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MDH COVID-19 Omicron Update House Health Finance and Policy Committee

Commissioner Jan Malcolm
1/13/22



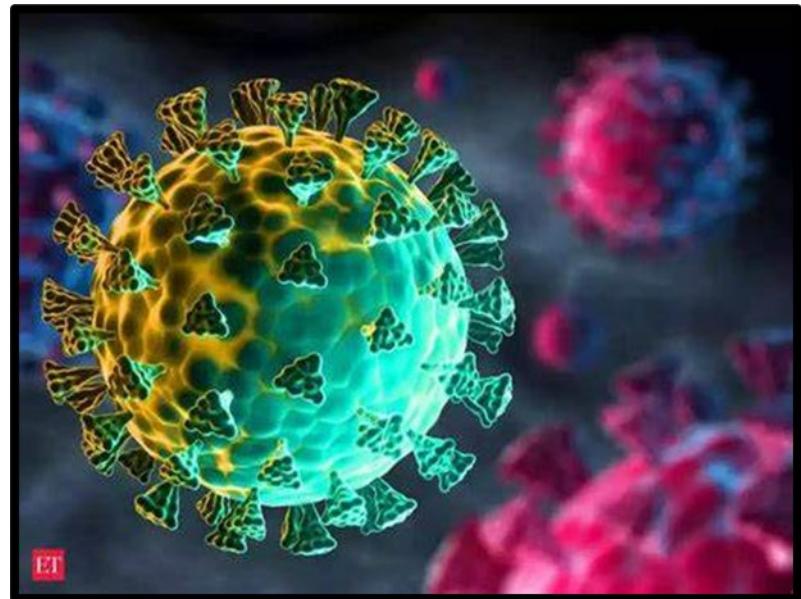
“It’s déjà vu all over again.”

Yogi Berra, Yankees baseball Hall of Famer

Omicron: What we know

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- Highly infectious and moves quickly
 - Doubling every 1.5-3.0 days
- Seeing some evidence of reduced proportion of severe disease, milder disease in persons immunized by vaccination or prior infection.
- Studies in mice and hamsters suggest Omicron infection milder because it is focused in the nose, throat and windpipe rather than lungs.

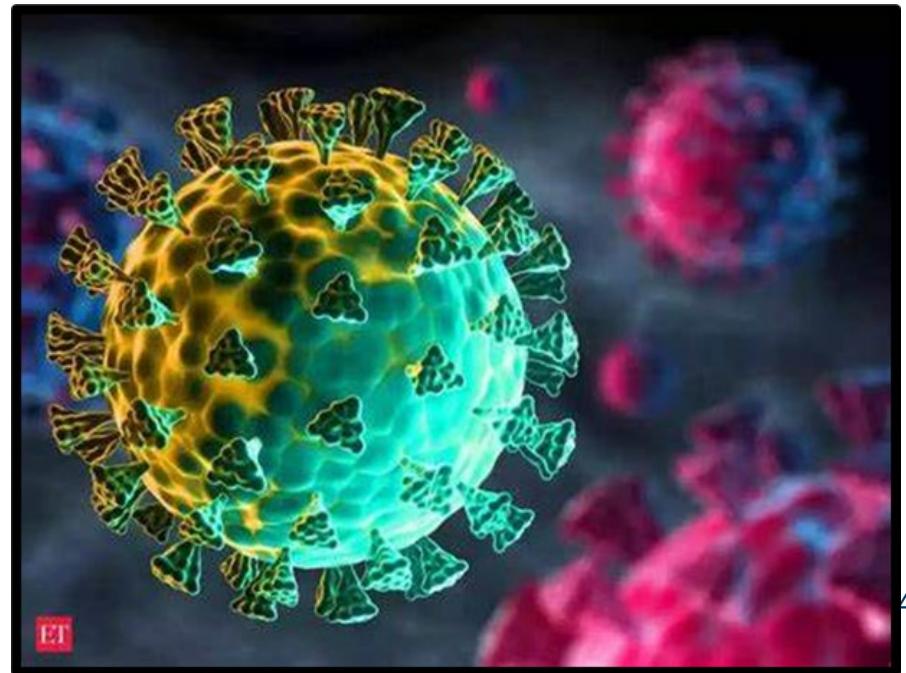


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Omicron: What we know

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- Partial vaccine escape
 - Large number of vaccine breakthrough infections and reinfections
 - Booster increases immune response, but not at same level as Delta
 - Still thought to have some protection against severe disease
- Significantly lower efficacy of Monoclonal Antibody Therapy. One therapy (Sotrovimab) is effective but very low supplies nationally.
- This week MDH recommended moving to a random selection process for allocating monoclonal antibody treatment among patients with clinically-similar risk.

