

BEN TISDEL
LYNN M. PADGETT
JAKE NIECE
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



TANNER KINGERY, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

P.O. Box C • Ouray, Colorado 81427 • 970-325-7320 • FAX: 970-325-0452

November 1, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Ouray County Strongly Encourages Masking in Indoor Public Places

Ouray County, Colo. – Public Health Director Tanner Kingery is reporting that during the month of October, Ouray County has experienced its highest count of COVID-19 cases since November of 2020. “Masking up in public indoor places is as important as ever right now, and I can’t encourage it enough for our community members and visitors” said Kingery, during the Ouray County Board of County Commissioners work session on October 27, 2021.

“Public indoor places” continues to be defined broadly to include any enclosed indoor area, which is publicly or privately owned, to which the public has access by right or invitation. It includes enclosed indoor spaces serving as a place of employment, indoor stores, businesses, schools, common areas, offices, lobbies, and elevators. Consequently, employers should continue encouraging masking up amongst employees, contractors, customers, and anyone else within their indoor space, regardless of a person’s vaccination status. .

While it is understood that the majority of people who get COVID-19 do not die, a top concern from the beginning of the pandemic has been to prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. Kingery also stated that Montrose Regional Health hospital, along with other regional hospitals around the Western Slope, are reporting limited-to-zero ICU bed availability. This makes it challenging for patients suffering not only from COVID-19, but patients needing urgent care for trauma injuries- like one might sustain in a car crash, and other health emergencies like heart attacks, to receive treatment.

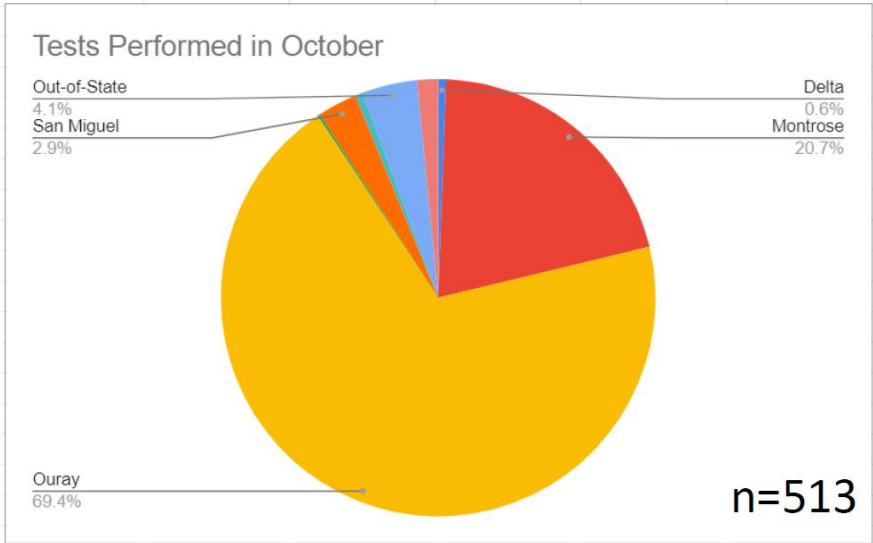
Ouray County Public Health staff continues to see an increase in weekly COVID-19 tests, administering on average over 100 tests weekly at the Public Health office in Ouray. People seeking weekly and twice weekly testing are coming from as far as Delta County and the West End of Montrose County. County staff are struggling to keep up with the demand of COVID vaccines, tests, flu shots and other Public Health necessities.

With the demands of COVID-19 continuing to increase in our area, Kingery and the Board of County Commissioners encourages the commitment to masking up in indoor public places, and obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination. “Masking alone will not bring this pandemic to an end, getting your COVID-19 vaccine, masking up, and encouraging your family and friends to do the same, are our best tools. Especially now that the weather has turned cooler, and the holiday season is approaching, it’s a great time to get your COVID-19 vaccine or your booster” says Kingery.

The Commissioners also ask our partners at the City of Ouray and the Town of Ridgway to help by adopting mask requirements in municipal buildings.

Ouray County Public Health offers COVID-19 vaccines and COVID-19 testing at the Public Health office in Ouray. COVID-19 testing is available weekly, Monday-Thursday 9am-11am and 1pm-3pm. COVID-19 vaccines are available by appointment by calling 970-325-4670.

Ouray County Public Health reports a high demand for COVID-19 testing. By October 27, 2021, Ouray County Public Health Agency had performed 513 tests. About 70 percent of the tests in October were requested by Ouray County residents and 21 percent were for Montrose County residents.



