

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

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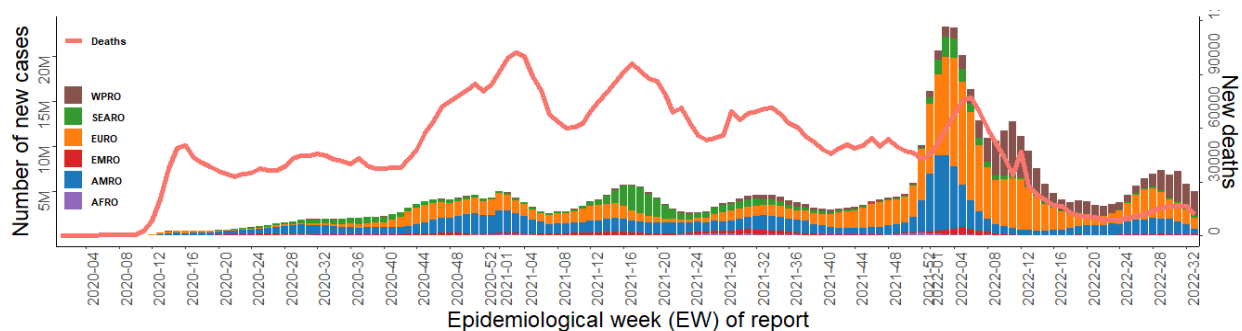
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- Executive summary including global overview
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### Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to August 23, 2022, a cumulative total of approximately 594 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.5 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 33, cases decreased in all WHO regions (range: -25.4 - -3.4%) except for the region of Western Pacific (1.6% increase). COVID-19 deaths increased in 4 regions while they decreased in EURO (-27.7%) and SEARO (-11.4%).
- **Globally**, approximately 5,331,041 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 33 (August 14, 2022-August 20, 2022) - a -5.5% decrease compared to EW 32 (August 07, 2022-August 13, 2022) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 14,348 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a -8.4% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 988,335 cases and 5,447 deaths were reported in EW 33 - a -17.1% decrease in cases and -14.9% decrease in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases decreased in all four subregions (range: -29.3 - -7.2%). COVID-19 deaths increased in Central America (9.8%) and Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands (11.7%) while they decreased in North America (-15.4%) and South America (-17%).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 96.6 cases per 100,000 population during EW 33 (116.5 the previous week). Between EW 33 and 32, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 11.6 deaths per 1 million population (12.6 the previous two weeks).
- Among 29 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in six countries and territories (range: 5% - 200%) during EW 33 compared to the previous week. Among 2 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in nine countries and territories (range: 3.5% - 100%).

**Figure 1:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 33, 2022.

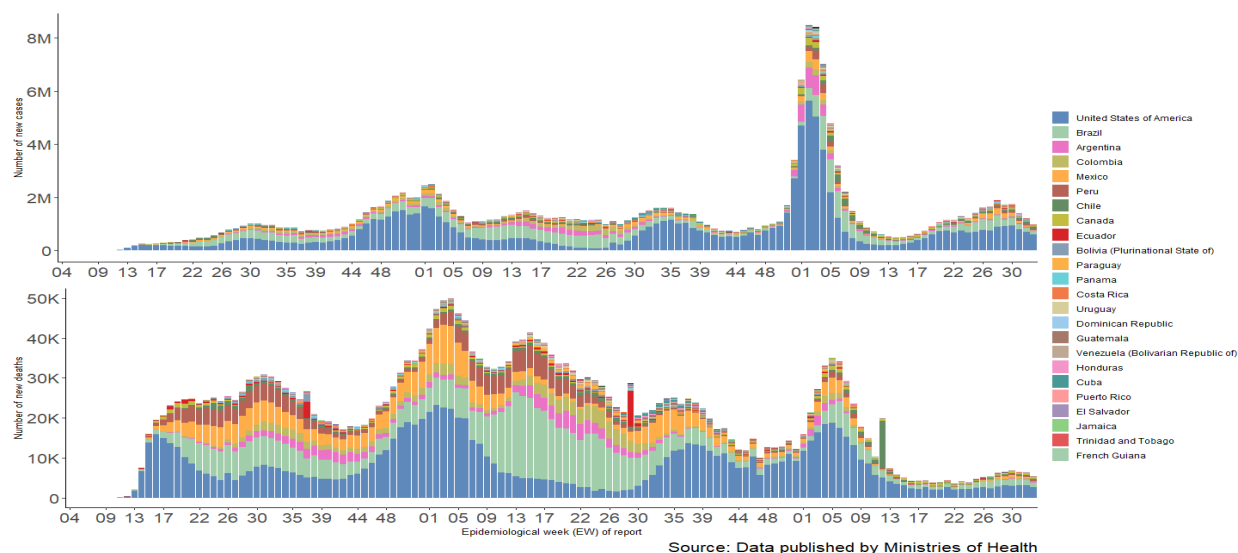


Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

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 - 33, 2022.



During EW 33, 988,335 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -4.2% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases was reported from the North American subregion (649,278 cases, -15% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). At the country level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases were reported from the United States of America (612,378 new cases, -12.5% decrease), Brazil (116,106 new cases, -24.4% decrease), Chile (62,880 new cases, -13.3% decrease).