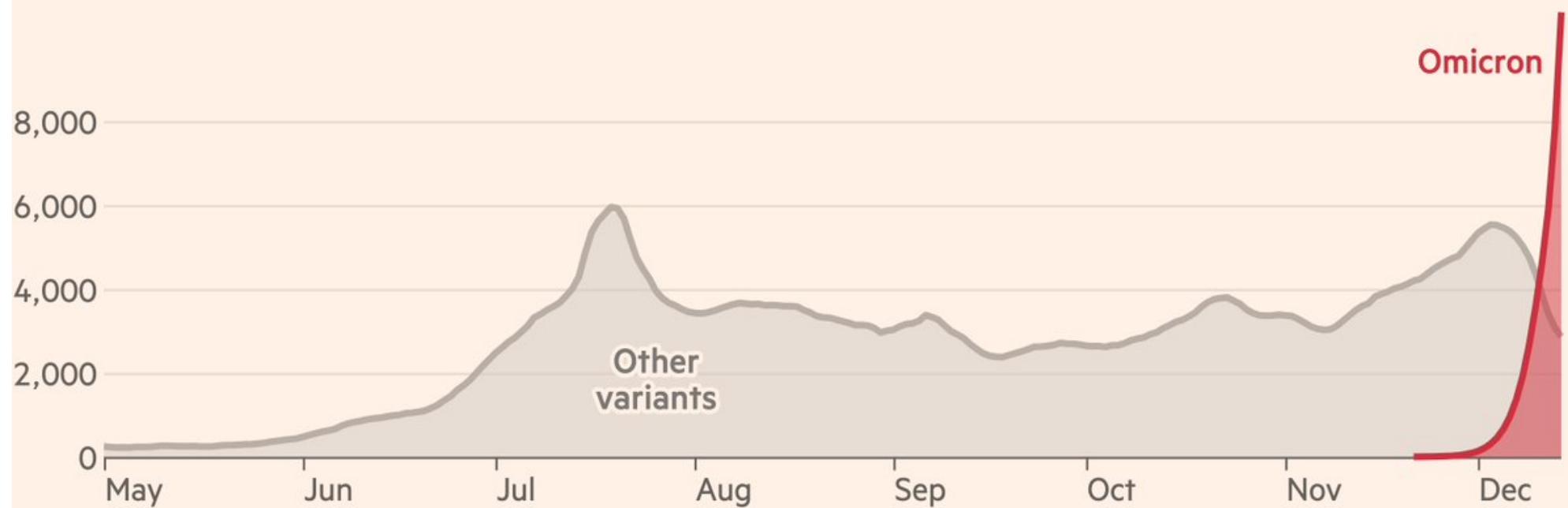


We are facing a double outbreak in the short term

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London now has two pandemics: an ongoing Delta wave, and a steep Omicron wave that has shot past Delta in a matter of days

Daily cases in London, by variant



Source: FT analysis of data from UKHSA. Cases by specimen date, adjusted for late reporting
FT graphic by John Burn-Murdoch / @jburnmurdoch
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Vaccine Effectiveness against Omicron in the UK