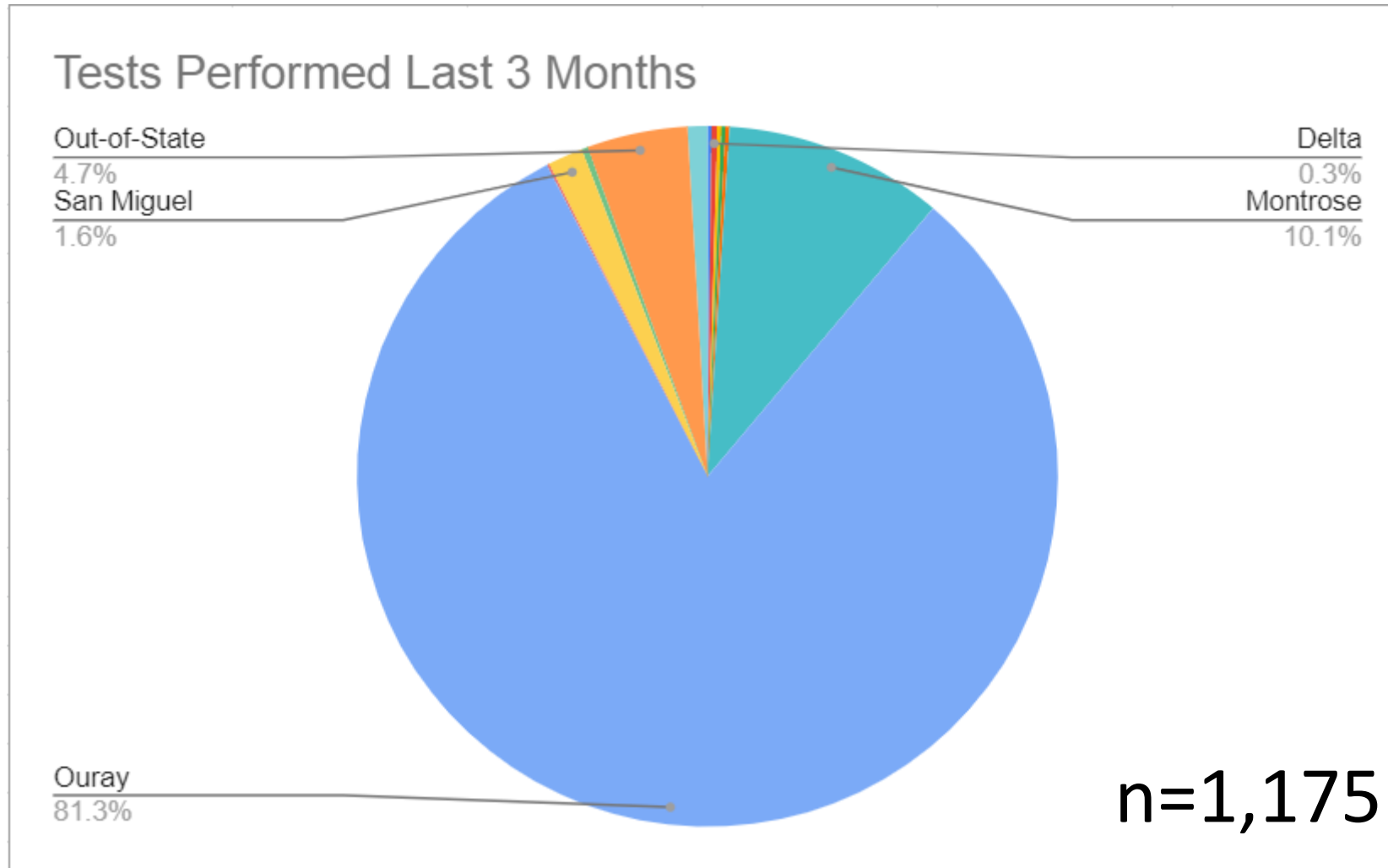
COVID-19 Tests performed at Ouray County Public Health, October 1 through October 27, 2021 by residency.

Additional graphics:

