

Weekly COVID-19 Epidemiological Update - Region of the Americas

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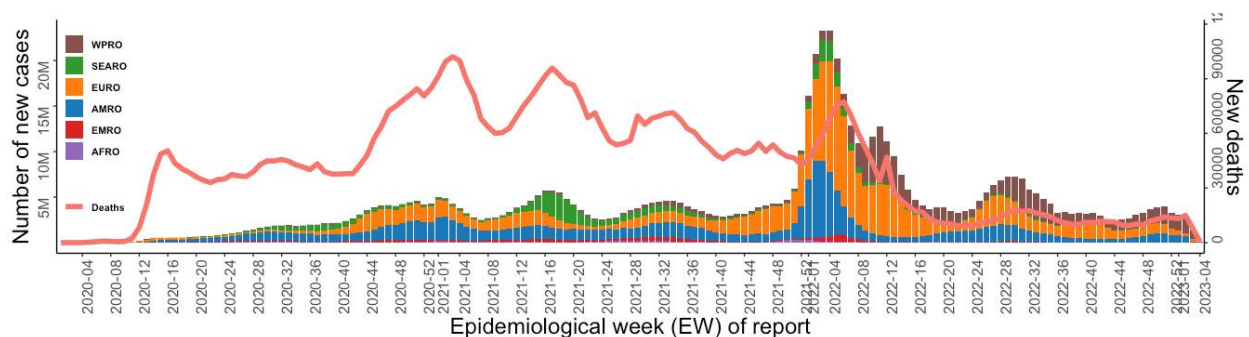
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Executive Summary

- **Since the onset of the pandemic** in 2020 and up to January 24, 2023, a cumulative total of approximately 665 million COVID-19 cases including about 6.72 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. During epidemiological week (EW) 3, COVID-19 cases decreased in five WHO regions while they increased in EMRO (54.1%). COVID-19 deaths decreased in four regions while they increased in EMRO (24%) and AMRO (1.4%).
- **Globally**, approximately 1,883,406 new COVID-19 cases were reported in EW 3 (January 15, 2023-January 21, 2023) - a -33.8% decrease compared to EW 2 (January 08, 2023-January 14, 2023) (**Figure 1**). For the same period, 12,748 new COVID-19 deaths were reported globally – a -16.6% relative decrease compared the previous week.
- **In the region of the Americas**, 540,449 cases and 5,857 deaths were reported in EW 3 - a -21.3% decrease in cases and 1.4% increase in deaths compared to the previous week.
- At the subregional level, COVID-19 cases decreased in all four subregions (range: -35 - -12.4% decrease). Deaths increased in one subregion – South America (60.8%) while they decreased in the remaining three subregions (range: -17.5 - -1.8% decrease).
- The overall weekly case notification rate for the region of the Americas was 52.8 cases per 100,000 population during EW 3 (67.2 the previous week). Between EW 3 and 2, the 14-day COVID-19 death rate was 11.4 deaths per 1 million population (10.3 the previous two weeks).
- Among 20 countries/territories in the region with available data, **COVID-19 hospitalizations** increased in 7 countries and territories (range: 8.8% - 101%) during EW 3 compared to the previous week. Among 18 countries and territories with available data, COVID-19 **ICU admissions** increased in 5 countries and territories (range: 0.8% - 100%).

Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. EW 4, 2020 - EW 3, 2023.