**Table 1:** Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 32 and EW 33 by subregion. Region of the Americas

| Subregion                            | Total Cases | Total Deaths | Cases EW 32 | Deaths EW 32 | Cases EW 33 | Deaths EW 33 | % Change Cases | % Change Deaths |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands | 4,138,634   | 34,522       | 32,552      | 103          | 23,025      | 115          | -29.3%         | 11.7%           |
| Central America                      | 3,862,263   | 52,748       | 36,510      | 163          | 33,894      | 179          | -7.2%          | 9.8%            |
| North America                        | 103,449,292 | 1,404,752    | 769,800     | 3,662        | 649,278     | 3,097        | -15.7%         | -15.4%          |
| South America                        | 63,088,502  | 1,319,840    | 352,854     | 2,476        | 282,138     | 2,056        | -20.0%         | -17.0%          |

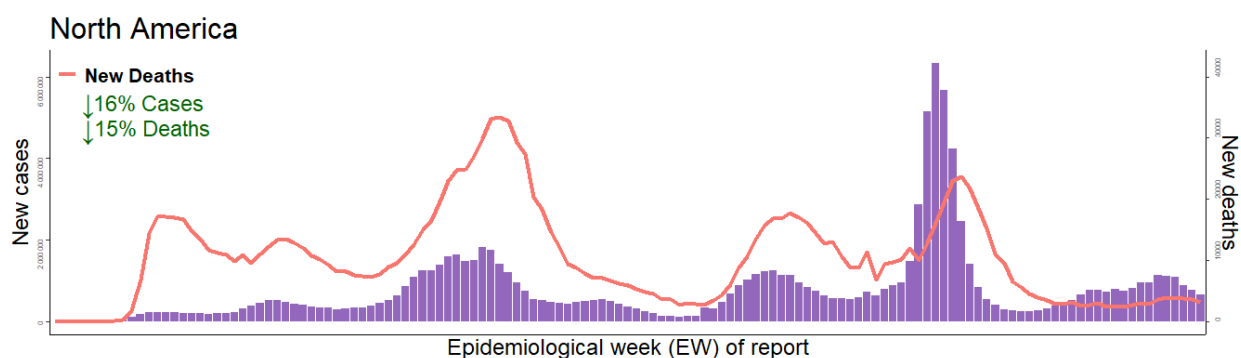
For the same period, 5,309 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 0.7% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was reported from North American subregion (3,097 deaths, -15% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported from the United States of America (2,714 new deaths, -12.7% decrease), Brazil (1,105 new deaths, -26.1% decrease), and Peru (378 new deaths, 9.9% increase).

**A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 33 by subregion is presented below.**

## North America

COVID-19 cases have been decreasing for the past six consecutive weeks in North America with a 16% decrease in reported weekly cases (n=649,278 new cases) during EW 33 compared to the previous week. During EW 33, two countries reported a decline in weekly cases - the largest decline being reported by Mexico (11,224 cases, -74.9 % decrease), followed by the United States of America (612,378 cases, -12.5 % decrease). Canada did not report any substantial changes in cases during EW 33 compared to the previous week (25,676 cases, 1.9 % increase).

**Figure 3:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). **North America.** Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 33, 2022.



During the same period, **Weekly COVID-19 deaths** decreased by -15.4% in (n=3,097 new deaths) in North America relative to the previous week. Similar to weekly cases, while two countries reported a decline in weekly deaths – Mexico (56 new deaths, -80.8% decrease) and the United States of America (2714 new deaths, -12.7% decrease) – while Canada reported a 24.3% increase (n=327 new deaths) in weekly deaths during EW 33 compared to the previous week.

During EW 33, among the two countries in North America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, the United States of America did not report substantial changes in weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions compared to the previous week – 40,792 hospitalizations (-3.2% decrease) and 4,862 ICU admissions (-0.5% decrease). On the other hand, Canada reported about 10% increase in both hospitalizations (n=5,376) and ICU admissions (n=291) for the same period. In Mexico, the current national hospital occupancy is about 8% and the bed occupancy with ventilators is 3% as of EW 32<sup>1</sup>, which decreased from 18% on July 25, 2022.<sup>2</sup>

The Omicron variant of concern (VOC) sub-lineages of BA.4 and BA.5 are predominant in all three countries in the subregion. The BA.5 and BA.4 sub-lineages made up about 89% and 11% of cases for the week ending on 20 August 2022 in the United States of America<sup>3</sup>, 86.7% and 10.5% for the week of 31 July 2022 in Canada,<sup>4</sup> and 89% and 5% for the EW 31 in Mexico, respectively.

1 Secretaría de Salud de México. Del 7 al 13 de agosto, en México se registraron en promedio cinco mil 566 contagios de COVID-19. Accessed 23 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3APRFI5>

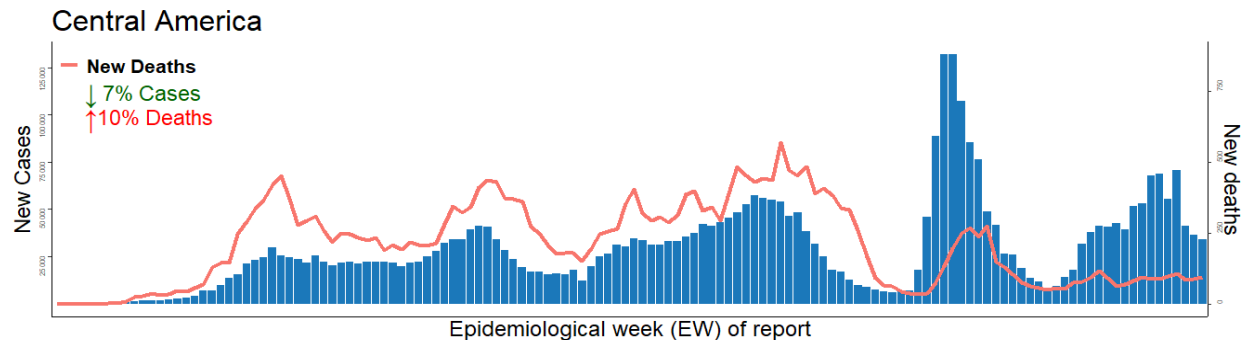
2 Secretaría de Salud de México. COVID-19 Technical Statement. 2 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3BI5PKW>

