

COVID-19 UPDATE

October 19, 2021



Get Your Vaccine!

- Vaccines work. Vaccines are safe, effective & free. Visit [Vaccine Finder](#) for vaccination sites nearest you.
- [VDH has opened a Community Vaccination Center](#) for all COVID vaccines. Open 10 a.m. – 8 p.m., Mon.-Sat. at the old Sears store in Valley View Mall.
- [Vaccine clinics/events](#) - For flu and COVID-19 (ages 12 & up), appointment only, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays** - Montgomery Co. Health Dept., Christiansburg. Call 540-585-3300.
- **Tuesdays** - Floyd Co. Health Dept., Floyd. Call 540-745-2142.
- **Wednesdays** - Pulaski Co. Health Dept., Pulaski. Call 540-441-2188. Giles Co. Health Dept., Pearisburg. Call 540-235-3135.
- **Fridays** - Radford Health Dept. Call 540-267-8255.
- **Wed., Oct. 27, 1-3 p.m.** - McDonalds, Franklin Ave., Christiansburg. McDonald's will give coupons to patrons who receive a vaccine at this time.
- Get a [digital verification \(QR\) code](#) of your vaccine.

Employer Resources

- **On-site services for employers:** Contact Ashley Briggs: 540-639-9313, abriggs@nrvc.org.
- **BCT Workshop Series:** next session – Oct. 28, in partnership with Uncork-it. Register here: <https://forms.gle/WHZxARTZtUTq2cax8>

COVID-19 Data

As reported to VDH, by date of lab report. May differ from other sources, due to reporting lags. Totals are cumulative since March 2020. (Negative values reflect data corrections.)

| | New cases, since last report* | New cases, weekly avg.* | Total cases | Total hospitalizations | Total deaths | Total vaccines given | % fully vaccinated |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Floyd County | 2 | 4 | 1,383 | 45 | 28 | 13,745 | 45.3% |
| Giles County | 2 | 7 | 2,211 | 79 | 30 | 16,319 | 48.1% |
| Montgomery County | 21 | 17 | 11,619 | 251 | 104 | 94,509 | 47.5% |
| Pulaski County | 12 | 13 | 4,019 | 185 | 81 | 32,340 | 46.7% |
| Radford City | 7 | 5 | 2,867 | 48 | 31 | 16,022 | 43.3% |
| New River Health District | 44 | 47 | 22,099 | 608 | 274 | 172,953 | 47.0% |
| Virginia | 1,617 | 1,983 | 909,499 | 38,041 | 13,538 | 11,126,822 | 62.1% |

* Cases are now reported weekdays only, creating a cumulative number (3-day total) each Monday. The weekly case average (3rd column of the table) most accurately reflects local trends.

Stop the Surge!

- If anyone in your household has any COVID-related symptoms, **stay home & get tested**. Don't assume it's just allergies.
- If you are indoors with people you don't live with, **wear a mask**, even if you are vaccinated.
- If someone in your household has COVID-19 or tests positive, **do not send unvaccinated children to school**.
- **Get fully vaccinated**.
- **Avoid the 3 Cs:** Crowds, Close settings, & Confined spaces. Especially if you're not vaccinated.
- **Are you high risk for hospitalization?** If you are exposed or test positive, you can benefit from monoclonal antibody treatment. Ask your doctor or call the health department at 540-585-3300.

News, Testing, Statistics

- **COVID-19 testing is widely available.** Search [local testing sites](#) & a [test finder](#). Or call 1-877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682).
- **Current 7-day positivity rate:** Virginia – 6.8%; New River Health District – 8.0%
- **We are in high transmission:** all employees are mandated to require masks indoors.
- See Task Force [news, videos & events](#).

Weekly Update with Dr. Bissell

October 18, 2021



Press Statement from Dr. Bissell

Good afternoon. The number of new COVID cases in our district, as well as across the state and the nation, continues to decline, though we are still at high community transition as defined by the CDC. According to the regulations from the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, this means that all employees throughout our region are required to wear masks indoors, whether or not they are vaccinated.

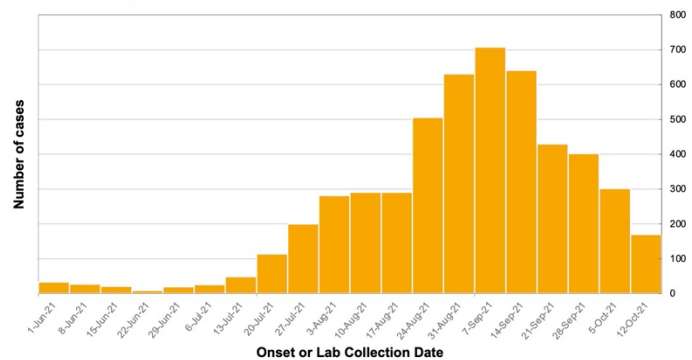
Our epi curves continue to show a decline in cases. Please remember the last column isn't complete and will fill in over the course of the week.

You can see from our school-aged children graph that cases in this group are also going down. This makes sense because transmission in the schools has been minimal; 70+% of all transmission has been in the household, so as the adults don't get the COVID, they don't share it with the younger children. The schools are doing very well.