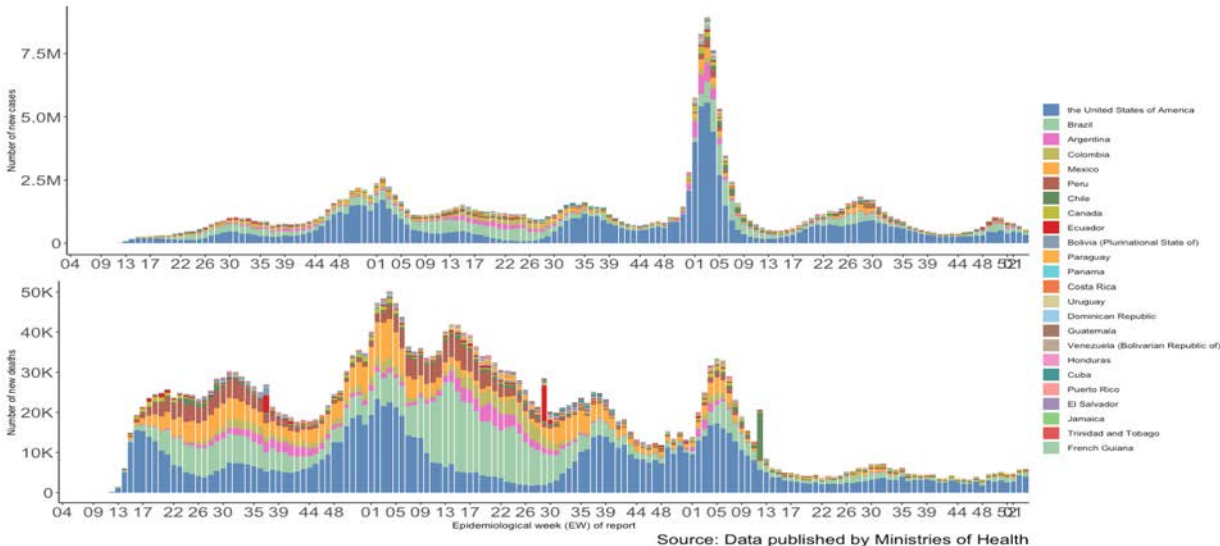


Source: Data from WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

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 - 3, 2023.



During EW 3, 540,449 new **COVID-19 cases** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative decrease of -21.3% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 cases in the last week was reported from North America (357,895 cases, -24% decrease) compared to the previous week. (**Table 1**). During EW 3, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 cases at the national level were reported by the United States of America (323,721 new cases, -24.6% decrease), Brazil (114,916 new cases, -4.8% decrease), Mexico (20,226 new cases, -26.3% decrease).

Table 1: Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 2 and EW 3 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 02	Deaths EW 02	Cases EW 03	Deaths EW 03	% Change Cases	% Change Deaths
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	4,369,247	36,037	10,913	56	9,128	55	-16.4%	-1.8%
Central America	4,192,399	54,072	17,412	63	11,322	52	-35.0%	-17.5%
North America	112,532,979	1,475,556	473,363	4,755	357,895	4,298	-24.4%	-9.6%
South America	67,241,062	1,342,871	185,146	903	162,104	1,452	-12.4%	60.8%

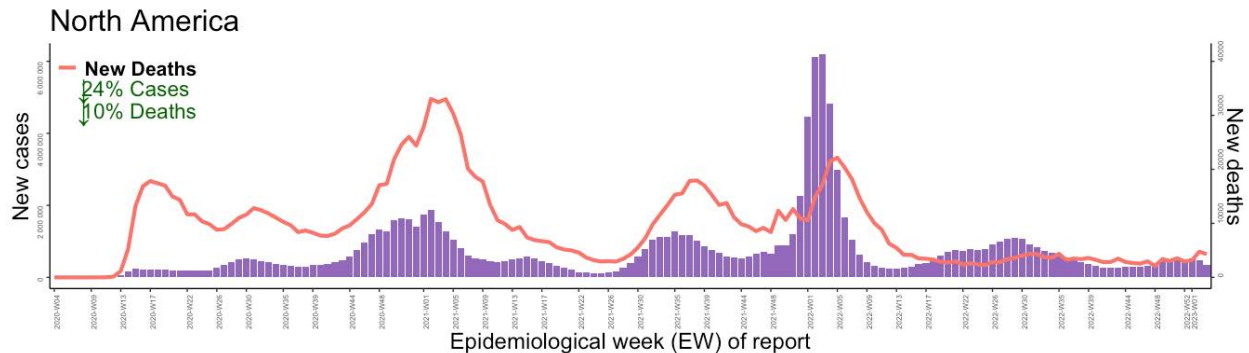
For the same period, 5,857 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in the region of the Americas - a relative increase of 1.4% compared to previous week (**Figure 2**). The highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the last week was reported from North America (4,298 deaths, -9% decrease) (**Table 1**). At the national level, the highest proportion of weekly COVID-19 deaths were reported by the United States of America (3,922 new deaths, -7.8% decrease), Brazil (952 new deaths, 108.3% increase), and Canada (225 new deaths, -22.9% decrease).

