29.2 % increase (21,317 cases) during EW 27, following a smaller relative increase during EW 26 (9.6% increase) compared to the previous week.

**Figure 3:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 27, 2022.



During the same period, **COVID-19 weekly deaths** decreased by 15.7% (2,295 deaths) in the North American subregion relative to the previous week. Similar to the cases, the United States of America observed a decline in weekly deaths (1,987 new deaths, 18.8% decrease) during EW 27, while the remaining two countries in the subregion reported an increase – the largest increase being observed in Canada (127 new deaths, 16.5% increase), followed by Mexico (181 new deaths, 7.7% increase).

Among two countries with data available for **COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, the United States of America reported no substantial changes in both weekly hospitalizations (n=33,610; 0.2% decrease) and ICU admissions (n=3,805; 2.5% increase) after a sustained increasing period for about 11 consecutive weeks. In Canada, hospitalizations and ICU admissions have increased for the second consecutive week – a 12.6% increase in hospitalizations (n=3,946) and 13.6% ICU admissions (n=250) during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

In Canada, COVID-19 incidence and hospitalizations have started to increase since EW 25 after about two-months of a declining period. The proportion of Omicron variant of concern (VOC) sub-lineage BA.2.12.1 in Canada has decreased since the week of June 12, 2022, accounting for about 34.8% of the total sequenced data in the country as of the week of June 19, 2022, while the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants has been increasing for the past five weeks, making up about 47.4% of the sequenced data - 9% and 38.4% respectively - for the same period.<sup>1</sup> To date, the percentage of eligible population in Canada that received a completed primary schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations is 82%<sup>2</sup>, and about 60% of them received at least 1 additional dose with COVID-19 vaccines.

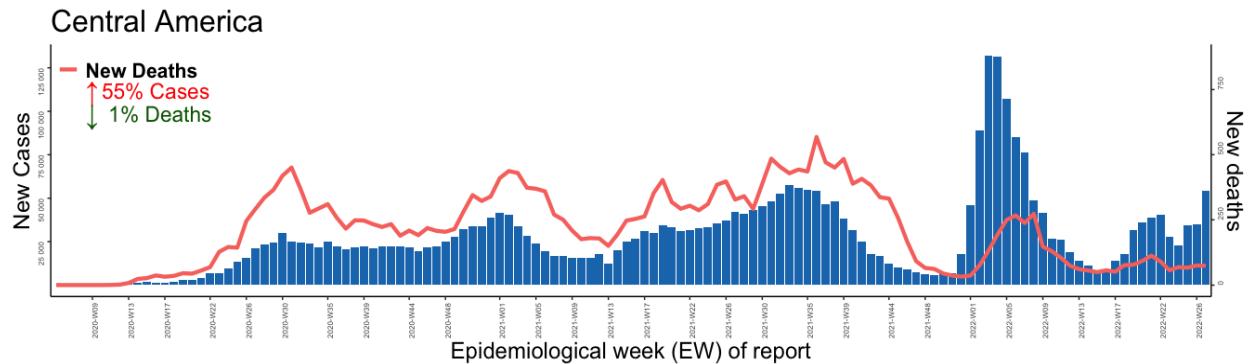
1 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 12 July 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFR>

2 Completed schedule is calculated using the last dose of the primary schedule, which means the first dose for 1 dose schedules, second dose or third dose in accordance with each country's established schedule.

## Central America

In Central America, COVID-19 incidence has increased for the fourth consecutive week (**Figure 4**), with 54,075 new cases reported during EW 27 – a 54.9% increase compared to the previous week primarily driven by the large increase in cases observed in Guatemala and El Salvador. Please note that data from EW 23 to EW 27 for Costa Rica were not publicly available, resulting in a data artifact in percent change of COVID-19 cases and deaths for the subregion.

**Figure 4:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Central America. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 27, 2022.



During EW 27, the countries reporting an increase in **weekly cases** included Guatemala (23,979 new cases, 7.8% increase), Panama (15,801 new cases, 48.5% increase), El Salvador (11,324 new cases, 100% increase), and Honduras (2,130 new cases, 153.9% increase). Please note that the relative increase in cases of El Salvador is a result of a data artifact since data for EW 26 was not available. Two countries/territories in the subregion observed a decline – Belize (810 new cases, 26.4% decrease) and Nicaragua (31 new cases, -56.3% decrease) during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

For the same period, there were no substantial changes in **COVID-19 weekly deaths** in the subregion – a slight decrease of 1.4% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**). Three out of the seven countries and territories reported an increase in weekly deaths during EW 27 in Central America – Honduras (6 deaths, 500% increase), El Salvador (10 deaths, 42.9% increase), and Guatemala (106 deaths, 2.9% increase). On the other hand, Panama reported a decline in weekly deaths (16 deaths, -42.9% decrease) compared to the previous week.