3 The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 23 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

4 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Epidemiological Update. Accessed 23 August 2022. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

# Central America

**Figure 4: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). Central America. Region of the Americas. EW 6, 2020 - EW 33, 2022.**



In Central America, COVID-19 incidence for the sub-region is on a downward trend for the third consecutive week, with 33,894 new cases being reported during EW 33 – a -7.2% decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 4**).

During EW 33, two countries in the subregion reported an increase in **weekly cases** – Belize (261 new cases, 26.7% increase) and Honduras (2,130 new cases, 1.7% increase) – while four countries and territories reported a decline (range: -58.5 - -7% decrease) with the largest decline observed in Nicaragua (27 new cases, -58.5% decrease), followed by Guatemala (14,792 new cases, -8.7% decrease), and Panama (6,021 new cases, -7.1% decrease) relative to the previous week.

For the same period, **weekly deaths** increased by approximately 9.8% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**). Three out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase – Guatemala (134 new deaths, 22.9% increase), Panama (12 new deaths, 20% increase), and Costa Rica (28 new deaths, 7.7% increase). The remaining four countries either had not reported any deaths (Nicaragua, Belize) or observed a decline – Honduras (4 new deaths, -55.6% decrease) and El Salvador (1 new death, -88.9% decrease) compared to the previous week.

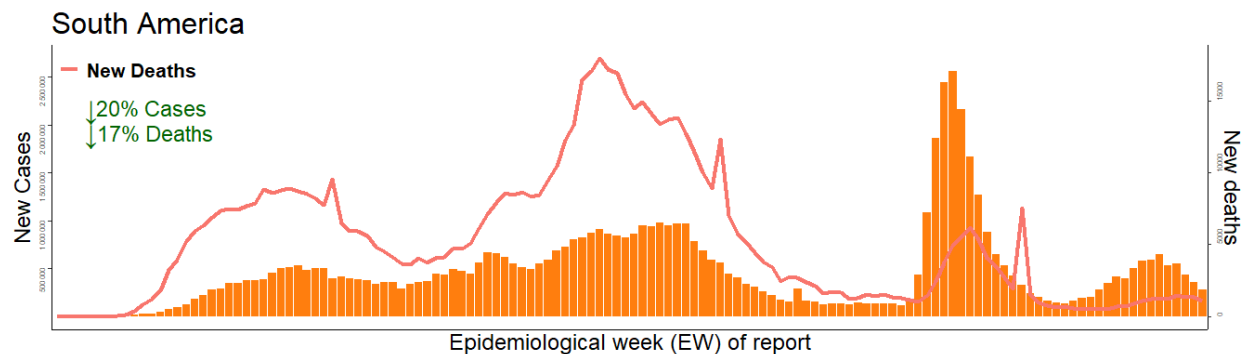
Among four countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in this subregion, one country – Panama – reported an increase in weekly hospitalizations (183 hospitalizations, 10.9% increase) during EW 33, while the remaining three countries either remained the same – Belize (2 hospitalizations; 0% change) and Costa Rica (303 hospitalizations, -0.6% decrease) or reported a decline – Honduras (93 hospitalizations, -23.1% decrease) compared to the previous week. With regards to **ICU admissions**, among three countries with available data for weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions, two countries reported an increase during EW 33 – Costa Rica (52 ICU admissions, 13% increase) and Panama (29 ICU admissions, 45% increase) while Honduras reported a 46% decline (7 ICU admissions) relative 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 third consecutive week, with a total of 282,138 new COVID-19 cases were reported during EW 33 – a -20.0% 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 33, 2022.



Out of the 10 countries and territories in the subregion, two experienced an increase in **weekly cases** during EW 33 – Uruguay (2,041 new cases, 10.7% increase) and Ecuador (4,644 new cases, 28.1% increase) while the remaining eight countries and territories reported a decline in cases (range: -29 – -8.9% decrease). The largest decline in cases in the subregion was reported by Paraguay (1,433 new cases, -29% decrease), followed by Brazil (116,106 new cases, -24.4% decrease), and Peru (47,526 new cases, -23.8% decrease).

During the same period, weekly **COVID-19 deaths** have plateaued in South America, with a total of 2,056 new deaths reported (-17% decrease) compared to the previous week. At the national level, COVID-19 deaths increased in seven countries and territories in the subregion (range: 9.9 – 116.7% increase), while the remaining three countries reported a decline – Colombia (119 new deaths, -43.9% decrease), followed by Argentina (80 new deaths, -36.5% decrease), and Brazil (1105 new deaths, -26.1% decrease).