A summary of the COVID-19 trends for EW 3 by subregion is presented below.

North America

The overall trends for **COVID-19 cases** have been decreasing in North America for the second consecutive week as of EW 3. During EW 3, all three countries in the subregion observed a decrease in weekly cases – with the largest decline in cases being reported by Mexico (20,226 cases, -26.3% decrease), followed by the United States of America (323,721 cases, -24.6% decrease), and Canada (13,948 cases, -17.3% decrease).

Figure 3: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). North America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 3, 2023.



For the same period, **weekly COVID-19 deaths** decreased by -9.6% in North America during EW 3 relative to the previous week. Similar to weekly cases, all three countries in the subregion reported a decline in weekly deaths. The largest decline in deaths were reported by Mexico (151 new deaths, -28.4% decrease), followed by Canada (225 new deaths, -22.9% decrease), and the United States of America (3,922 new deaths, -7.8% decrease).

During 3, among the two countries in North America with available data for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions**, the United States of America continued to report a decrease in both hospitalizations (n=37,702, -14.1% decrease) and ICU admissions (n=4,810, -10.5% decrease) for the second consecutive week. On the other hand, Canada reported an increase in both weekly hospitalizations (n=5,102, 8.8% increase) and weekly ICU admissions (n=268, 0.8% increase) during EW 3 compared to the previous week.

The Omicron lineages BA.5 and XBB are circulating in all three countries in the subregion. In the United States of America, the proportion of the BA.5 subvariant has been gradually decreasing over the past three months – accounting for 2%, while the estimated proportions of BA.5 sub-lineages, BQ.1 and BQ.1.1, and XBB sub-lineages have been increasing over the past few weeks – accounting for 40.2% and 52.4% (including 43% of XBB.1.5), respectively of sequences for the week ending on 21 January 2023¹. The sub-lineages of BA.5 and XBB made up about 89.3% (including 5.5% of BQ.1 and 31.7% of BQ.1.1) and about 3% in EW 52, 2022, respectively in Canada². The sub-lineages of BA.5 and XBB made up about 90% and 9% of sequences in EW 52, 2022 in Mexico, respectively.

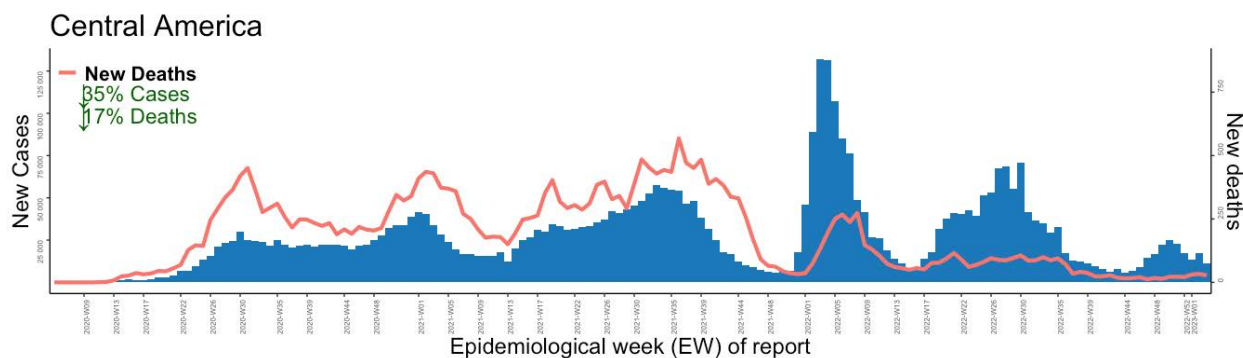
1 The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Variant Proportions. Accessed 24 January 2023. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3Obz8cT>

2 Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). COVID-19 Variants in Canada. Accessed 24 January 2023. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3bbFRFr>

Central America

In Central America, the overall **COVID-19 incidence** for the sub-region is on a downward trend with 11,322 new cases being reported during EW 3 – a 35.0% decrease 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 3, 2023.



