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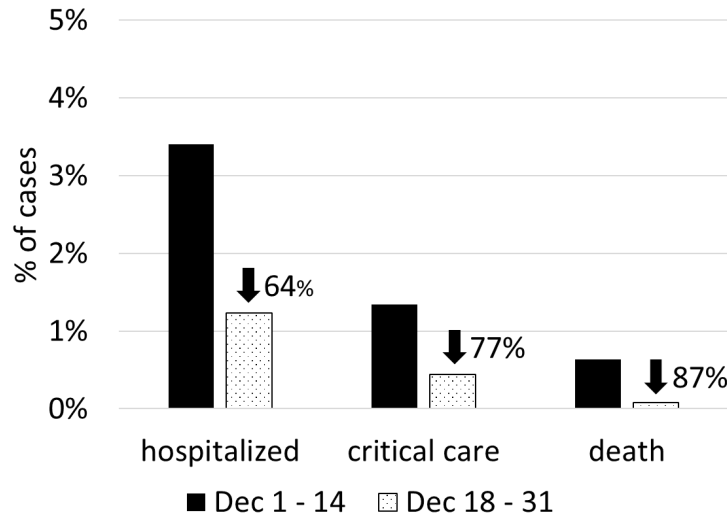
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January 26, 2022

COVID-19 Update #21

- Since mid-December 2021, Omicron has been the dominant variant among COVID-19 cases in Island Health. While the number of people infected with COVID-19 has increased substantially, the proportion of those with severe disease has substantially decreased:

Percentage of Island Health cases reported from 1-14 Dec 2021 (Delta-dominant) and 18-31 Dec 2021 (Omicron-dominant) hospitalized, requiring critical care, and deceased as of 10 Jan 2022



- Public health management of COVID-19 is shifting towards alignment with other respiratory pathogens and to self-management based on symptoms. Many provincial guidelines have been recently updated, notably the updated testing guidelines, and can be found at bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19.
- Those who are unvaccinated continue to be at higher risk of severe outcomes. Of the Island Health cases requiring critical care so far in January, ~70% have been unvaccinated adults despite representing only ~5% of the total population. The most important intervention against harm from COVID-19 remains the first dose of vaccine. Please continue to work with your vaccine-hesitant patients with supporting resources:
 - Patient-oriented Q+A: immunizebc.ca/covid-19
 - Healthcare provider communication tool: bit.ly/3j4cOFj
 - BCCDC toolkit for health professionals: bit.ly/382A1Bl
- COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are now available through many pharmacies, in addition to Island Health clinics. Access is primarily through the provincial system at gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register. Viral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca, Janssen) can be requested through the provincial call centre at 1-833-838-2323.
- Outpatient treatment is available under specific eligibility criteria, see islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/covid-19/outpatient-covid-19-therapeutics-clinic.