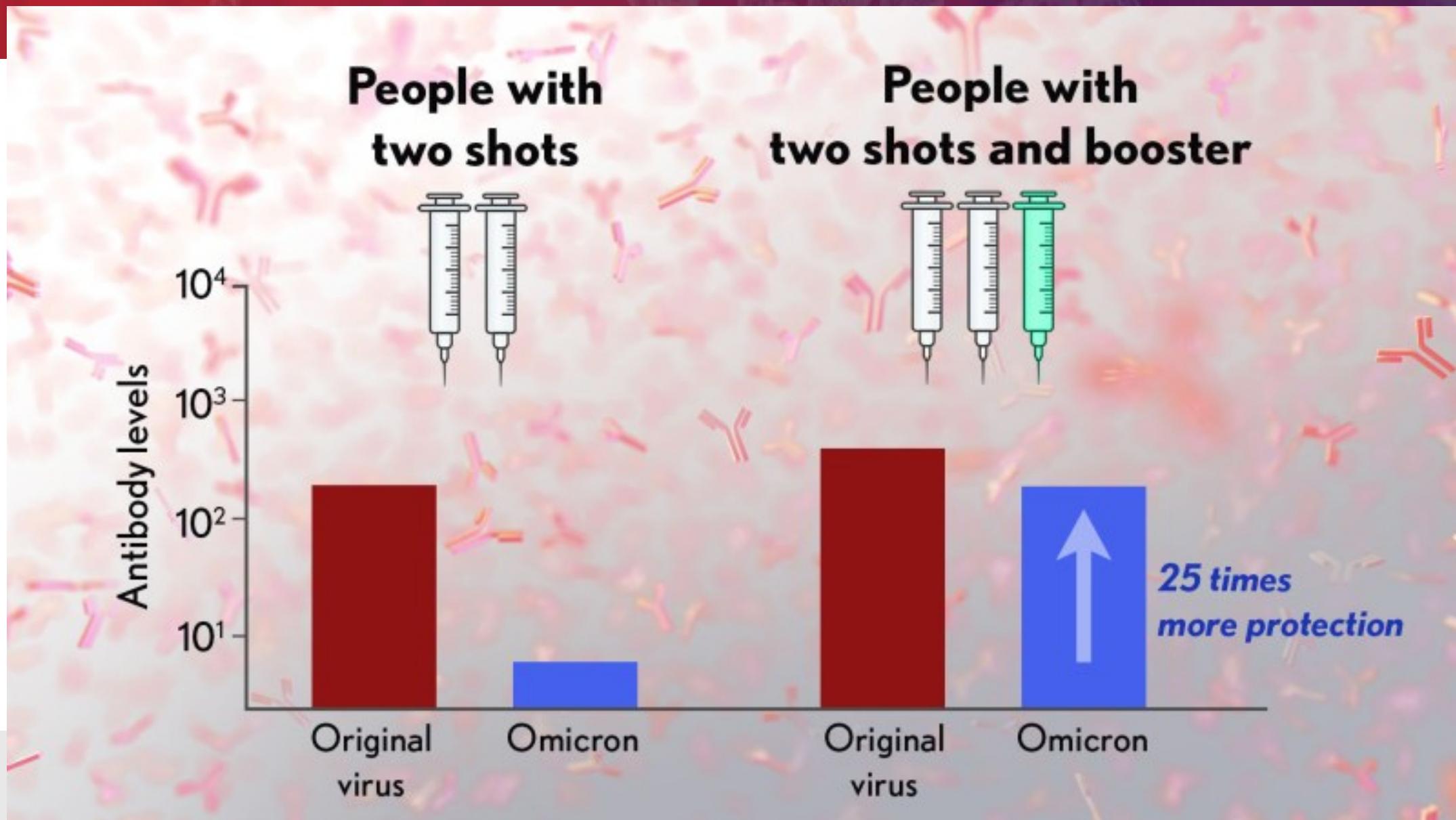
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- UK data through December 28, 2021 found **vaccine effectiveness against hospitalization** of 52% after one dose, 72% 2 to 24 weeks after dose 2, 52% 25+ weeks after dose 2 and **88% 2+ weeks after a booster dose.**
- Vaccine effectiveness against symptomatic disease with the Omicron variant is significantly lower than compared to the Delta variant and wanes rapidly.
- Nevertheless, **protection against hospitalization is much greater** than that against symptomatic disease, in particular **after a booster dose** (nearly 90%).
- Experience with previous variants suggests that this will be sustained longer than protection against symptomatic disease.



Vaccine protection for Original Virus and Omicron Variant

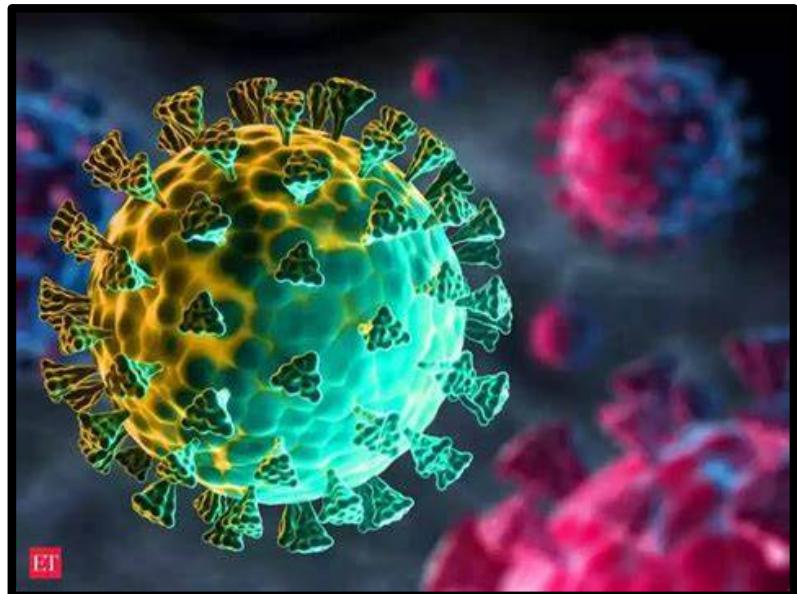
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Omicron in Minnesota