During EW 3, **COVID-19 weekly cases** increased in one country in the subregion – Honduras (914 new cases, 3.2% increase) relative to the previous week. The remaining five countries and territories observed a decline in weekly cases (range: -52 - -15% decrease), and one country – El Salvador – did not report any cases during EW 3. The countries with the largest decline in cases this week included Guatemala (4,570 new cases, -52% decrease), Belize (158 new cases, -29.1% decrease), and Panama (789 new cases, -23% decrease).

During EW 3, **weekly deaths** decreased by approximately -17.5% relative to the previous week (**Figure 4**) with one country – Honduras out of the seven countries and territories reporting an increase (4 new deaths, 300% increase). One country – Guatemala – reported a decrease in weekly deaths (24 new deaths, -36.8% decrease) and two countries did not report any changes – Costa Rica (19 new deaths, 0%) and Panama (5 new deaths, 0%) compared to the previous week. The remaining three countries/territories did not report any deaths during EW 3.

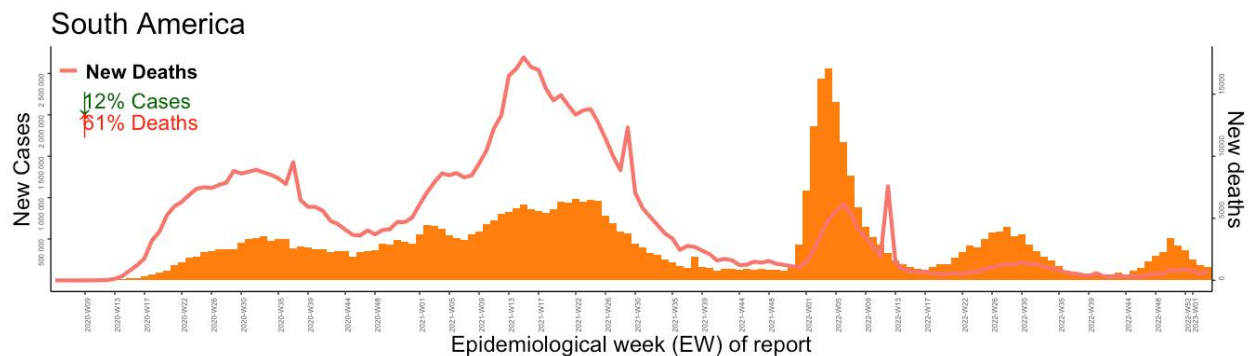
Among four countries/territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations** in the Central American subregion, Costa Rica reported an increase in weekly hospitalizations (n=160, 11.9% increase) while the remaining three countries/territories reported a decline in weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (range: -38.4 - -26.7% decrease). Similarly, among three countries and territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions**, Costa Rica reported a 20% increase in ICU admissions (n=18), while the remaining two reported a decline – Honduras (2 ICU admissions, - 33.3% decrease) and Panama (2 ICU admissions, -50% decrease) compared to the previous week.

As of EW 2, the Omicron lineages BA.5 and XBB have been reported from six and three of the seven countries and territories in the subregion, respectively – Costa Rica (BA.5 and XBB), Panama (BA.5 and XBB), Guatemala (BA.5 and XBB), El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Belize.

South America

In South America, the overall **COVID-19 incidence** for the subregion has decreased by -12.4%, with a total of 162,104 new COVID-19 cases being reported during EW 3 compared to the previous week (**Figure 5**). Please note that data for EW 2 for Colombia in the subregion was not publicly available, could result in a data artifact in percent changes in cases and deaths for EW 3.

Figure 5: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW). South America. Region of the Americas. EW 3, 2020 - EW 3, 2023.