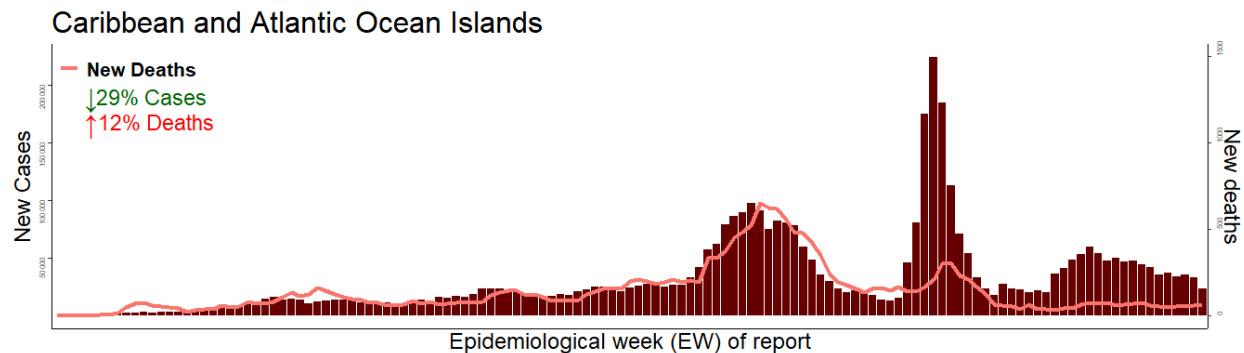
During EW 33, all four countries and territories in the subregion with data available for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations** observed a decline in their weekly hospitalizations – Chile (1,619 hospitalizations, -3.9% decrease), Colombia (1,060 hospitalizations, -3.9% decrease), Peru (1,238 hospitalizations, -6.4% decrease), and Ecuador (281 hospitalizations, -28.5% decrease). Among six countries with available data for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** in this subregion, two countries observed an increase in weekly ICU admissions during EW 33 – Uruguay (30 ICU admissions, 20% increase) and Peru (264 ICU admissions, 3.5% increase), while the remaining countries reported a decline compared to the previous week (range: -15.9 - -3.6%).

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 -29.3% during EW 33 compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in 11 out of the 34 countries and territories in the subregion (range: 8.5% - 264.4%) while it declined in the 22 countries and territories (range: -100% - -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 33, 2022.



During EW 33, **COVID-19 deaths** have increased by 11.7% (115 deaths) in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion compared to the previous week. Five countries and territories in the subregion observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths during EW 33 compared to the previous week (range: 6.7 – 250% increase). The remaining countries and territories of the subregion either remained the same (n=18) or declined (n=9; range: -100 – -17.6% decrease) in weekly deaths compared to the previous week.

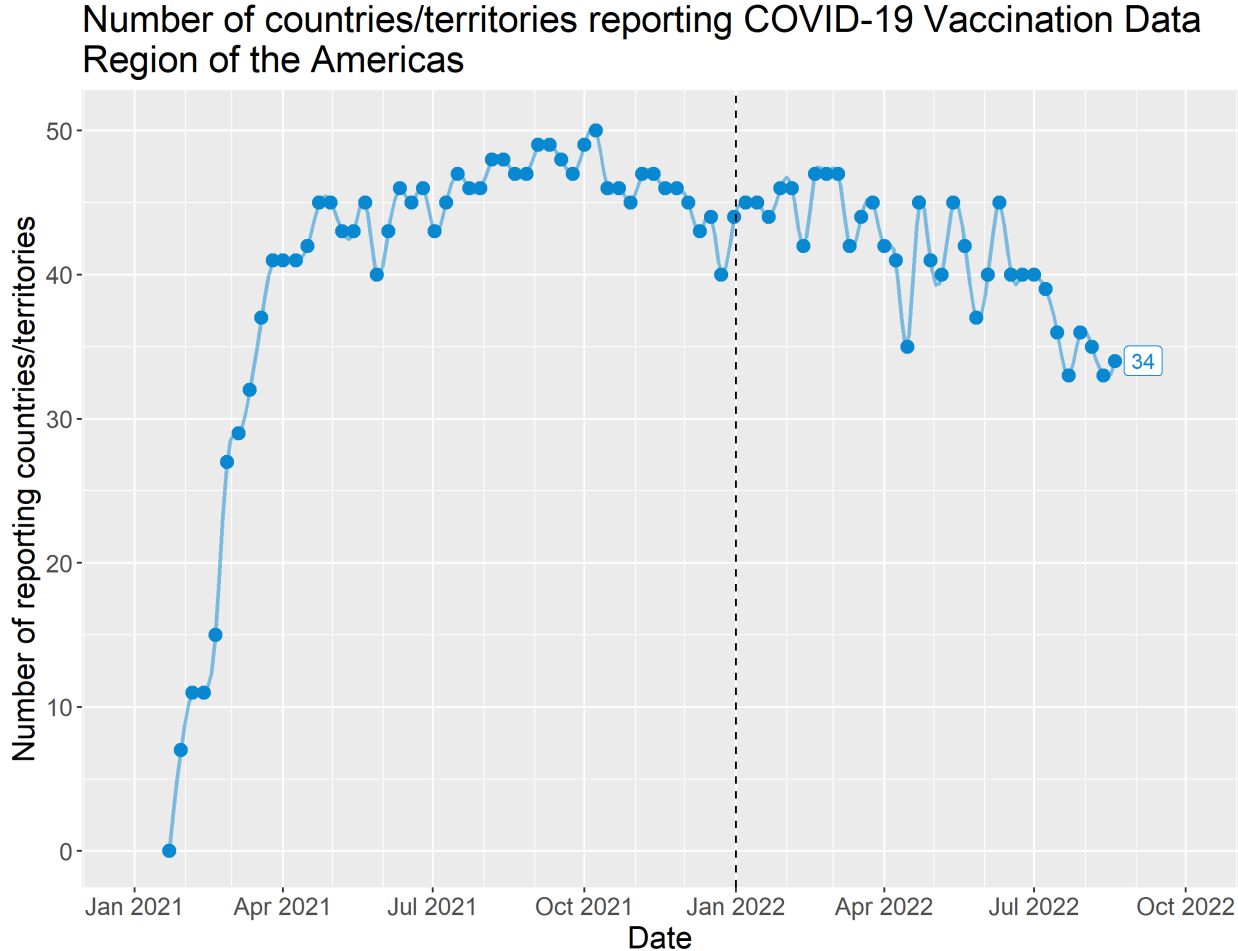
Among 19 countries and territories with available data, four countries and territories reported an increase in their weekly **COVID-19 hospitalizations** (range: 5 – 200%), with the largest relative increases being observed in United States Virgin Islands (9 hospitalizations, 200% increase), the Bahamas (27 hospitalizations, 28.6% increase), and Bermuda (7 hospitalizations, 16.7% increase). Among 11 countries and territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, four reported an increase during EW 33, the highest relative increase being observed in the Martinique (4 ICU admissions, 100% increase) and Trinidad and Tobago (9 ICU admissions, 12.5% increase).

