



COVID-19 Cases and Deaths Increase Significantly in Rural Counties

Updated November 10, 2020

As community spread of COVID-19 continues in North Carolina, newly reported cases are increasingly being identified in rural counties. Since September 2020:

- Nearly twice as many new cases have been reported from rural counties compared to urban or suburban counties (Figure 1).
- The majority of cases in rural counties are increasingly white, non-Hispanic as compared with previous months (Figure 2).
- COVID-19 related deaths in rural counties also increased significantly, and account for the majority of deaths statewide compared with deaths in urban and suburban counties (Figure 3).
- Among deaths in rural counties, deaths among white, non-Hispanic and Black/African American cases have increased over time (Figure 4).
- The majority of COVID-19 cases in rural communities are in people 49 years and younger (Figure 5).
- This increase is being driven by community spread, not congregate living settings like nursing homes or jails (Figure 6).

Figure 1. New COVID-19 cases are increasing faster among persons in rural counties (blue bars) compared with persons in urban and suburban counties.

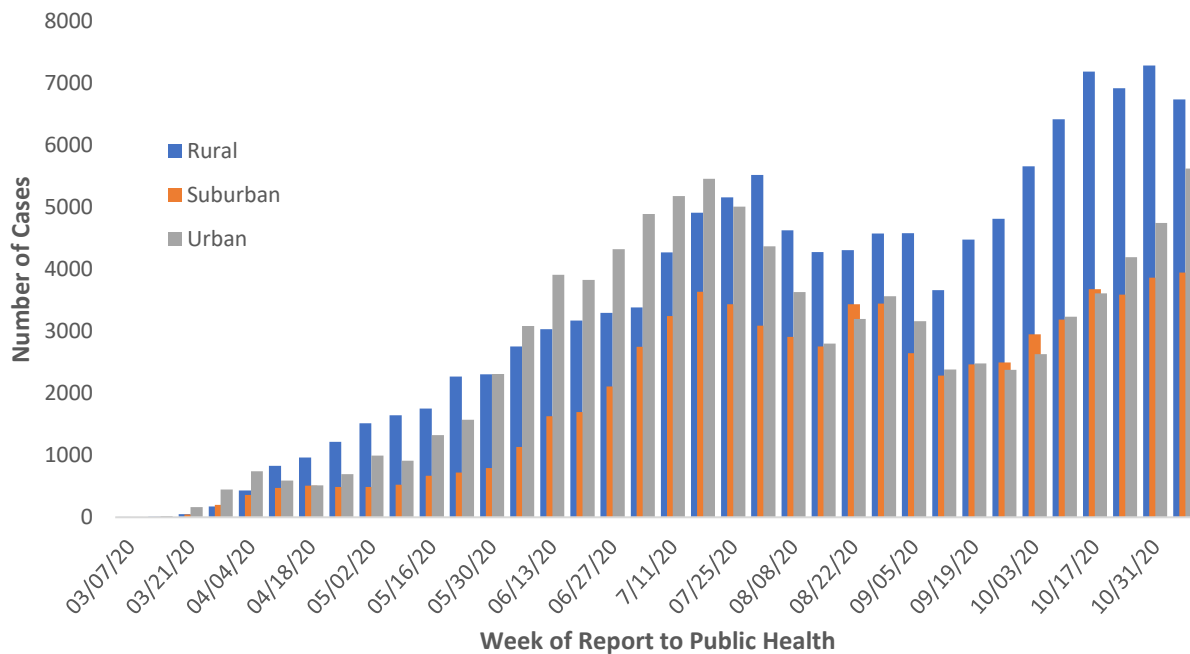


Figure 2. COVID-19 cases in rural counties are increasingly among white, non-Hispanic persons (light blue bars).