During EW 3, **COVID-19 weekly cases** increased in two out of the 10 countries and territories the sub-region – Paraguay (4,045 new cases, 419% increase) and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (323 new cases, 95.8% increase) – and they decreased in the remaining eight countries and territories (range: -55.6 - -4.8% decrease). The largest decline in cases was reported by Argentina (8,614 new cases, -55.6% decrease), followed by Ecuador (1,171 new cases, -52.1% decrease), and Uruguay (2,017 new cases, -46.3% decrease) relative to the previous week.

During EW 3, a total of 1,452 **COVID-19 deaths** were reported in South America, primarily due to a large increase observed in Brazil – 60.8% increase in the subregion compared to the previous week. The largest increase in weekly deaths were reported by Brazil (952 new deaths, 108.3% increase), followed by Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (13 new deaths, 18.2% increase), and Paraguay (32 new cases, 6.7% increase). Chile (144 new deaths, -13.3% decrease), and Colombia (126 new deaths, 100% increase).

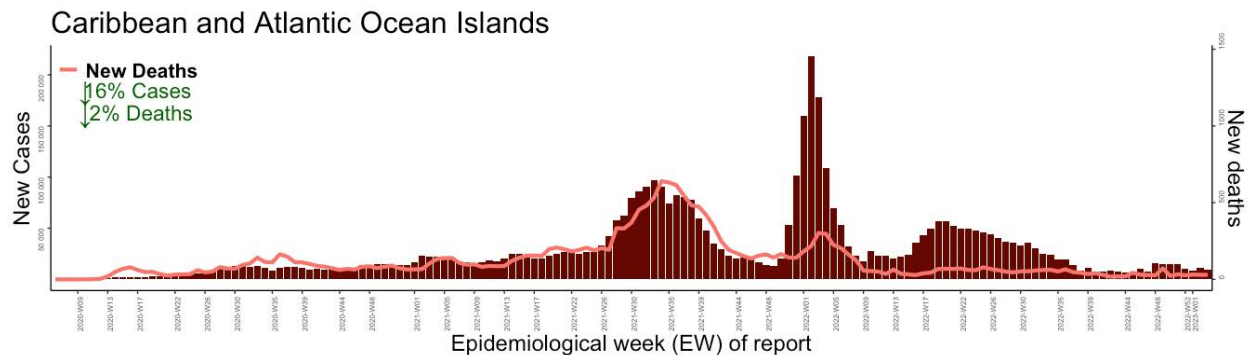
Among three countries and territories in the subregion with data available for **COVID-19 weekly hospitalizations**, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) reported an increase in weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations (148 hospitalizations, 10.4% increase). The remaining two countries reported a decline – Chile (994 hospitalizations, -9.1% decrease) and Peru (228 hospitalizations, -15.6% decrease). For the same period, all four countries and territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions** reported a decline in their weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions (range: -30.4 - -2.2% decrease).

As of EW 2, the Omicron lineages BA.5 and XBB have been reported from nine and eight out of the 10 countries in the subregion, respectively – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay (BA.5 only), Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands

In the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands sub-region, **COVID-19 weekly cases** decreased by -16.4% compared to the previous week (**Figure 6**). At the national level, cases increased in eight countries and territories in the subregion (range: 6.5% - 100%) while they declined in 14 countries and territories (range: -100% - -2.9%). The remaining countries/territories did not report any cases during EW 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 3, 2023.



During EW 3, **COVID-19 weekly deaths** decreased by -1.8% (55 deaths) in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion. Five observed a relative increase in their weekly deaths in EW 3 compared to the previous week (range: 2-11 deaths, 100-200% increase). Please note that 11 new deaths of Jamaica during EW 3 included 9 historical deaths occurred during 2021. Weekly deaths either remained the same – United States Virgin Islands (1 death) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2 deaths) – or declined in five countries/territories of the subregion (range: -100 – -13.9% decrease). The remaining countries/territories did not report any deaths during EW 3.