Notable increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 33 were reported from Grenada (266 new cases, 264.4% increase), Suriname (19 new cases, 216.7% increase), and Antigua and Barbuda (75 new cases, 127.3% increase).

To date, Omicron lineages BA.4 and BA.5 have been reported from 16 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.** The Number of Countries/territories Reporting COVID-19 Vaccination Data. The region of the Americas. As of EW 33, 2022.



Progressively fewer countries/territories in the Americas are transmitting their weekly national COVID-19 vaccination data to PAHO. In July 2022, 40 of the 51 countries/territories reported updated data. By 19 August 2022, this number decreased to 34. Also, the highest number (50) of reporting countries/territories for a single week was reported in October 2021. Since then, the number of countries with weekly reports to PAHO has varied, but a clear decreasing trend can be observed especially over the last two months (July and August 2022). The absence of COVID-19 vaccination data diminishes the precision of any comparisons or analyses that can be performed throughout the region. Coverage tracking becomes increasingly difficult, especially in countries/territories where vaccination coverage rates remain below 70%.\*

\* Based on the United Nations (UN) Population Prospects for 2021 and projections from the United States (US) Census Bureau for countries with 100,000 or fewer inhabitants



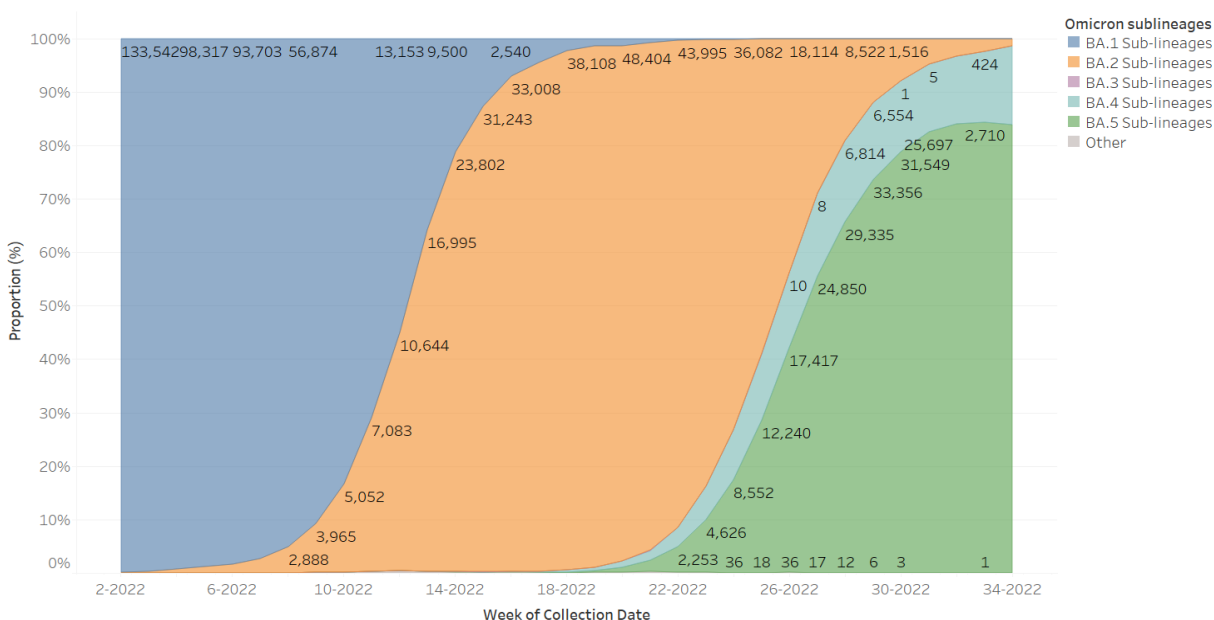
## Genomic surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, 437,064 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 23 August 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. 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: 56.0% of BA.1 (and BA.1 sublineages), 29.5% of BA.2 (and sublineages), 0.01% of BA.3 (and sublineages), 3.0% of BA.4 (and BA.4 sublineages), and 11.5% 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 96.0%, 96.3%, 92.8%, and 91.9% 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-August 2022)



