

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

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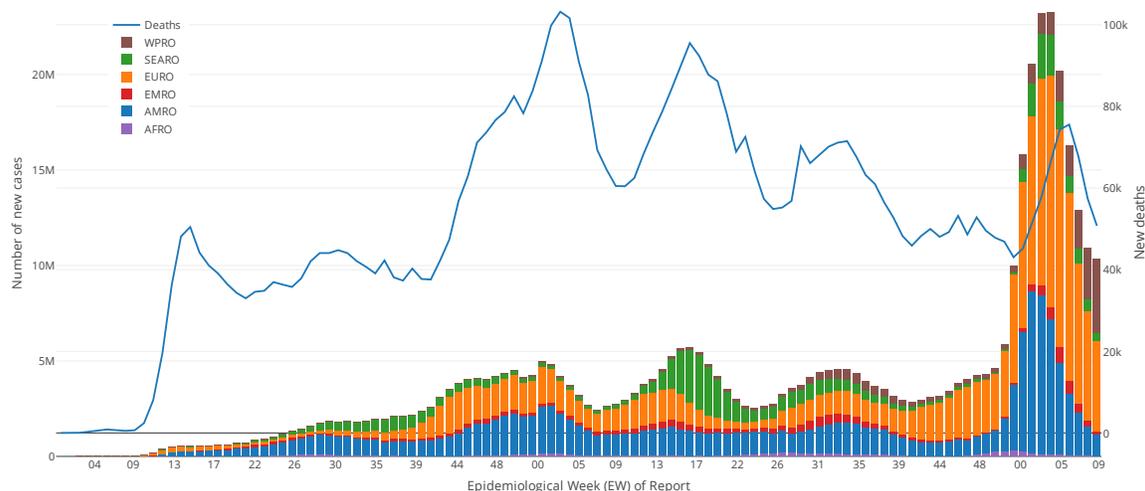
### Executive Summary

Since the onset of the pandemic in 2020 and up to 8 March 2022, a cumulative total of over 446 million COVID-19 cases including 6 million deaths were reported from all six WHO regions. Overall trends continued to decline worldwide during epidemiological week (EW) 9 (27 February – 5 March) when approximately 10.3 million new cases including 50,761 deaths were reported— a decline of 5% and 11.6% respectively compared to EW 8 (20 – 26 February). **Figure 1.** While the Western Pacific Region (WPRO) continued to observe relative increases in weekly cases (46.4% increase) and deaths (29%), COVID-19 trends are either declining or stabilizing in all the other WHO regions.

**In the Region of the Americas,** approximately 148 million cases of COVID-19 including 2.6 million deaths were reported during the last two years of the pandemic (February 2020 – February 2022). Despite making up only 13% of the world's population, the region of the Americas contributed 44% of the total global deaths and 34% of the cases.

COVID-19 cases in the region continued to decline for a seventh consecutive week with more 1.1 million new cases reported in EW 9 – a decline of 26.1% compared to EW 8. Similarly, the downward trajectory of weekly deaths continued for a fourth consecutive week with nearly 18,000 new deaths reported during EW 9 – a 35.5% decline. Trends for COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or ICU admissions are also declining across the region and are now at or near pre-Omicron severity levels in many countries and territories.

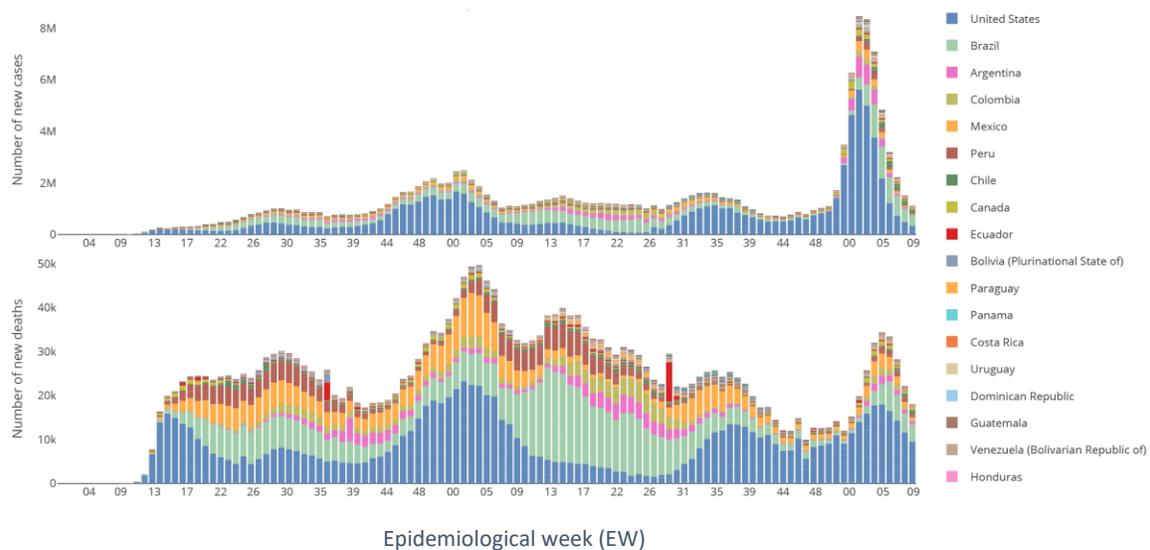
**Figure 1: COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and WHO region. As of EW 9 2022.**