During EW 3, among 11 countries and territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations**, four countries/territories reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations, with the highest increase being observed in Puerto Rico (203 hospitalizations, 101% increase), followed by Bermuda (13 hospitalizations, 85.7% increase), and Trinidad and Tobago (71 hospitalizations, 51.1% increase). Among nine countries and territories with data available for **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, three reported an increase in their weekly COVID-19 ICU admissions – Puerto Rico (34 ICU admissions, 100% increase), Bermuda (1 ICU admission, 100% increase), and Martinique (2 ICU admissions, 100% increase).

Notable increases in weekly cases in the subregion during EW 3 were Curaçao (21 new cases, 90.9% increase), Trinidad and Tobago (519 new cases, 27.8% increase), and Jamaica (175 new cases, 24.1% increase) relative to the previous week.

As of EW 2, the Omicron lineages BA.5 and XBB have been reported from 18 and nine out of 34 countries and territories in the subregion respectively, including the overseas territories of France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. However, these trends should be interpreted with caution due to the presence of differences in sequencing capacity and sampling strategies between countries and territories.

Immunization

Figure 7: Complete Primary Series Coverage in the Region of the Americas. As of EW 3, 2023.

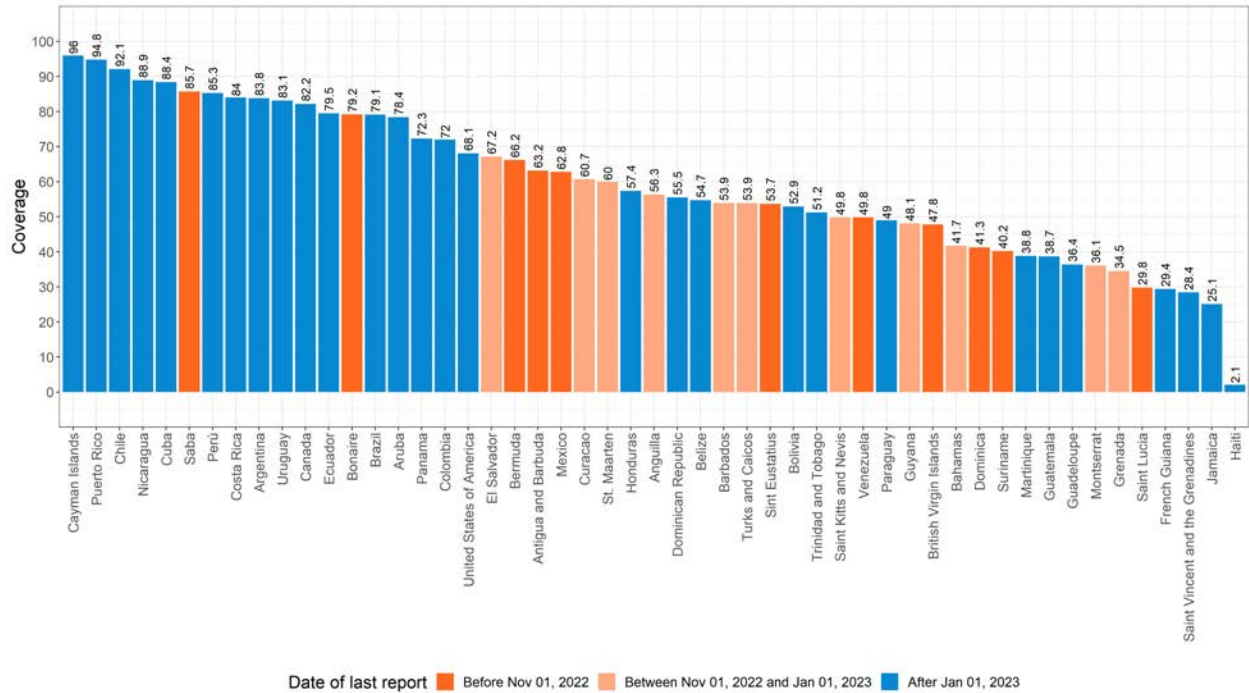
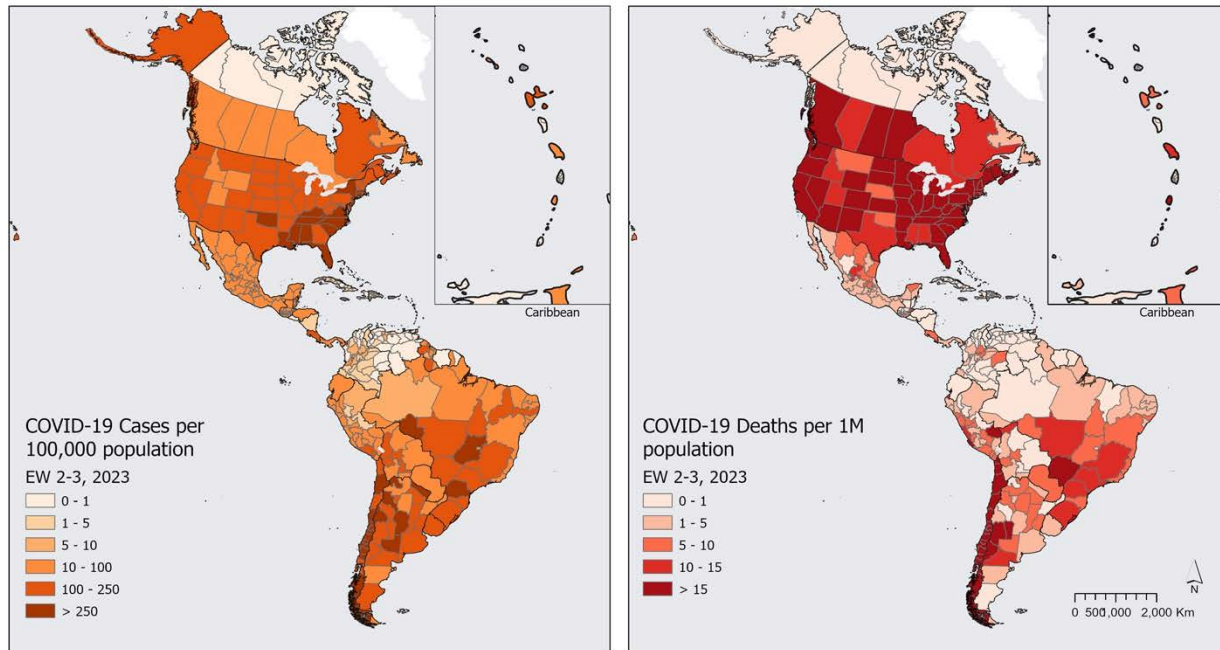