Source: GISAID

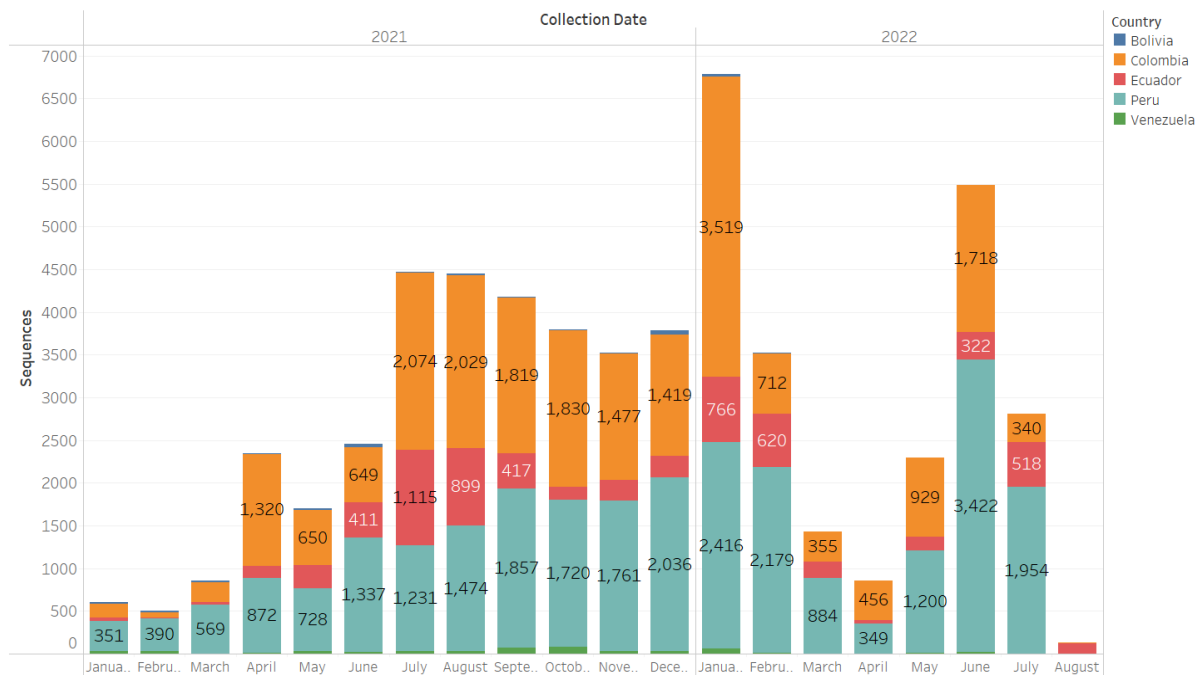


## Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in Andean Subregion

During the last 19 months (January 2021 to 21 August 2022), 55,980 whole genome sequences from Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) 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 12 weeks (**Figure 10**). Since Omicron’s first detection, BA.1 and BA.1 sublineages represent the majority (52.7%) of cumulative sequences, while BA.2 and BA.2 sublineages represent 28.3% of the cumulative sequences, and BA.3, BA.4, and BA.5 (with their respective sublineages) represent 0.10%, 7.2%, and 11.7% of cumulative sequences, respectively (**Figure 11**). However, BA.1 was progressively replaced by BA.2 in weeks 10 to 19, and the proportion of BA.4 and BA.5 have been increasing since week 19 (**Figure 12**). When focusing on the past four weeks (24 July to 20 August), BA.5 is the predominant sublineage (68.8%) while BA.4 and BA.2 account for 16.4% and 14.4% of the sequences, respectively. It is important to note that the majority of sequences (95%) for the 4-week period was contributed by Ecuador (**Figure 9**).