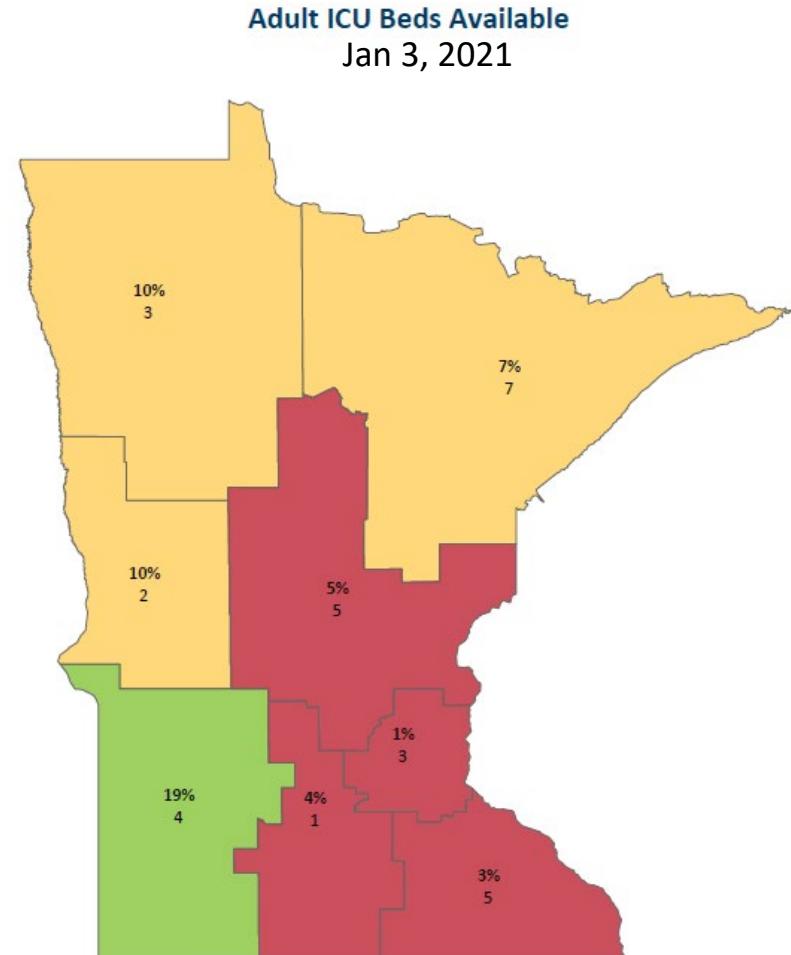
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- First MN case identified 12/1/21—latest cases suggest widespread community transmission in metro and greater Minnesota.
- 90% of cases likely attributable to Omicron.
- We won't have complete case counts due to over-the-counter testing.
- Anticipate increase in hospitalizations to follow in several weeks.