Figure 7 shows the reported complete primary series coverage* for each country and territory in the Americas. Each bar is colored depending on the last date this information was available. Only bars colored in blue indicate a country that has reported data at some point in 2023 (in the past 3 weeks), while those colored dark orange have not reported data for 2.5 months (or more). The number of countries in an orange hue is alarming, as it corresponds to 43% of the countries and territories in the region. As proposed in previous weekly sitreps, it becomes more difficult to discern the state of COVID-19 vaccinations in the region with fewer data points available each month.

* 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

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 2 and 3, 2023.



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 2 and 3, 2023.

The highest case incidence was observed in the USA, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Puerto Rico, and US Virgin Islands, while the highest mortality was seen in the USA, Canada, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

In North America, some states in the US (Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, South Carolina, etc.) presented the highest incidence rates. While high mortality rates were observed in most of the US, and some parts of Canada (British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia).

In Central America, incidence and mortality rates continue to be low in the sub-region. Meanwhile, in South America, in most regions of Chile, some provinces in Argentina (La Palma, Córdoba, San Juan, Catamarca, Jujuy, and Formosa), and some states of Brazil (Parana, Goiás, and Rondônia) reported high incidence rates. At the same time, most regions of Chile, some regions of Peru (Madre de Dios, and Ica), the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, and some parts of Argentina (Neuquén, Mendoza, and San Luis) showed the highest mortality rates in the sub-region.

In the Caribbean territories, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands reported the highest incidence rates, and Puerto Rico, and St Vincent and the Grenadines reported the highest mortality rates in the sub-region.

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