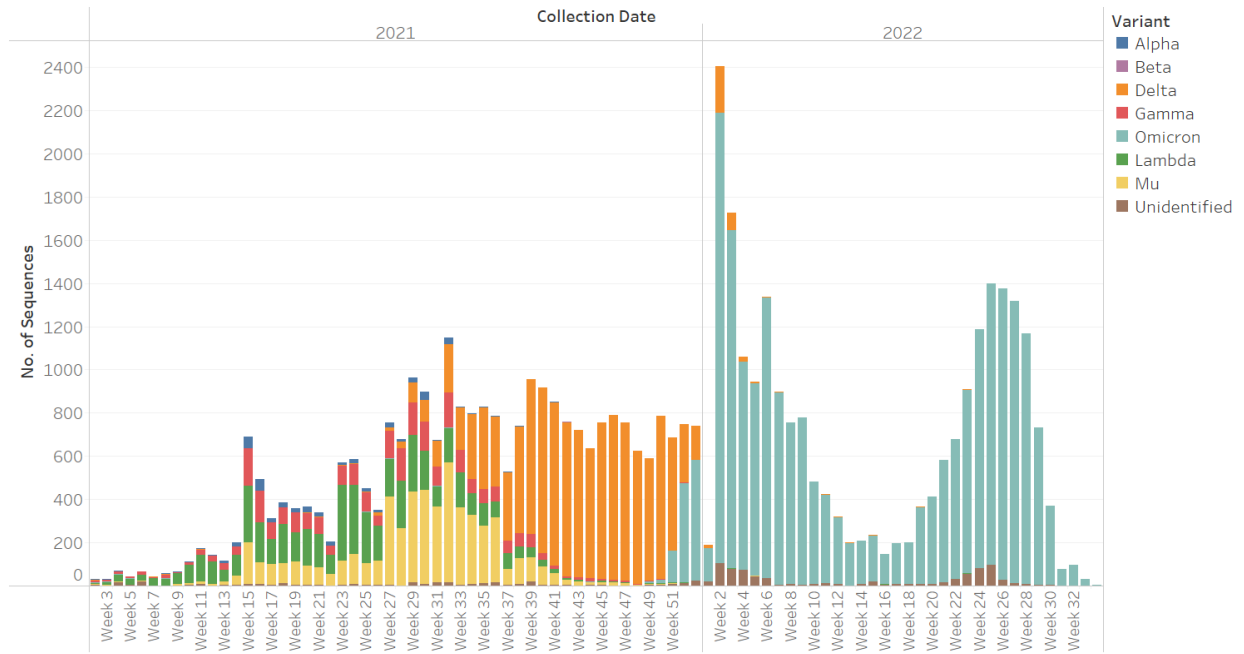
**It is important that all countries at PAHO region continue the collection of representative samples for sequencing and to maintain COVID-19 appropriate genomic surveillance.**

**Figure 9.** Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in Andean subregion (January 2021- July 2022)



Source: GISAID

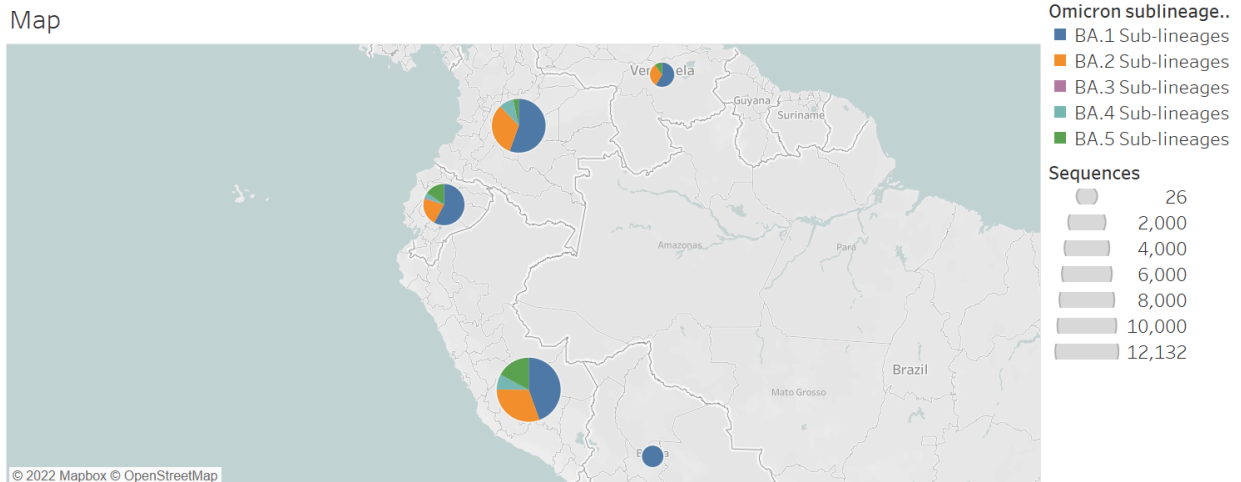
**Figure 10.** Variants detected and reported by the Countries in Andean Subregion (January 2021-August 2022)



Source: GISAID

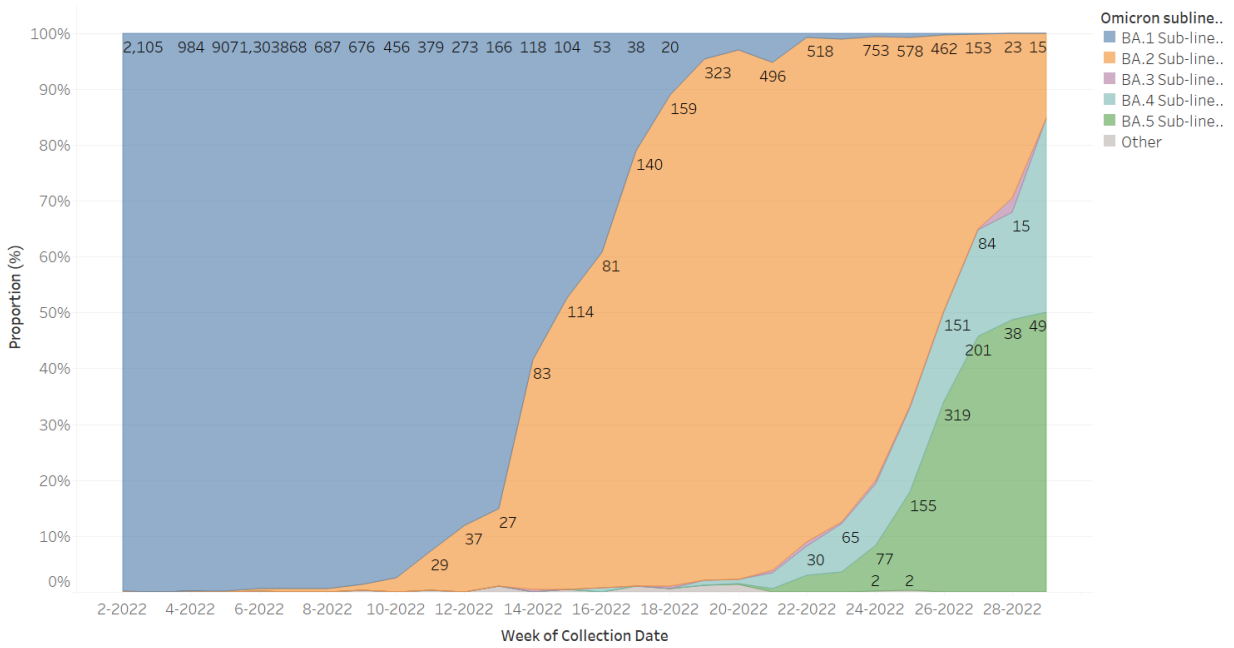
Country-specific data is available at: [https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS\\_CoV2\\_variants\\_regional.asp](https://ais.paho.org/phi/viz/SARS_CoV2_variants_regional.asp)