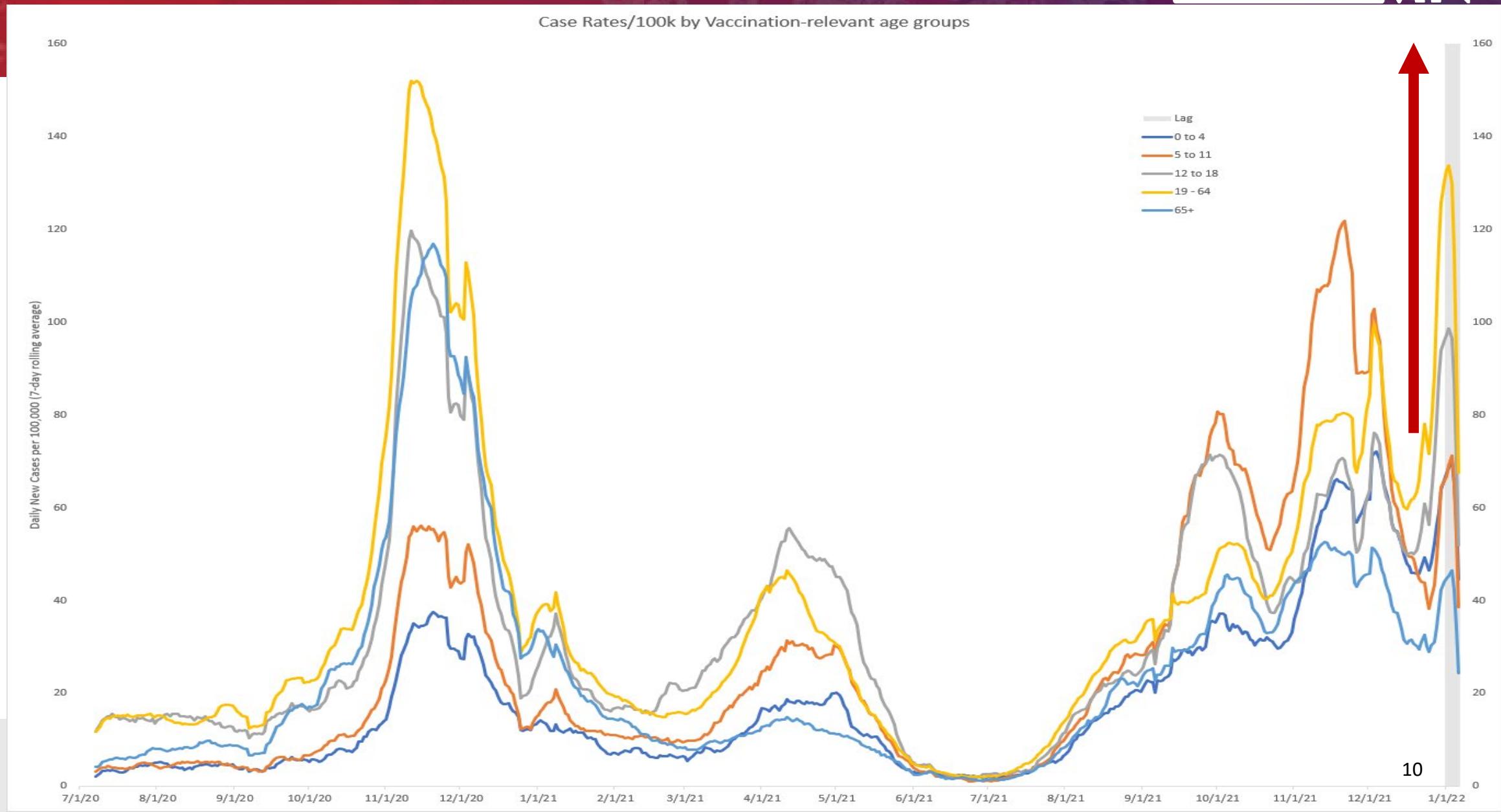
Specific Concerns

- Health care capacity (both acute and long-term care) already stretched and very likely to worsen
 - Omicron wave will result in some severe disease, even if proportion is less than Delta
 - Influenza cases rising, population significantly under-vaccinated
 - Illness among health care workers and families, childcare and school closures, will further exacerbate already strained staffing



Case Rates/100K by relevant age-groups

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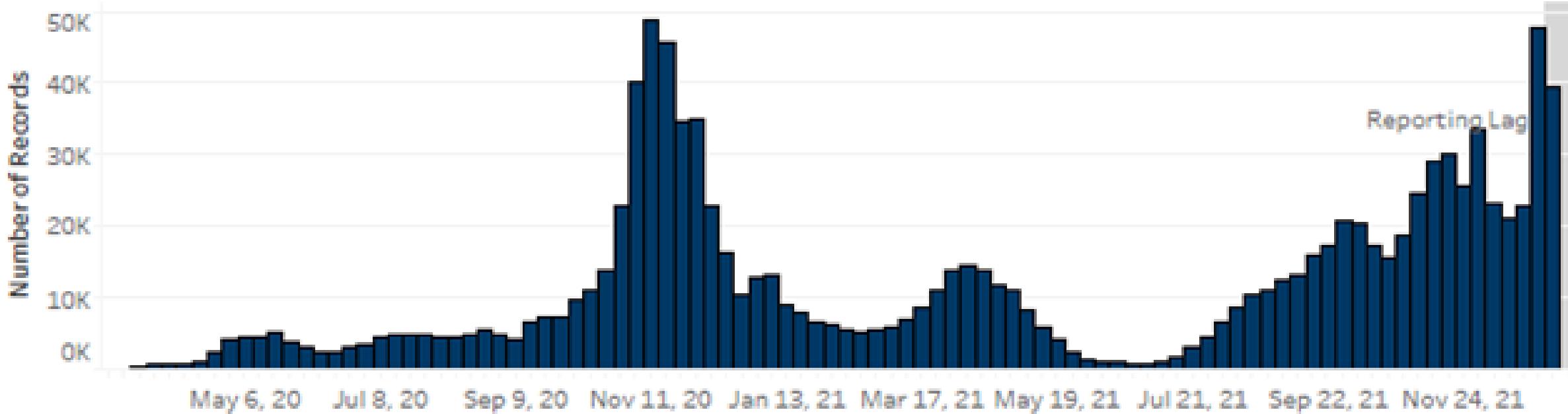


Omicron: In Minnesota

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- In the last 3 weeks have seen an exponential surge of Omicron cases