Among three countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in the Central American Subregion, two reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations – Belize (8 hospitalizations, 14.3% increase) and Honduras (74 hospitalizations, 60.8% increase) while one – Panama – reported a 5.3 % decline during EW 27 compared to the previous week. Similarly, both countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions** reported a decline during EW 27 – Honduras (3 ICU admissions, 62.5% decrease) and Panama (34 ICU admissions, 12.8% decrease) – compared to the previous week.

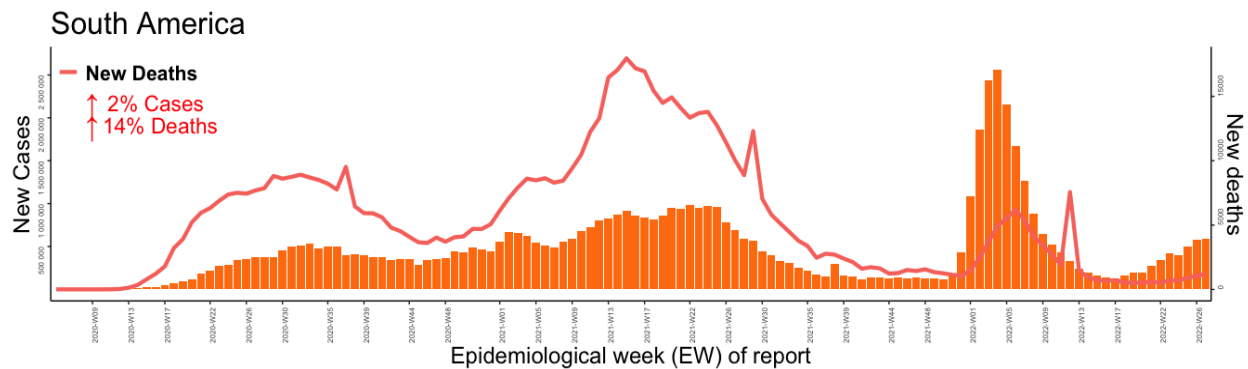
**Increases in severity trends** during EW 27 were observed in Honduras where there has been a large increase in hospitalizations and deaths during EW 27 – 500% increase in weekly deaths (n=6) and an 60.8% increase in hospitalizations (n=74) reported as compared to the previous week. Similarly, Guatemala continued to observe a sustained increase in its hospitalizations (n=425, 81.6% increase)<sup>3</sup> along with an increasing trend in weekly cases observed over the past five consecutive weeks. To date, the percentage of eligible population in Honduras and Guatemala having received a completed schedule<sup>2</sup> of COVID-19 vaccinations is about 52% and 50%, respectively. Of them, about 52% and 52.8% in each country received at least one additional dose.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Conferencia de Prensa Semanal | Recursos para Prensa - Gobierno de Guatemala. Available at : <https://bit.ly/3yYVIAN>

## South America

In South America, there were no substantial changes in COVID-19 incidence, with a total of 585,408 new COVID-19 cases reported during EW 27 – a 2.0% increase 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 27, 2022.**



During EW 27, five out of ten countries/territories in the sub-region experienced an increase in **weekly cases** (range: 17.3-144.6% increase), with the largest relative increases being observed in Paraguay (12,988 new cases, 144.6% increase), followed by Peru (32,889 new cases, 76.1% increase), and Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (13,857 new cases, 59% increase). The remaining five countries reported a decline in weekly cases during EW 27 compared to the previous week (range: -32.5 - -0.7% decrease), including Brazil (396,781 new cases, 3.4% decrease) and Chile (61,630 new cases, 6.5% decrease), and Colombia (23,667 new cases, 0.7% decrease).

For the same period, a total of 2,243 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in South America – a 14.2% increase compared to the previous week. Seven countries/territories reported an increase in their weekly deaths (range: 10 – 200% increase). The largest proportion of reported deaths were reported by Brazil (1,639 deaths, 11.4% increase), followed by Chile (224 deaths, 25.8% increase), and Colombia (132 deaths, 32% increase), while the largest relative increase in deaths compared to the previous week was observed in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (9 deaths, 200% increase), Peru (126 deaths, 51.8% increase), and Paraguay (42 deaths, 35.5% increase). Three countries/territories in the subregion reported a decline (range: -74.2 - -7.7% decrease) during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