**Figure 11.** Distribution of Omicron sublineages identified by the countries in Andean Subregion (November 2021-August 2022)



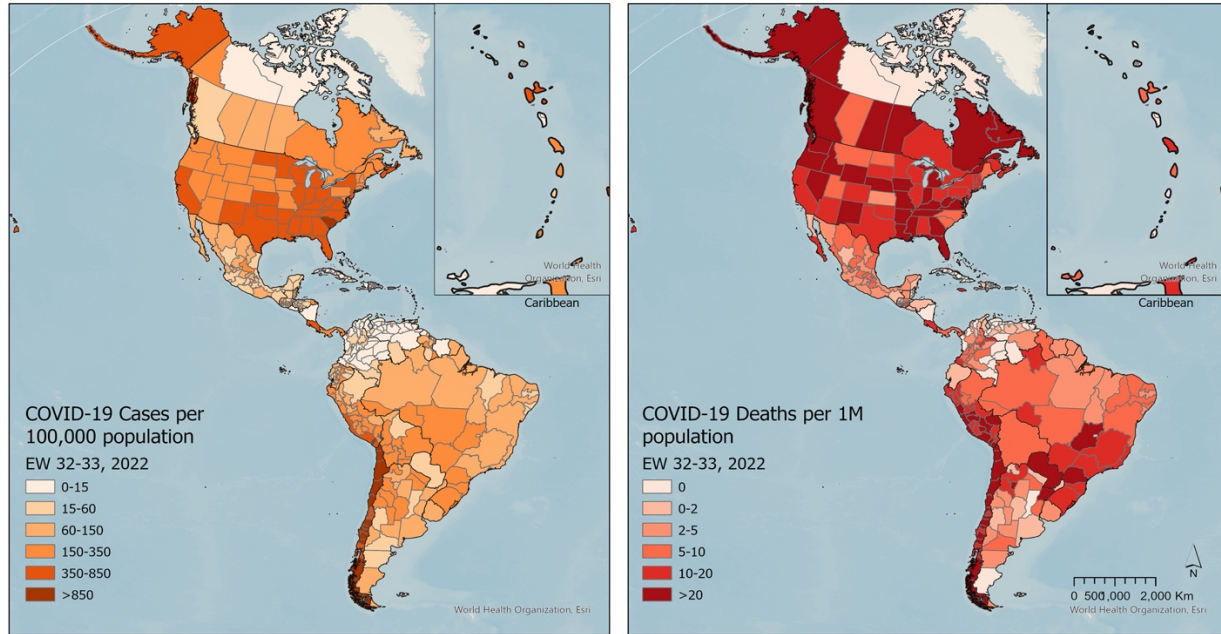
Source: GISAID

**Figure 12.** Proportion of VOC Omicron sublineages identified in the Andean subregion (January-August 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 32 and 33, 2022.



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The maps (**Annex 1**) represent the COVID-19 incidence rates per 100,000 population and the mortality rates from COVID-19 per 1 million population in the Region of the Americas reported in EW 32 and 33, 2022.

The overall trends in incidence have been declining compared to the previous two weeks in all subregions. The largest relative decrease in incidence was observed in the Caribbean region. The highest incidence rates in the past two weeks (>850 cases per 100,000) were observed in the United States, Peru, Chile, Puerto Rico, and Barbados. In the United States, about half the states reported between 350-850 cases per 100,000 population, with higher rates reported mostly in the eastern states. Incidence rates declined in Canada and Mexico compared to the previous two weeks, and it was the case as well in all Central American countries except for Panama where incidence remained stable. In South America, incidence rates were above 850 cases per 100,000 in most regions in Chile but declined slightly compared to the previous two weeks. Incidence declined in all other countries of the sub-region.

The highest mortality rates (>20 deaths per million population) were observed in Canada, the United States, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil. While mortality rates decreased in North and South America, they slightly increased in Central America and the Caribbean, compared to the previous two weeks. Most countries and territories in the Caribbean reported below 20 deaths per million people, and the largest increases in mortality in the sub-region were seen in Curacao, Suriname, Guyana, Barbados, and Puerto Rico. In South America, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina reported increases in overall mortality rates compared to the previous two weeks.

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.