Epi Curve by Week of Specimen Date



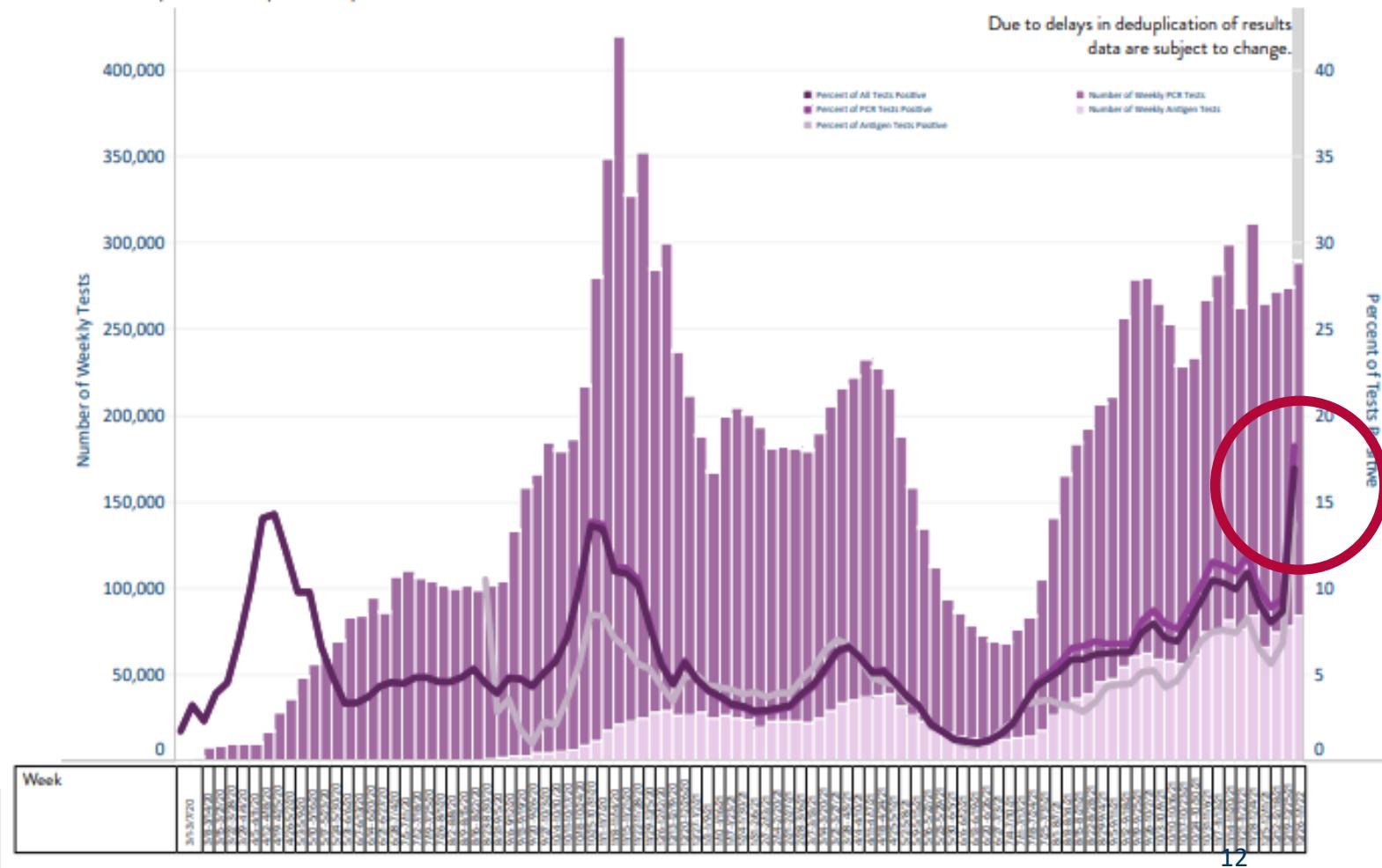
Testing and Positivity

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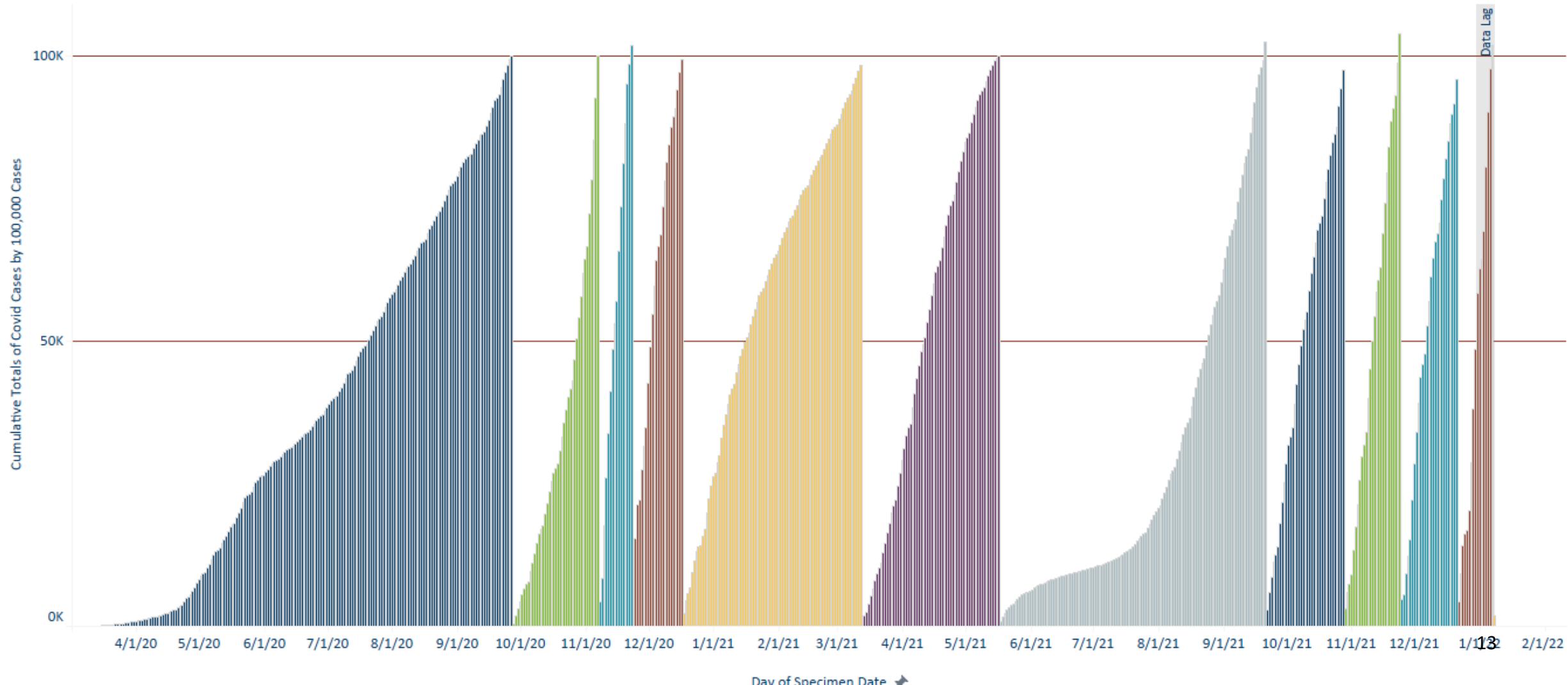
Number of Tests and Percent Positive by Week