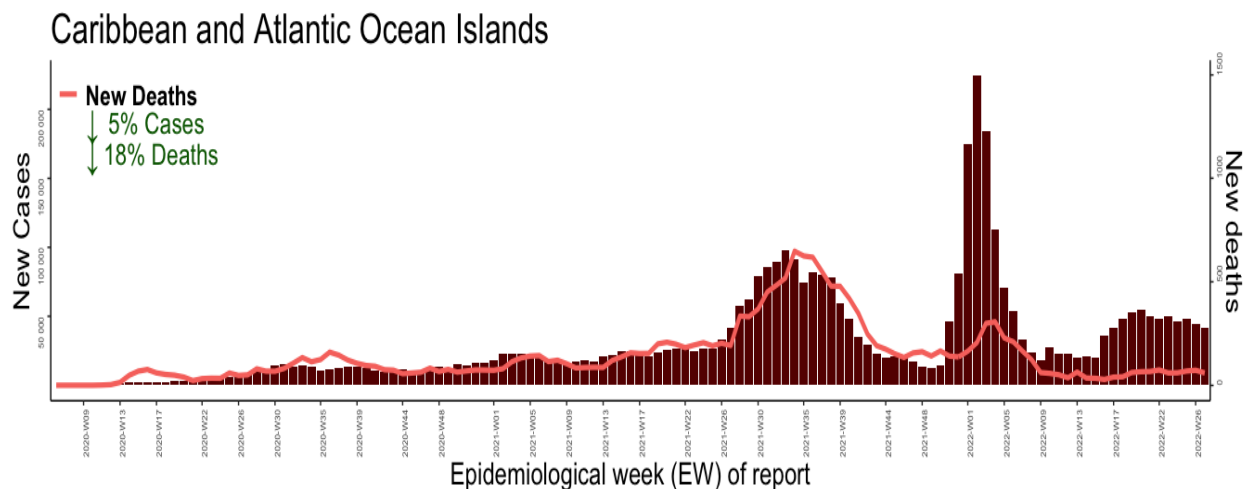
For the same period, all five countries/territories with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations** experienced an increase in their weekly hospitalizations (range: 3.9 – 22.5% increase) compared to the previous week. In terms of **COVID-19 ICU admissions** with available data, five countries/territories reported an increase – including Chile (n=193; 5.5% increase), Argentina (n=410; 6.2% increase), Peru (n=156; 9.1% increase), and Ecuador (n=39; 18.2% increase) during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

**Increased severity trends** during EW 27 were observed in Peru and Chile. Weekly hospitalizations in Peru have been steadily increasing – reaching over 1,000 hospitalizations reported – an increase of 7.5% (n=1,007) during EW 27, along with sustained increases in the trend of cases and deaths observed for the past seven and three consecutive weeks respectively - a 76.1% and 51.8% increase reported during EW 27 relative to the previous week. Similarly, Chile has been observing an increasing trend in its weekly deaths and weekly hospitalizations over the past five and seven weeks, respectively, with a 25.8% (224 deaths) and an 18.3% (2,041 hospitalizations) increase observed during EW 27.

To date, the percentage of eligible population in Peru and Chile having received a completed schedule of COVID-19 vaccinations is about 83% and 91.5%, respectively. Of them, about 68% and 86% in each country received at least one additional dose.<sup>2</sup>

## Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

**Figure 6:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands.** Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 27, 2022.



In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **COVID-19 weekly cases** have decreased over the past three consecutive weeks, with a 5.2% decrease (41,817 new cases) observed during EW 27 compared to the previous week. Similarly, COVID-19 weekly deaths decreased by 17.6% compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 16 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 2.1% - 800%) while it declined in the remaining 18 countries and territories (range: -100% - -2.3%).

During EW 27, a total of 112 **weekly deaths** were reported in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion – a 17.6% decrease compared to the previous week. Of the total, nine countries/territories observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths in EW 27 compared to the previous week (range: 66.7 – 100% increase). Weekly deaths either remained the same – Jamaica (21 deaths, 0% change) or declined in the remaining 11 countries and territories of the subregion (range: -100 – -20% decrease) during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

Among 23 countries and territories with available data, seven reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 25 – 100% increase). The largest relative increase in weekly hospitalizations was observed in Grenada (8 hospitalizations, 100% increase), followed by French Guiana (52 hospitalizations, 48.6% increase), and Cuba (186 hospitalizations, 40.9% increase). Among 16 countries/territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, five reported a relative increase (range: 14.3 – 100% increase), six reported a decrease, and the remaining five countries/territories had no changes during EW 27 compared to the previous week.