## Region of the Americas

In the last two years of the pandemic up to 7 March 2022, more than 148 million cases of COVID-19 including 2.6 million deaths were reported in the region of the Americas for a cumulative incidence rate of 14,000 cases per 100,000 population and cumulative mortality rate of 256 deaths per 100,000 population. Following a decrease since early October 2021 (EW 39), the number of weekly cases has been rising again since late November 2021 (EW 47), with an acceleration observed starting the end of December 2021, aligning with the increase in Omicron VOC presence in the region. The number of new reported cases should be interpreted with caution due to likely changes in testing policies in some parts of the region which could result in an underestimation of cases.

**Figure 2:** COVID-19 cases and deaths by epidemiological week (EW) of report and country/territory. Region of the Americas. As of EW 9 2022.



Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

Within the first two months of 2022, the region of Americas has already reported 63% of the total cases and 15% of the total deaths reported in all of 2021. These increasing trends occurred against a backdrop of the rapidly spreading Omicron Variant of Concern (VOC) in many countries and territories at the end of 2021, and just as health systems in the region were beginning to recover from the Delta Variant of Concern (VOC).

**Weekly COVID-19 cases** declined for a seventh consecutive week in 2022 with nearly 1.1 million new cases reported in EW 9 (27 Feb – 5 March) – a 26.1 % decrease compared to the previous week (**Figure 2**). Except in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands where there was a slight increase in cases (2.2% increase), COVID-19 incidence continued to decline in the remaining three subregions. (**Table 1**).

During EW 9, only five countries and territories in the region reported an increase in weekly cases – Anguilla 22.7%, Bahamas 3.1%, and Trinidad and Tobago 3.5% in the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Island subregion, as well as Bolivia (15.4%) and Canada (13.5%). As of EW 9, the highest number of weekly cases continued to be reported by Brazil (395K), United States (343K) and Chile (152K).

**Table 1:** Weekly change (%) in cases and deaths between EW 8 and EW 9 by subregion. Region of the Americas

Subregion	Total Cases	Total Deaths	Cases EW 8	Deaths EW 8	Cases EW 9	Deaths EW 9	% Variation Cases	% Variation Deaths
North America	87,424,708	1,306,503	552,125	13,171	405,556	10,564	-26.5%	-19.8%
Central America	3,005,600	49,033	52,182	504	39,935	315	-23.5%	-37.5%
South America	54,498,997	1,259,721	884,547	8,281	648,578	6,969	-26.7%	-15.8%
Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands	3,199,882	32,130	20,737	198	21,193	151	2.2%	-23.7%

Source: Data published by Ministries of Health

**Weekly COVID-19 deaths** also declined for a fourth consecutive week with approximately 18,000 new deaths reported during EW 9 – a 35.5% decline compared to EW 8 (**Figure 2**). The trend was uniform across all four sub-regions with Central America observing the largest relative decline this week (37.5%) compared to the last **Table 1**.