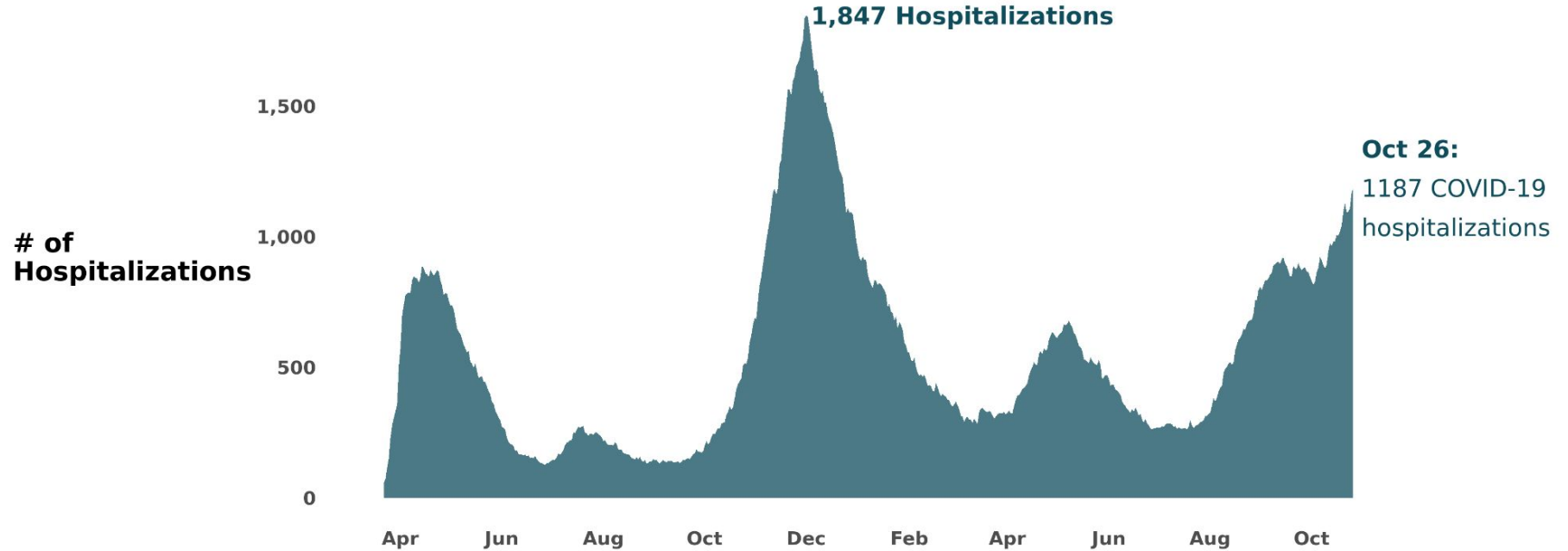
- Tests performed at Ouray County Public Health – last three months
- Currently Hospitalized Confirmed COVID-19 Patients, as of October 26, 2021
- Reported vs. Model Expected Hospitalizations, as of October 20, 2021
-

###

Tests Performed last 3 Months

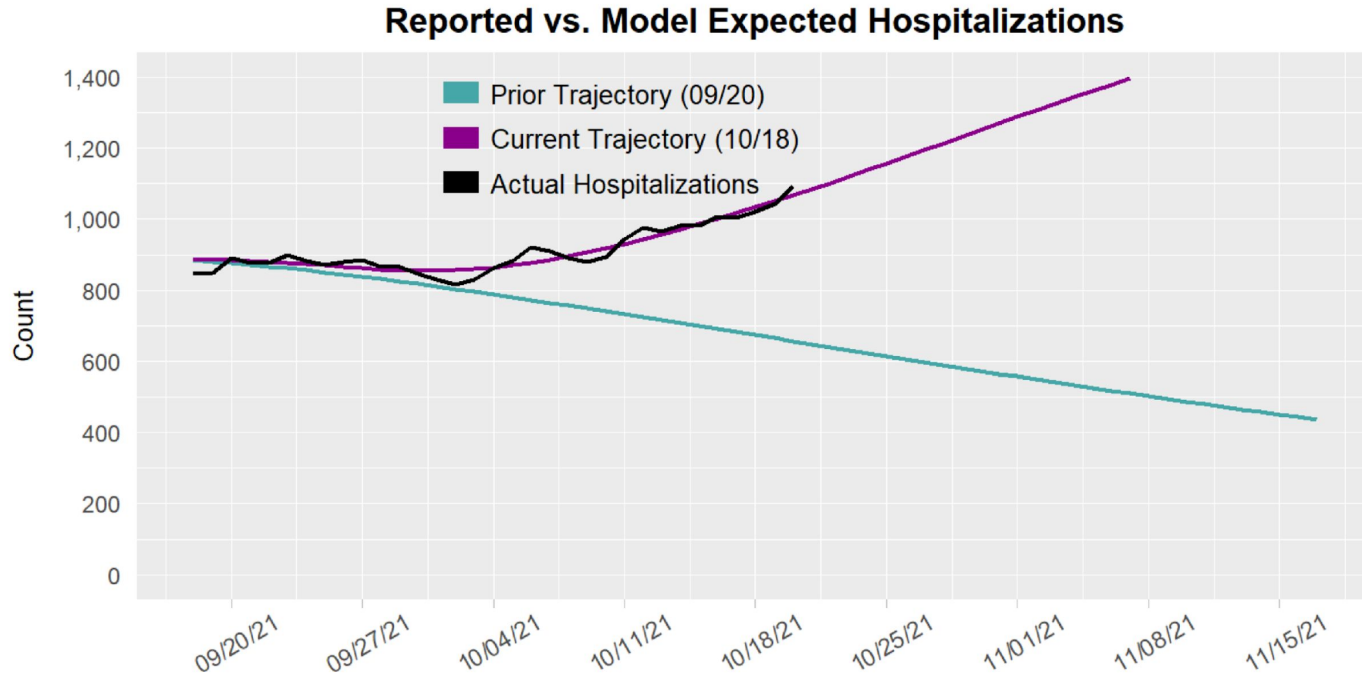


Currently Hospitalized Confirmed COVID-19 Patients



The epidemic curve is heading up

This is a sharp departure from last month



1,094 Active COVID-19 Hospitalizations as of Wednesday, 10/20