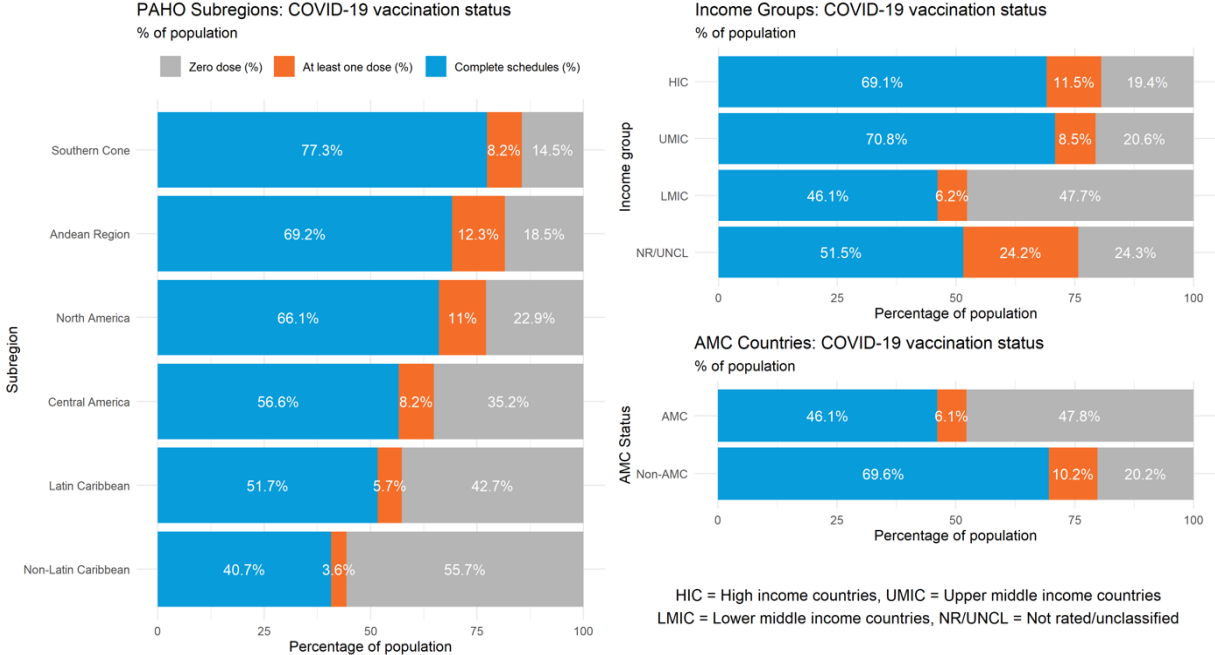
**Significant increases in weekly cases** in the subregion during EW 27 were reported from Saba (9 cases, 800% increase), Saint Pierre and Miquelon (78 cases, 550% increase), Saint Barthélemy (105 cases, 144.2% increase), and Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (16 cases, 100% increase).

For the same period, **notable increases in severity trends** were observed in Cuba where there has been an upward trend in hospitalizations for the past four consecutive weeks (186 hospitalizations; 40.9% increase & 3 ICU admissions, 50% increase) along with an increasing trend in cases (186 cases, 45.5% increase observed during EW 27 compared to the previous week).



# Immunization

**Figure 7.** COVID-19 vaccination rates per 100 people in the region of the Americas stratified by subregion, country income, and AMC status. The region of the Americas. As of EW 27, 2022



**Figure 7** reports the COVID-19 vaccination status for the Americas, with stratification by: a) subregion; b) income level (according to the World Bank 2021-2022 Income Level Classification); and c) AMC status.

**Subregion:** The region with the highest coverage for the primary series remains the Southern Cone, while both the Andean Region and North America exceeded the 60% coverage threshold for the primary series. The largest proportion of zero-dose individuals lives in the countries and territories of the Non-Latin Caribbean subregion.

**Income level:** To date, the upper-middle income countries achieved the highest coverage for the primary series, surpassing the WHO’s 70% coverage target set for 30 July 2022. High-income countries are one percentage point below this target, while lower-middle income countries/territories lag significantly behind (46.1% coverage) for the primary series.

These coverage values are calculated for each group as a whole, and do not represent the coverage rate reported by each country/territory within the group.

There are 9 countries/territories currently Not Registered/Unclassified by the World Bank. These are: Anguilla, Bonaire, Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Montserrat, Martinique, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Venezuela.