Number of tests and percentage positive by date of laboratory testing. Only tests reported by laboratories reporting both positive and negative results are included in positivity calculations. Percent positive is the percent of positive tests from the total number of tests.

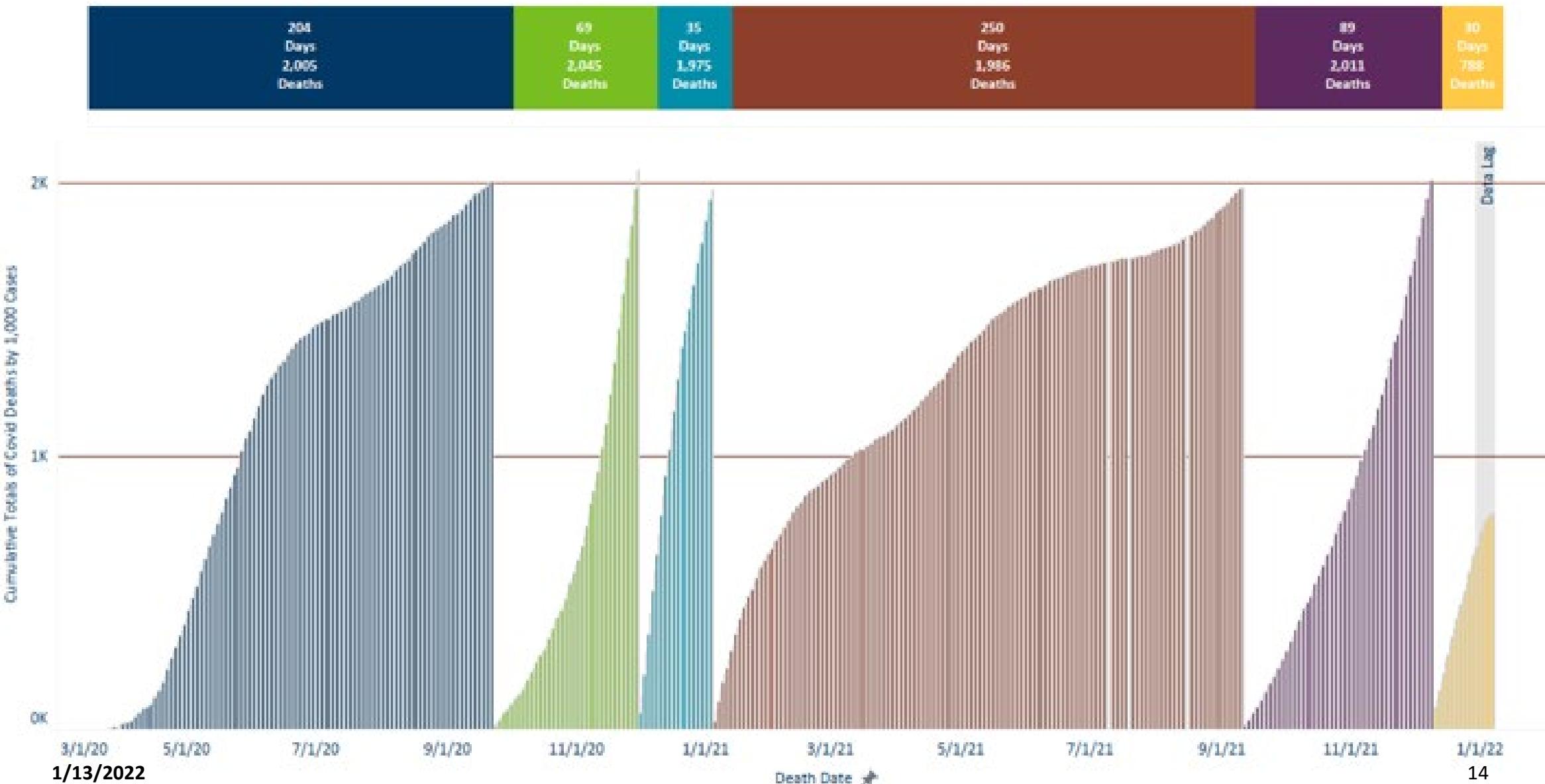
- Statewide positivity is at 19.8%, the highest positivity ever reported.
- Increasing one percentage point a day.
- Robust testing