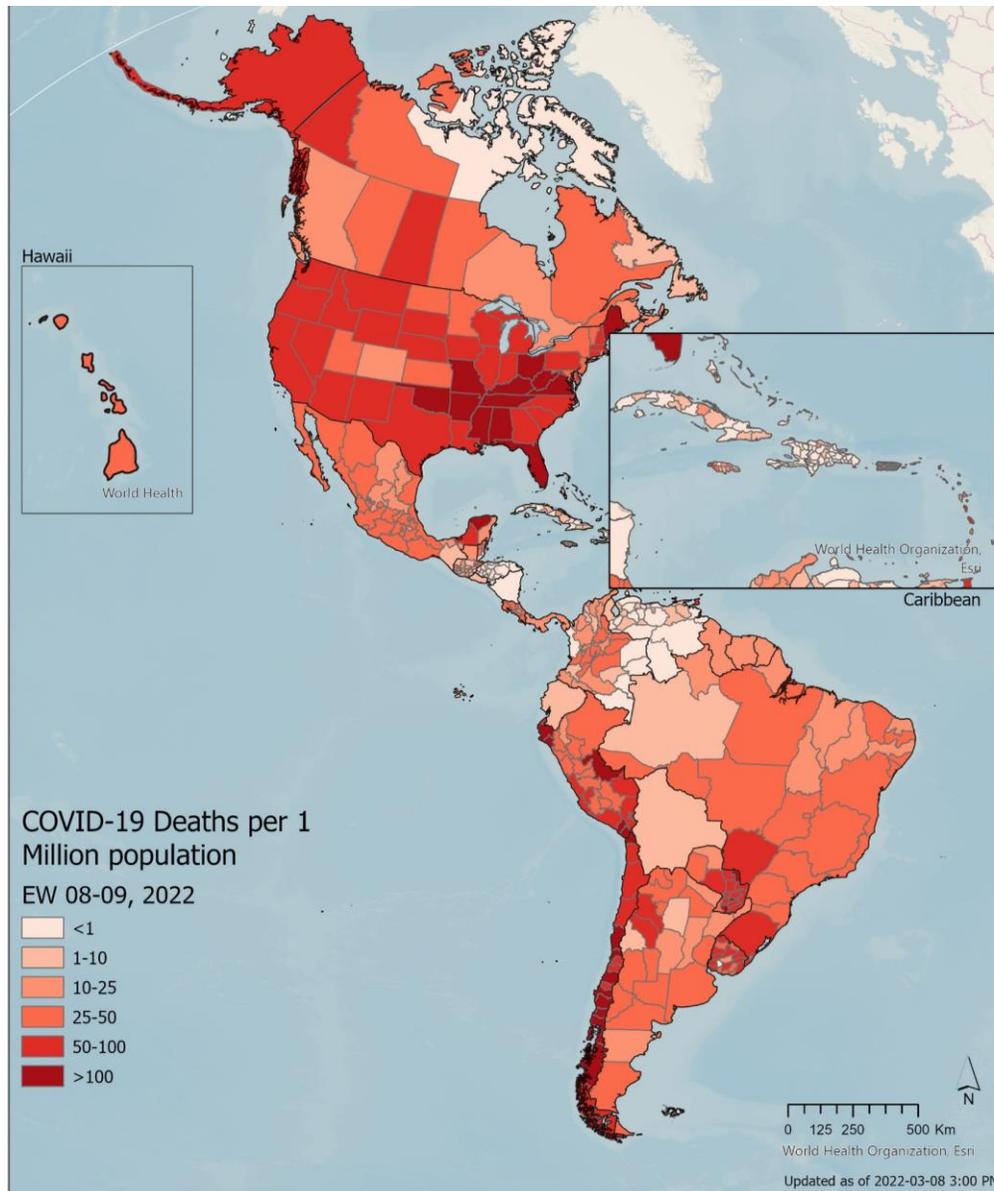
The United States (9,550 deaths), and Brazil (3,865) continues to report the highest burden of weekly COVID-19 deaths in the region. During EW 9, five countries/territories in the region observed increases in deaths– Haiti (5 new deaths, 400% increase), Bolivia (49 new deaths, 44.1% increase), Canada (535 new deaths, 17.8% increase), Puerto Rico (29 new deaths, 11.5% increase), and Chile (885 new deaths, 1.3% increase). However, with the exception of Chile, the overall trend for COVID-19 deaths is on a downward trajectory in the remaining four countries and territories.

Out of 35 countries and territories with available data for **weekly COVID-19 hospitalizations**, only two reported an increase – Anguilla (5 admissions, 66.7% increase), and Curacao (6 admissions, 10% increase). Of the 29 countries and territories with available data for weekly **COVID-19 ICU admissions**, two reported an increase in admissions during EW 9 – Curacao (6 admissions, 50% increase) and Jamaica (10 admissions, 11.1% increase). In the rest of the countries and territories, COVID-19 severity appears to be on the decline with many of them consistently reporting lower numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions each week.

**In Chile**, weekly COVID-19 deaths are stabilizing after weeks of acceleration between EW 4 (156 deaths) and EW 8 (874 new deaths). However, the overall weekly trends remain elevated with 885 new deaths reported in EW 9. Similarly, COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions also stabilized for the first time in EW 9 with negligible decreases of 2.9% and 0.1% respectively compared to the previous week.