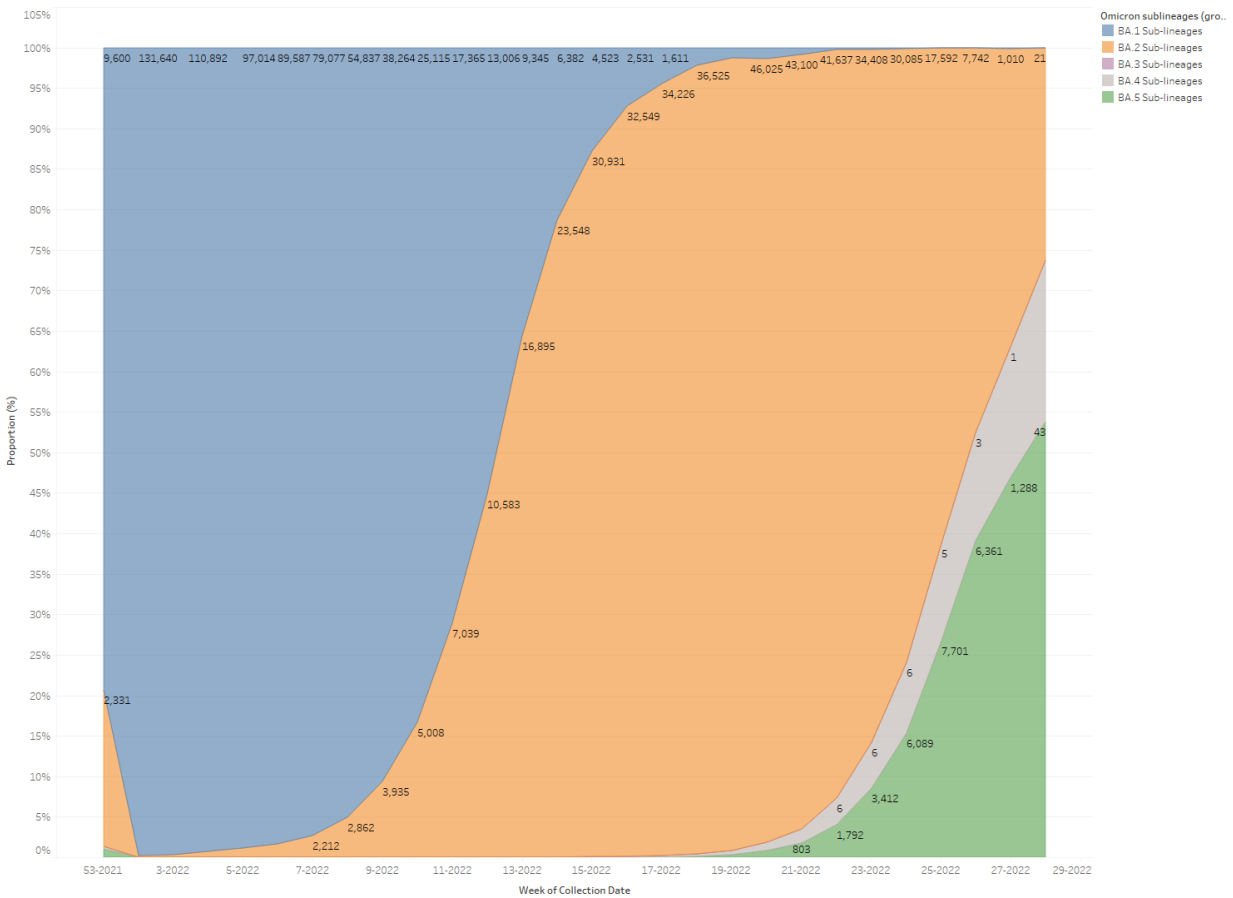
**AMC status:** Countries/territories with AMC classification report a significantly lower vaccination coverage rate compared to non-AMC countries/territories, with a difference of 20 percentage points.

# Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 384,331 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 12 July 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, which are also subdivided into additional sublineages. The cumulative proportion of sequences collected in the Americas from November 2021 to date are: 66.4% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 30.8% of BA.2 (and sublineages), <0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 0.97% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 1.83% 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 few BA.1 sequences have been identified since week 22 (**Figure 8**). At the same time, the proportion of BA.4 and in particular BA.5 have been increasing throughout the Region. Notably, in the past four weeks, the BA.4 and BA.5 combined represent 48%, 41%, and 36% of the characterized samples in North America, the Caribbean, and South America, respectively.