Time to Get to 100, 000 COVID-19 Case Increments, MN



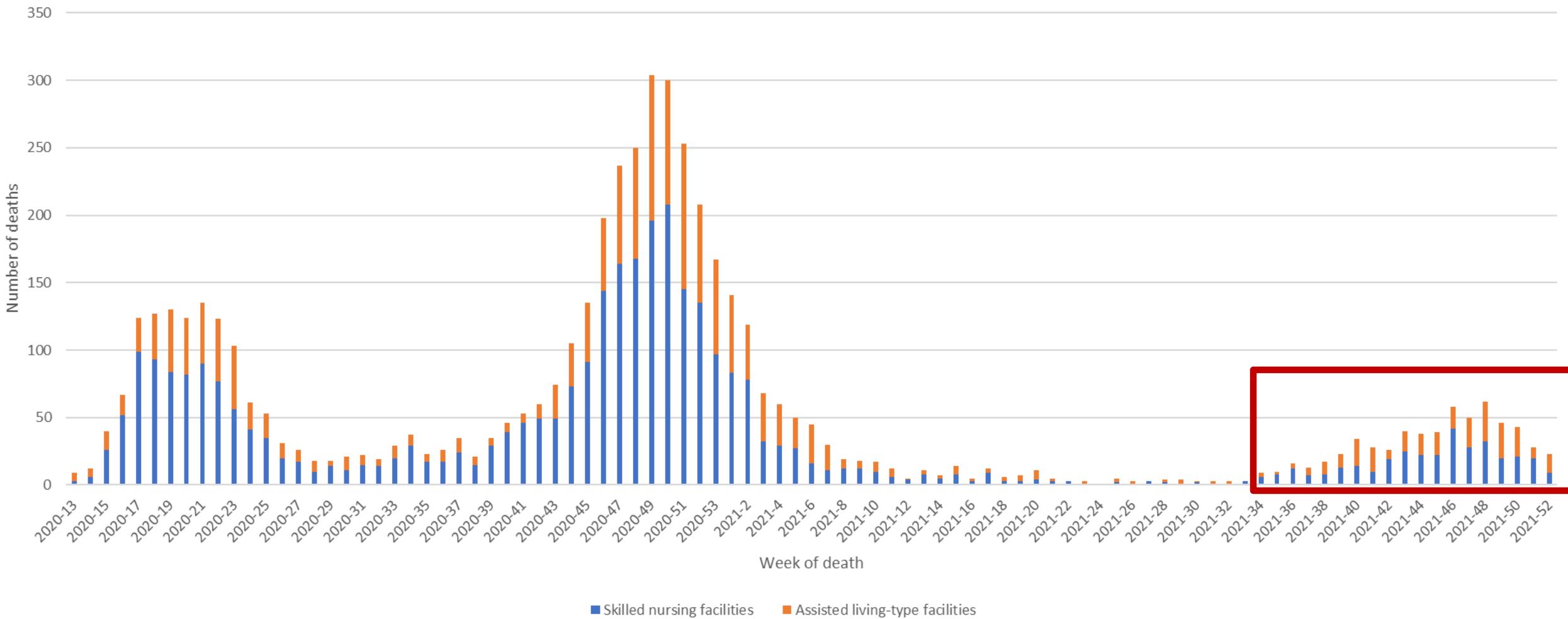
Time to Get to 2000 Deaths from COVID-19, MN



Impact of Vaccination on LTC-Deaths

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COVID-associated deaths in LTC residents



Mask Recommendations

- MDH recommends wearing a high-quality mask to help limit the spread of COVID-19 variants like Omicron. Examples are N95 or KN95 masks, which are very good at blocking droplets.

MDH guidance on other mitigation strategies remains unchanged:

- Get Vaccinated,
- Get Boosted,
- Get Tested,
- Stay Home if sick or if you test positive.



In Summary

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- Omicron has taken over as the dominant variant circulating in Minnesota in less than a month.
- Seeing evidence of much higher rates of transmission—with high case numbers.
- Illness appears to be milder [with more upper respiratory symptoms] but expect to continue to see high hospitalizations due to high levels of transmission
- Booster doses important in improving protection



In Summary

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- Boosters recommended for everyone 12 and older.
- Limited monoclonal antibody availability.
- **Layered mitigation remains critical: vaccination, masking, social distancing, avoiding large crowds, hand washing.**



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Thank you!