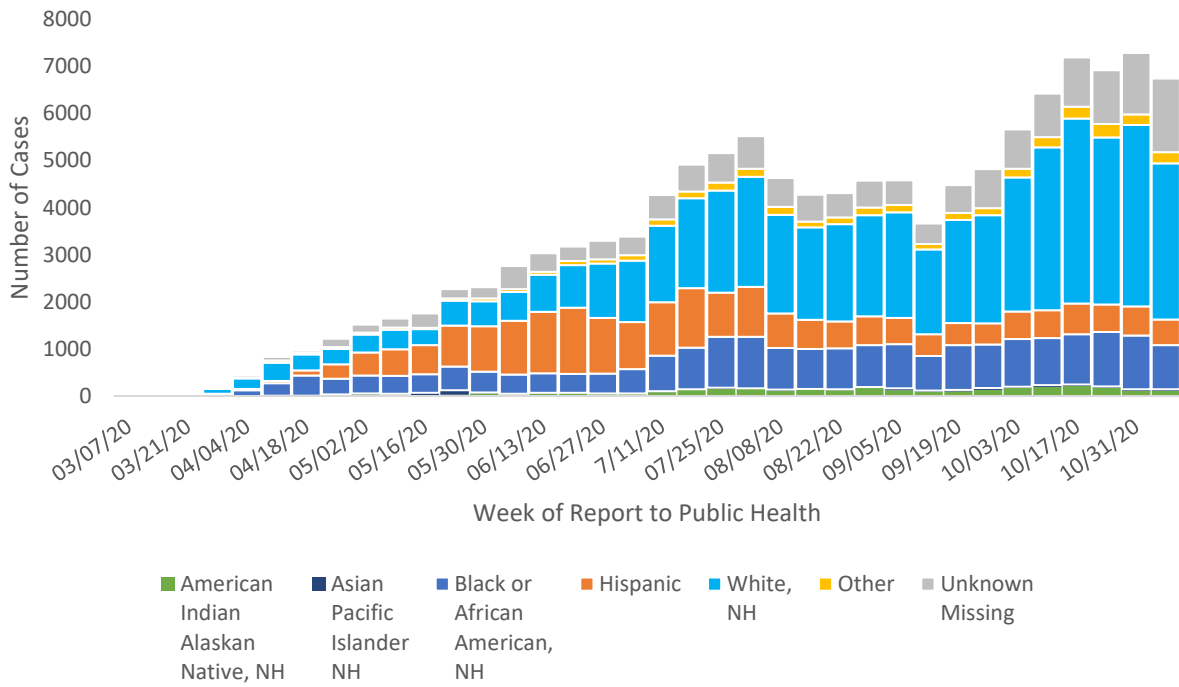


Figure 3. COVID-related deaths are increasingly more common among persons in rural counties (blue bars) compared with persons in urban and suburban counties.

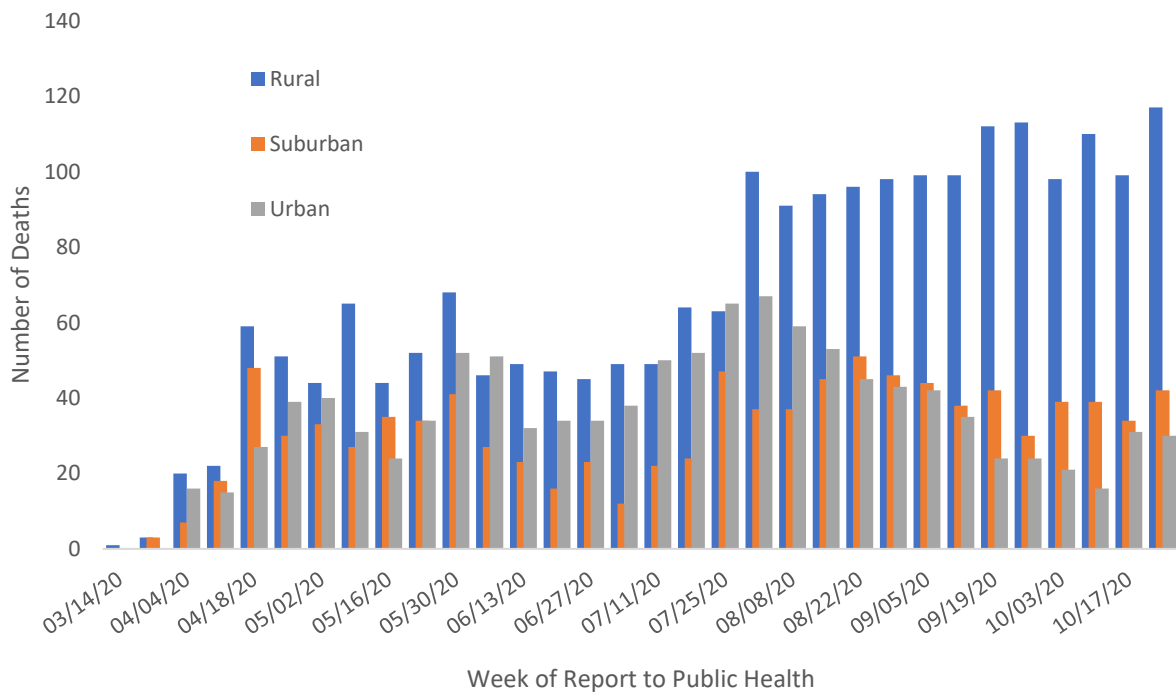


Figure 4. COVID-19 related deaths in rural counties are increasingly among white, non-Hispanic persons (light blue bars).