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



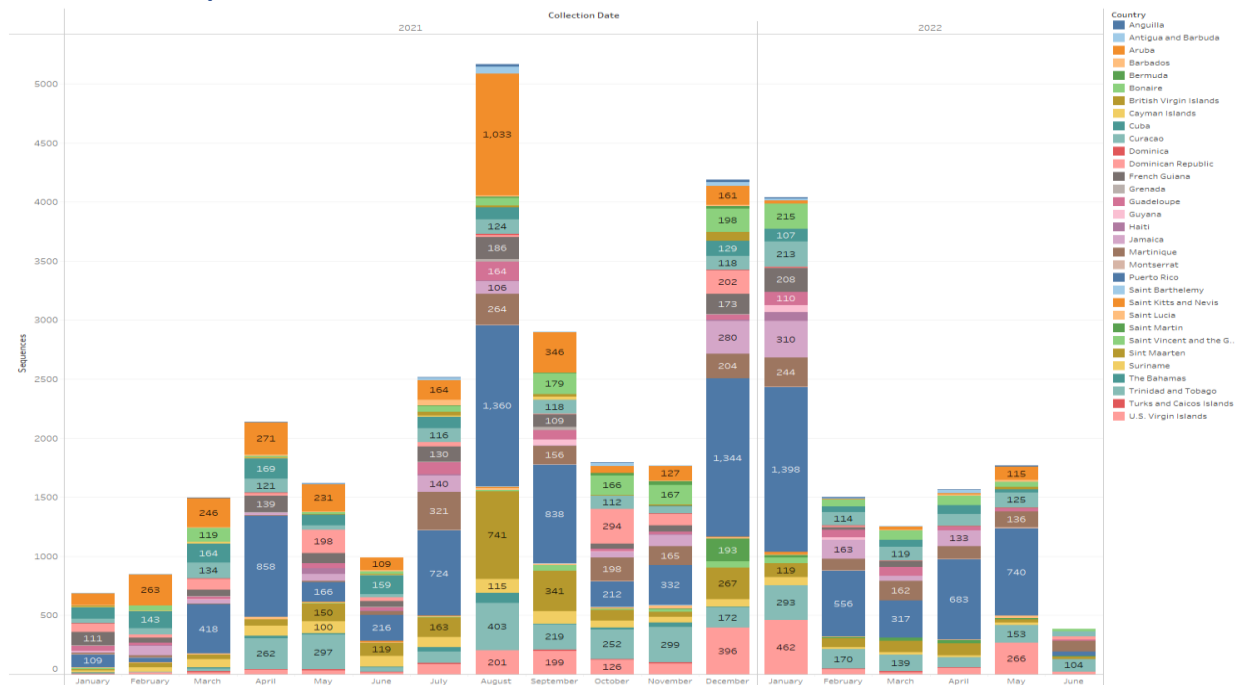
Source: GISAID



## Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Caribbean

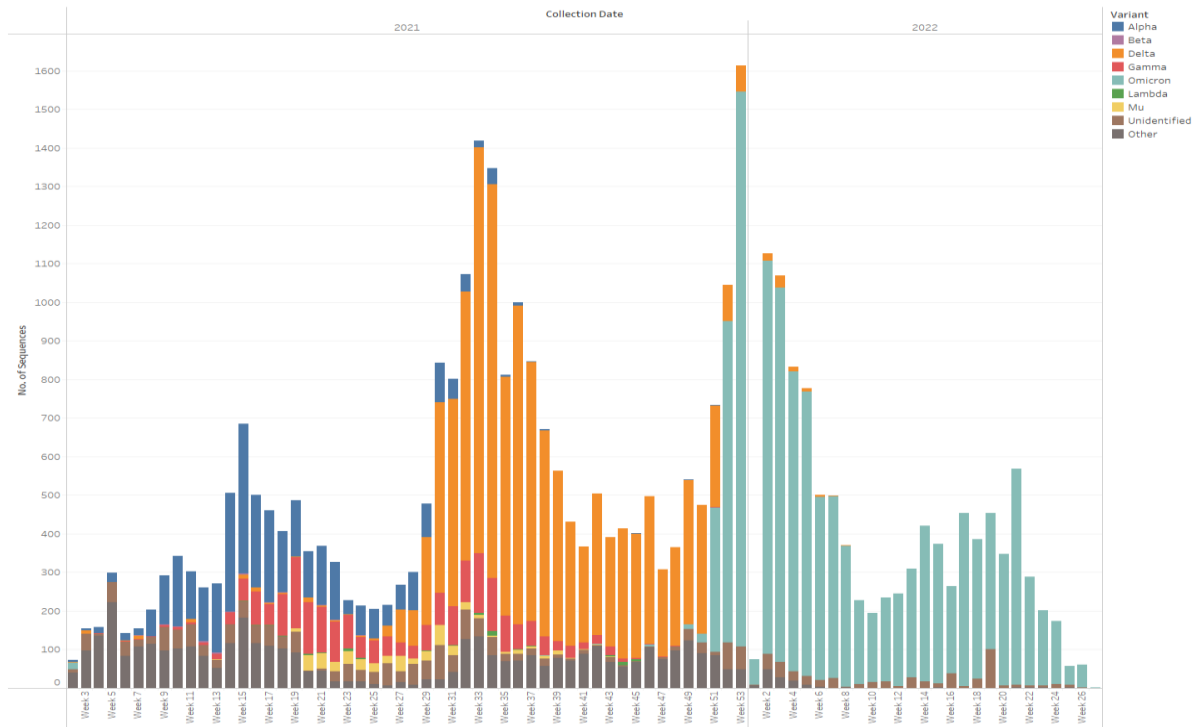
During the last 18 months (January 2021 to 26 June 2022), 36,627 whole genome sequences from the Caribbean countries and territories have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems (**Figure 9**). As in other subregions, Omicron is vastly predominant with no other “previously circulating” VOC/VOI detected in the past four weeks (**Figure 10**). Since Omicron’s first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (66%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 32% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 (with their respective sublineages) represent 0.01%, 0.33%, and 1.36% 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 (37.8%) while BA.2 and BA.4 account for 42.8% and 10.8% of the sequences, respectively. It is important to note that the majority of sequences for the 4-week period was contributed by Trinidad and Tobago (27%).