After weeks of consistent declines in their COVID-19 trends, **Canada, and Bolivia** both observed moderate increases in their weekly cases and deaths for the first-time during EW 9 – 2,700 new cases (15.4 % increase) including 49 new deaths (44.1% increase) in Bolivia and 47,955 new cases (13.5% increase) including 535 new deaths (17.8% increase) in Canada. While the overall trajectory of the trends in both countries are on the decline, they should nevertheless be monitored carefully in the coming weeks.

**Map 1: COVID-19 mortality per 1 million population by Country/Adm 1. Region of the Americas. EW 8 and EW 9. 2022.**



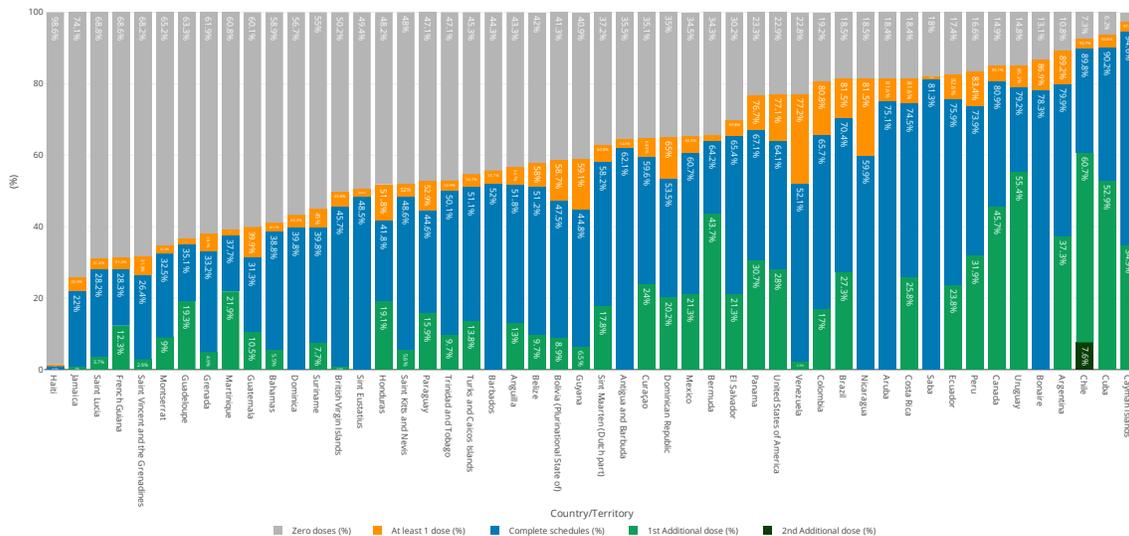
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During EW 8 and EW 9, the highest COVID-19 mortality rates per 1 million population were observed in the United States of America and Chile. **Map 1.** At the subnational level, while most states in the United States reported a mortality rate > 50 deaths per million population, some states in the Southeast reported rates over 100 deaths per million population. Most provinces and states in Canada and Mexico reported moderate rates between 25 – 50 deaths per million people respectively. In South America, Chile observed a high 2-week mortality rate in all of its territories (>50 deaths per million), while Paraguay and Peru reported mortality rates greater than 25 deaths per million population in most parts of the country (**Map 1**). Finally, while the Caribbean and Atlantic Ocean Islands subregion observed decreased mortality rates in most of its countries and territories during the past two weeks, some islands like Trinidad and Tobago, Dominica, Martinique, and Barbados reported high mortality rates in the last two weeks(>50 deaths per million people).

## Immunization

The latest vaccination data for the Americas shows that seven countries/territories now report fewer than 15% of persons with zero COVID-19 doses, while 14 countries/territories have reached the 70% coverage target set by WHO. **Figure 3** shows that Haiti and Saint Eustatius are the only two countries/territories that do not report whether additional doses are administered.

**Figure 3:** COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the Region of the Americas by country/territory and dose schedule. As of EW 9, 2022



Source: Data published by members states and analyzed by PAHO/WHO Immunization Team

\*Based on UN population projections for 2021 and US Census Bureau projections for countries with less than 100,000 inhabitants. For more information, please visit [https://ais.paho.org/imm/IM\\_DosisAdmin-Vacunacion.asp](https://ais.paho.org/imm/IM_DosisAdmin-Vacunacion.asp).