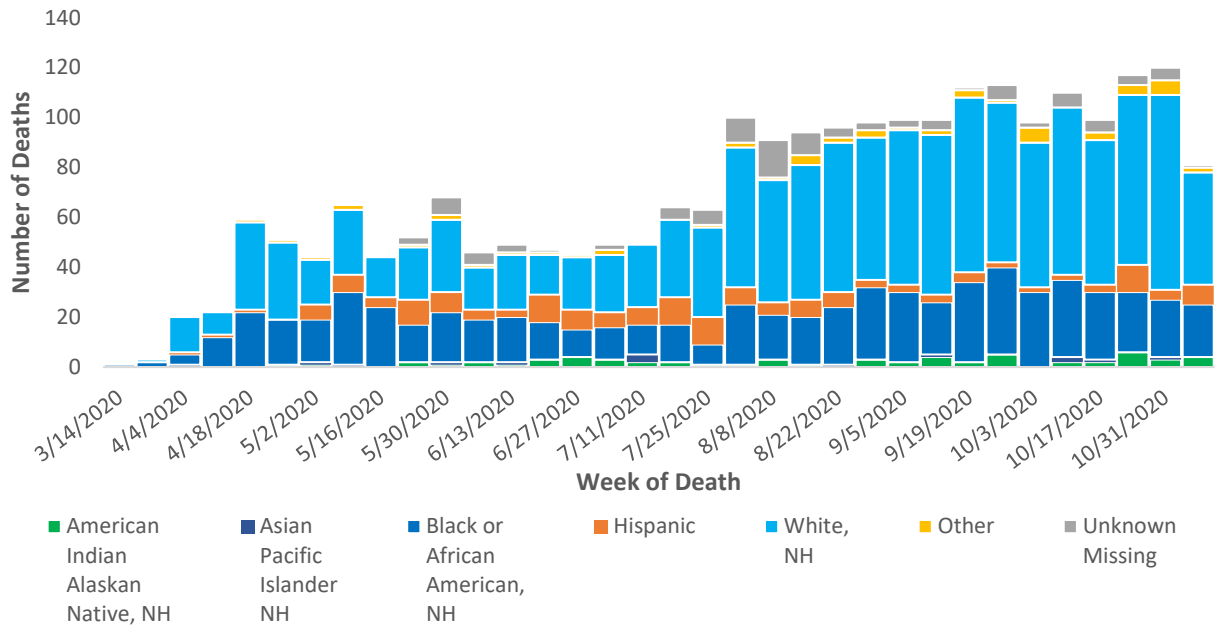


Figure 5. New COVID-19 cases are increasing among all age groups in rural counties with the largest proportion of cases among persons aged 25-49 years (grey bar).