**Figure 9.** Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Caribbean (January 2021-June 2022)



Source: GISAID

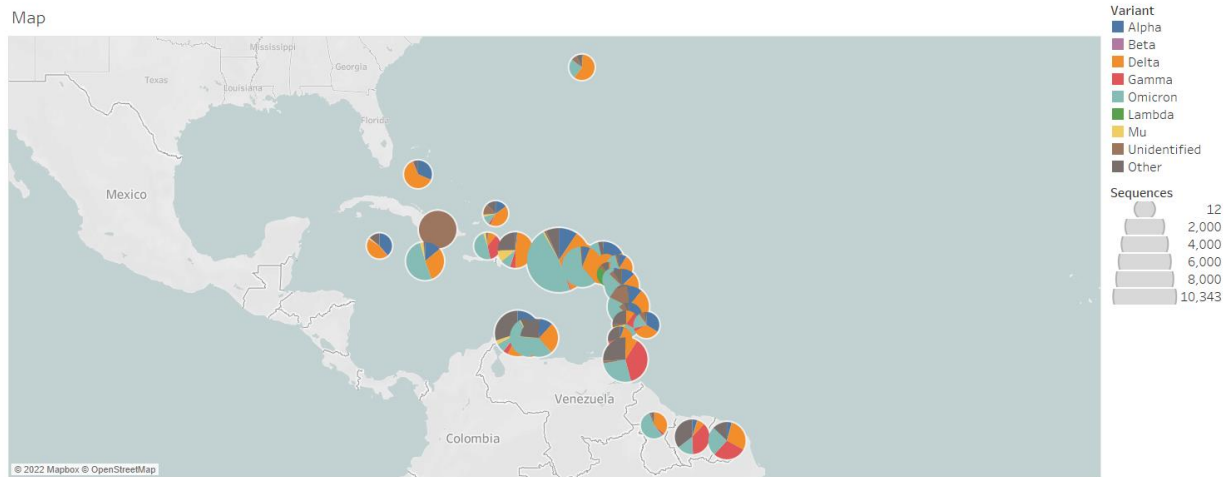
**Figure 10.** Variants detected and reported by the Countries in the Caribbean (January 2021- June 2022)



Source: GISAID

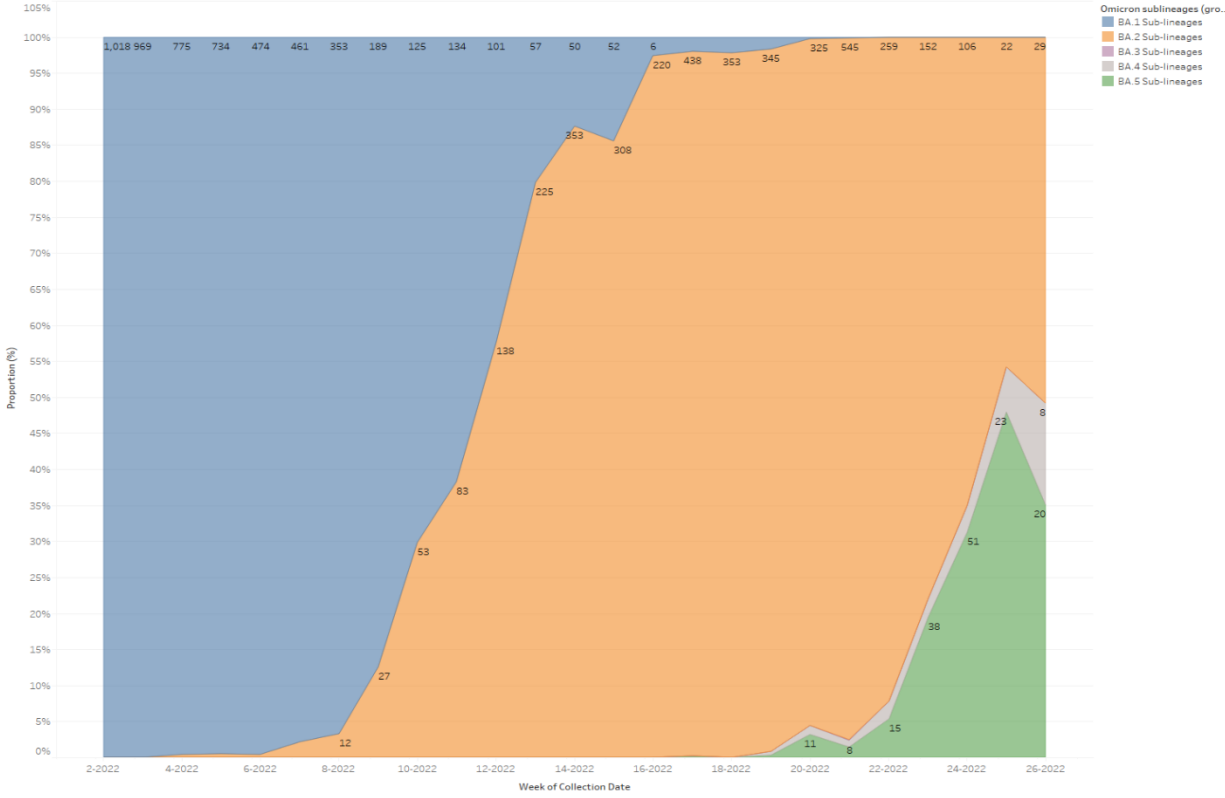
Country-specific data is available at: [https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS\\_CoV2\\_variants\\_regional.asp](https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp)