It is important to note that countries do not necessarily update the information presented here synchronously. Additionally, coverage percentages are based on UN Population Estimates for 2021 except for countries/territories with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants. For those countries, the reference population is taken from the US. Census Bureau estimates database.

## Genomic Surveillance

Through PAHO's Genomic Surveillance Regional Network and the work from the Member States, more than 291,492 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 08 March 2022.

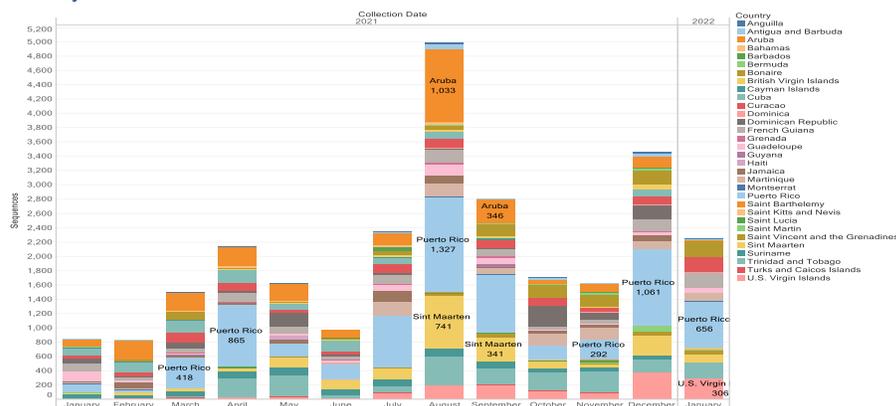
After the introduction of the Omicron VOC in the Americas by the end of December 2021, it has rapidly increased in prevalence and has been officially reported by 48 Countries or Territories. Omicron is now predominant in all PAHO countries with the BA.1 and BA.1.1 sub lineages identified in more than 98% of the characterized samples.

## Spotlight: Sequencing and genomic surveillance in the Caribbean subregion

During the last year (January 2021 to January 2022) 27,113 whole genome sequences from Caribbean Countries and Territories have been generated as part of the genomic surveillance systems. The five designated VOCs (Alpha-last detected 30 November 2021; Beta-last detected 9 June 2021; Gamma-last detected 17 December 2021; Delta-last detected 01 February 2022; and Omicron) have been detected in addition to VOIs Lambda (last detected 02 November 2021) and Mu (last detected 19 October 2021) along with other lineages/variants.

At the Caribbean subregion, Delta VOC was first detected in April 2021 by Aruba, and rapidly expanded to become predominant by mid-July in all Caribbean Countries and Territories. VOC Omicron was first detected in the subregion in November 2021 by Bermuda. After replacing Delta, Omicron has been predominant in all the subregion and has been detected in more than 609 samples (99%) sequenced and reported to GISAID during the last 6 weeks. So far, BA.1.1 (66%) and BA.1 (32%) sub lineages are predominant with BA.2 (<1%) present, but BA.3 still not detected.

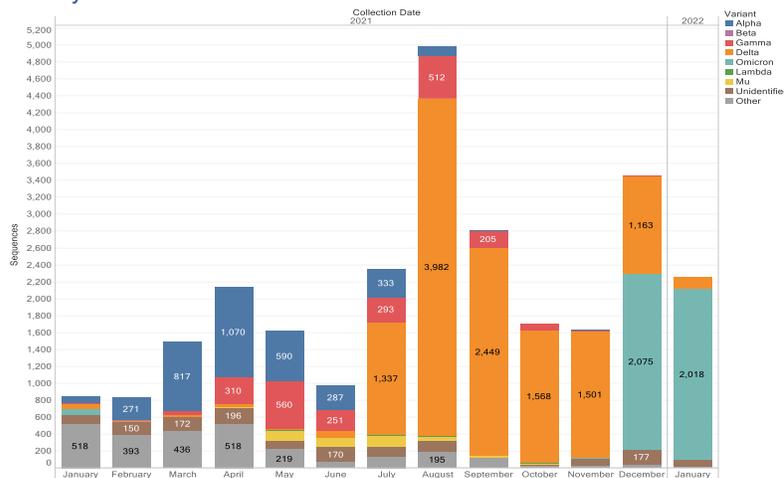
**Figure 4:** Number of sequences generated monthly by countries in the Caribbean subregion. January 2021 – January 2022



Source: GISAID

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

**Figure 5:** SARS-CoV-2 variants detected and reported by countries in the Caribbean subregion. January 2021 – January 2022



Source: GISAID

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