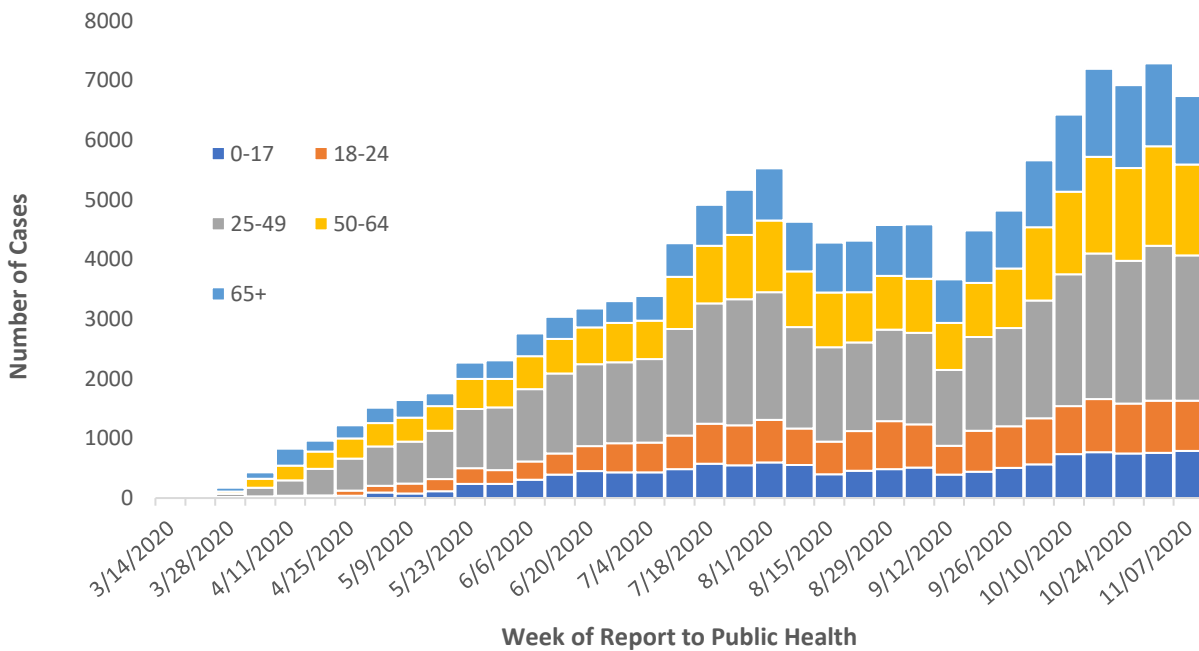
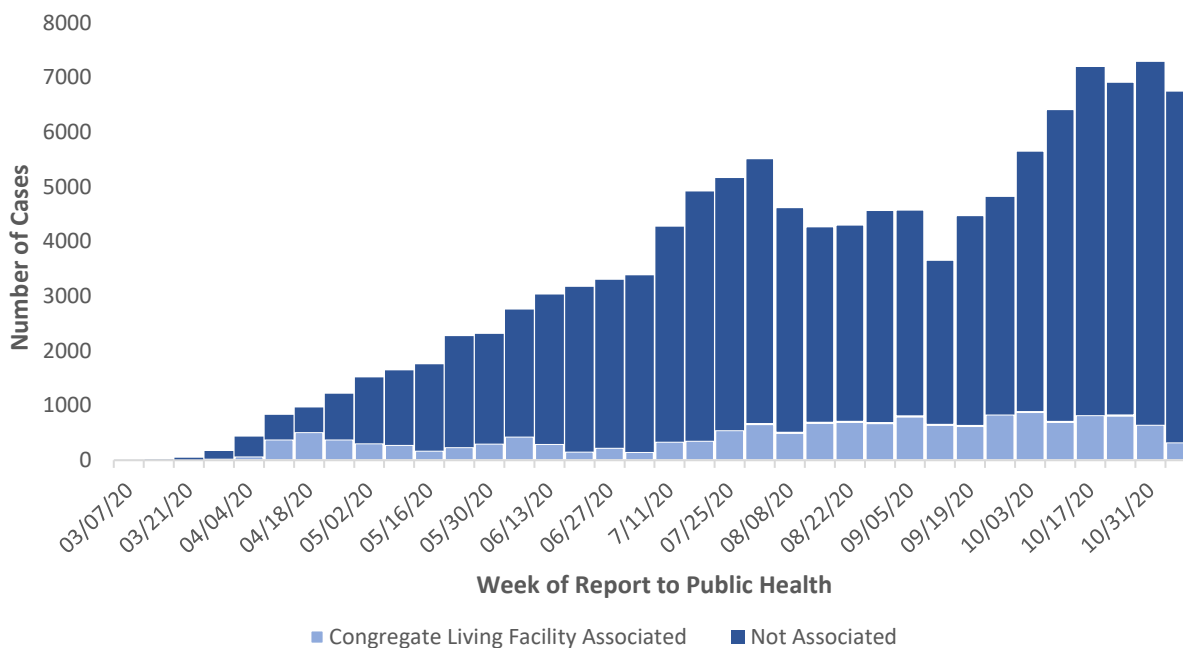


Figure 6. The majority of new COVID-19 cases in rural counties are in community cases (dark blue bars), not those associated with congregate living facilities (skilled nursing facilities, residential care facilities, or correctional facilities – light blue bars).



NCDHHS used [The Rural Center’s definition](#) of rural, suburban, and urban counties.

Rural			Suburban
Alexander County	Gates County	Pender County	Alamance County
Alleghany County	Graham County	Perquimans County	Buncombe County
Anson County	Granville County	Person County	Cabarrus County
Ashe County	Greene County	Polk County	Catawba County
Avery County	Halifax County	Randolph County	Cumberland County
Beaufort County	Harnett County	Richmond County	Davidson County
Bertie County	Haywood County	Robeson County	Gaston County
Bladen County	Hertford County	Rockingham County	Henderson County
Brunswick County	Hoke County	Rutherford County	Iredell County
Burke County	Hyde County	Sampson County	Lincoln County
Caldwell County	Jackson County	Scotland County	Orange County
Camden County	Johnston County	Stanly County	Pitt County
Carteret County	Jones County	Stokes County	Rowan County
Caswell County	Lee County	Surry County	Union County
Chatham County	Lenoir County	Swain County	
Cherokee County	McDowell County	Transylvania County	Urban
Chowan County	Macon County	Tyrrell County	Forsyth County
Clay County	Madison County	Vance County	Guilford County
Cleveland County	Martin County	Warren County	Durham County
Columbus County	Mitchell County	Washington County	Mecklenburg County
Craven County	Montgomery County	Watauga County	New Hanover County
Currituck County	Moore County	Wayne County	Wake County
Dare County	Nash County	Wilkes County	
Davie County	Northampton County	Wilson County	
Duplin County	Onslow County	Yadkin County	
Edgecombe County	Pamlico County	Yancey County	
Franklin County	Pasquotank County		