**Figure 11.** Distribution of VOC and VOI identified by the Countries in the Caribbean (January 2021-June 2022)



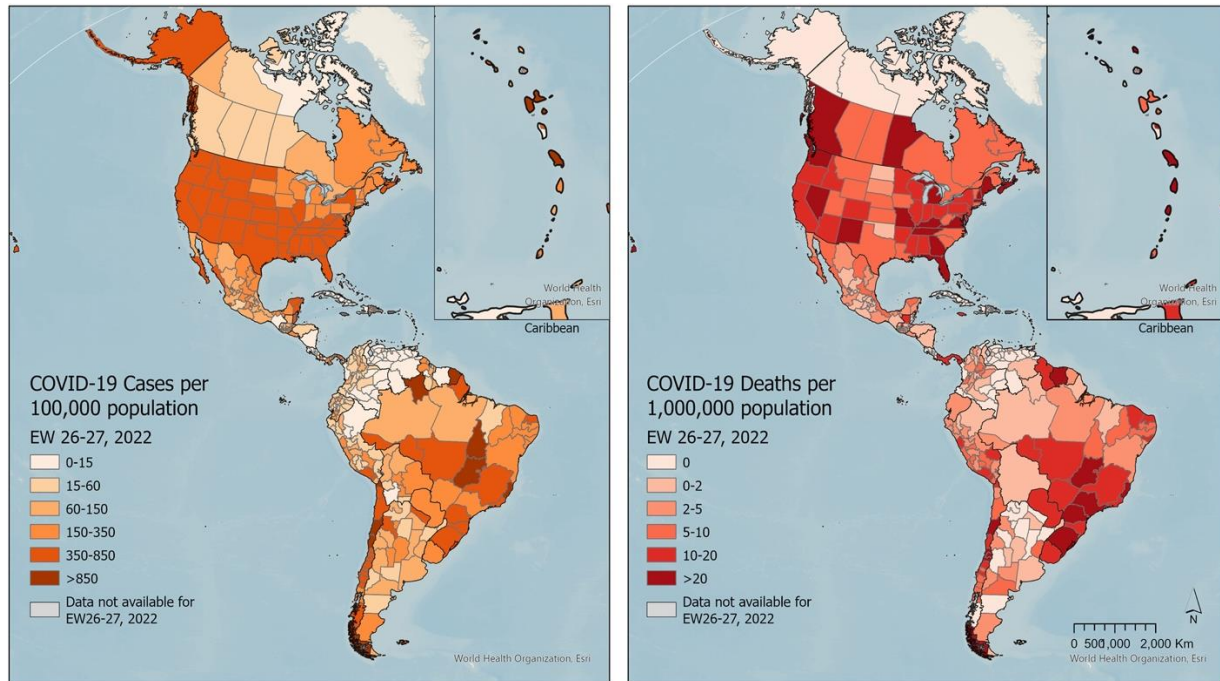
Source: GISAID

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



Source: GISAID

**Annex 1.** COVID-19 incidence rate per 100,000 population and COVID-19 mortality rate from per 1 million population. Region of the Americas. Between EW 26 and 27, 2022.



The maps (**Annex 1**) represent 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 in EW 26 and 27, 2022. Countries reporting highest incidence (>350 cases per 100,000 people) over the past two weeks were the United States of America, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, French Guiana as well as the several Caribbean Islands including: Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Puerto Rico. The highest mortality rates (>20 deaths per 1 million people) were observed in Canada, the United States of America, Brazil, Chile, Suriname, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, and United States Virgin Islands.

In North America, most states in the United States had incidence rates over 350 cases per 100,000 populations, while lower incidence rates have been observed in Canada and Mexico for the past two weeks. Higher mortality rates were observed in some south-eastern states in the U.S. and the provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba in Canada compared to the previous two weeks, reporting over 20 deaths per million people. In Central America, a slight decline in incidence was noted for western districts in Belize while most departments in Guatemala had an increase in incidence compared to the previous two weeks. In South America, incidence was slightly higher in northern states of Brazil as well as eastern districts of Peru including Loreto and Acre, compared to the previous two weeks. Higher mortality was observed in some southern parts of Brazil (i.e., Rio Grande do Sul, Parana, and São Paulo) reporting over 20 deaths per million. Lastly, high incidence rates were observed in Cuba, some parts of the Dominican Republic, and Guyana, and overall mortality rates in the Caribbean subregion remained high compared to the previous two weeks.