

Case Numbers: Numbers are down slightly this week. At **39,117 in the last 7 days in Alabama, 455 in last 7 days for Coffee County**. As stated in the last 3 updates, we still do not think cases numbers are accurately reflecting the on the ground situation; with some people testing at home (not reported to ADPH) or not testing, we also have noticed delays in reporting with numbers sometimes doubling days after first being reported. As the number of people seeking tests has dwindled (see testing below) we hold out hope for a downward trend in cases but are afraid this may be due to “home testing”. So, for now we continue to use case number statistics as an “educated guess” for community spread and hospital forecasting.

Positivity Rate: Still much higher than we would like to see. The CDC rates an area as high transmission rate if they have a positivity rate greater than 10%.

Coffee Counties is down this week to **46.5%** from 50.2% last week. State numbers are also down 39.8% this week and 46.3% last week. This really only tells us that we are probably not testing enough people (at doctor’s offices or ADPH sites) to get a real scope of the community transmission rate.

Hospitalizations: Unfortunately hospitalizations continue to climb. **With a high this week of 2,961 on Tuesday** (we have since dropped by about 90). We are now, over the peak observed in August and close to the peak last January. Though EMS reports 70% or more of their runs still having something to do with COVID, regional hospitals are not currently on diversion (not taking patients) but patients are being told there will be long waits for rooms.

The good news is hospital stay times are down, not as many patients are being sent to the ICU as last peak, and most do not require ventilators but we are seeing an uptick in renal failure. About 82% of those in the hospital are unvaccinated and 100% of COVID ICU patients in the area are unvaccinated

Deaths: Coffee County recorded 2 more deaths from Covid this week. We have lost 203 Coffee County residents over the course of this pandemic.

Testing: The site at ESCC is still up and running, 8 am -5 pm Monday- Friday, after some glitches we worked out with the contractor, the time to get results is improving and we hope it will be back down to the 24-36 hour range soon. We took about a half as many tests this week, with 475 tests taken from last Friday. If this trend continues we may lower the open times for this testing site, a decision on this will be made the beginning of next week.

Vaccinations: Our rate in Coffee County remained stable at; 46.64% receiving at least 1 dose and 38.2% completing the Vaccination series. This is well below the national averages of 77% with at least one dose and 64% fully vaccinated.

Concerns, We could continue to see some growth in hospitalizations, increased wait for rooms/beds, and longer transports for some patients. However, with shorter hospital stay times, we think that hospitalizations numbers will start to decline along with lower case counts, we are hoping to see this downward trend by the middle of *February.

*WARNING this is conjecture based on antidotal evidence only and should not be interpreted as fact.

What can we do? Prayer and Personal Responsibility remain our two options. Vaccinate, Mask, Wash your hands, Social distance is all we have to offer. However, I would add... if you get this, drink plenty of water. Gatorade is good but not a substitute for good old water.