Hospitalizations lag behind new cases by a number of weeks. This morning, hospitals in the New River Health District reported 37 patients with COVID and 1 person under investigation. This is fewer cases than last week, so the downward trend is starting to be seen in hospitalizations as well. Our hospitals are still very busy, but they remain at normal operations.

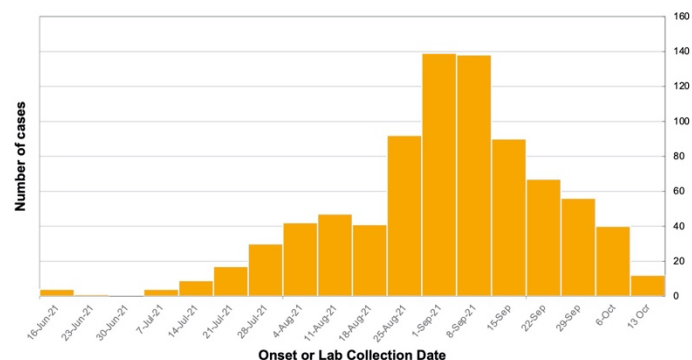
The Delta variant is so highly transmissible that it's increasingly likely this was the last large surge. It has hit our unvaccinated population with very high case numbers. Epidemiological analysis and serology studies show that for each reported case there are likely 3-4 additional ones. Community immunity and vaccinations together have greatly increased the number of people who have antibodies to COVID. We do not expect that COVID will go away, but that we will likely see smaller waves that ebb and flow, not unlike flu and other respiratory illnesses.

NRHD, COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun - 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Be committed. Be well.

NRHD School - Aged Children (5-17 years old), 1 Jun - 18 Oct



Be committed. Be well.

Last week the FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee recommended booster shots for the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. This week, the FDA is expected to fully authorize them and the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will meet to discuss their recommendations. We do expect the booster shots to be authorized in the next week or so, and those who got Moderna will be eligible for a half-dose booster at least 6 months after their second shot. People who got a Johnson & Johnson shot will be eligible 2 months after their shot.

The FDA Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) has also scheduled a meeting to discuss authorization of the Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5-11 on October 26th. Then the CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices will meet to discuss its recommendations. Once these are authorized, we and our pharmacy/pediatrician partners are prepared to offer vaccines to the younger school children. The FDA may address mixing vaccines at this meeting as well.

With the new cases going down, we are seeing less demand for testing. This should help resolve the difficulty in finding rapid tests. Testing is still available daily (M-F) at health departments throughout the district with just over a 24 hour turnaround.

As this surge resolves, and people engage more in travel and companies move back to the office, many questions are arising, such as who is considered fully vaccinated, how to prove one is vaccinated, and when to test. At this time there are no plans to change the definition of who is fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated is 2 weeks after the second dose of an mRNA vaccine or 2 weeks after one dose of Johnson & Johnson. Boosters are available for those at higher risk as authorized by the FDA and CDC. Other people considered vaccinated are those who received active doses in clinical trials of vaccines that are not yet approved by the FDA, but are listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization (such as AstraZeneca/Oxford and Novavax) or have been independently confirmed by a data and safety monitoring board. Now that some international borders are reopening, organizations will be seeing people with other vaccines or some mix and match. People are considered fully vaccinated if they received any two of an FDA approved or WHO approved combination as long as there was at least 17 days between doses.

As more people look for electronic proof of vaccination, VDH has instituted a QR code access to COVID vaccination records. For this to work there must be a phone number connected to the record, which may require calling the state Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm, at 877-829-4682 (877-VAX-IN-VA). Initial record entries did not require phone numbers, so during the peak of our vaccination efforts when tens of thousands of vaccines were being administered daily, phone numbers may not have been entered.

Employers are required by Virginia's Department of Labor and Industry to have a COVID response plan, which includes knowing which employees are vaccinated and which have had COVID, in addition to requiring all employees to mask indoors during times of high or substantial community transmission. Some employers are requiring testing as part of their back-to-work policies after having COVID. Individuals should check with their employers about business specific requirements.

During periods of high transmission, the best practices are testing prior to engaging in indoor activities in close quarters, such as weddings, worship, and indoor events like concerts, then testing again 5-7 days later. Anyone with any symptoms of respiratory illness should get a COVID test.

In other news, in a national 2021 National Health Security Preparedness Index, compiled by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the University of Colorado School of Public Health, and the University of Kentucky Center for Business and Economic Research, Virginia tied for first place for state readiness to respond to public health threats during the pandemic. We tied with Maryland, Massachusetts and Nebraska. In Virginia, public health is funded by the state with a match from the localities. Once again, I'd like to thank the communities in the New River Valley for their unique level of cooperation in funding and working with our public health team.

Families are starting to plan for the holidays. This year, please plan for safe gatherings. We don't want to cause another uptick in cases. Halloween parties outdoors are ideal, but be careful of carpooling. For the winter holidays, please plan to be careful, stay outdoors as much as possible and remember to wash your hands. If you are visiting vulnerable family and friends, be extra careful. Our behavior should be informed by a risk assessment of the activities we are considering.

Lastly, please make sure to get a flu shot. We are already seeing flu. People getting COVID boosters can get their flu vaccine at the same time.

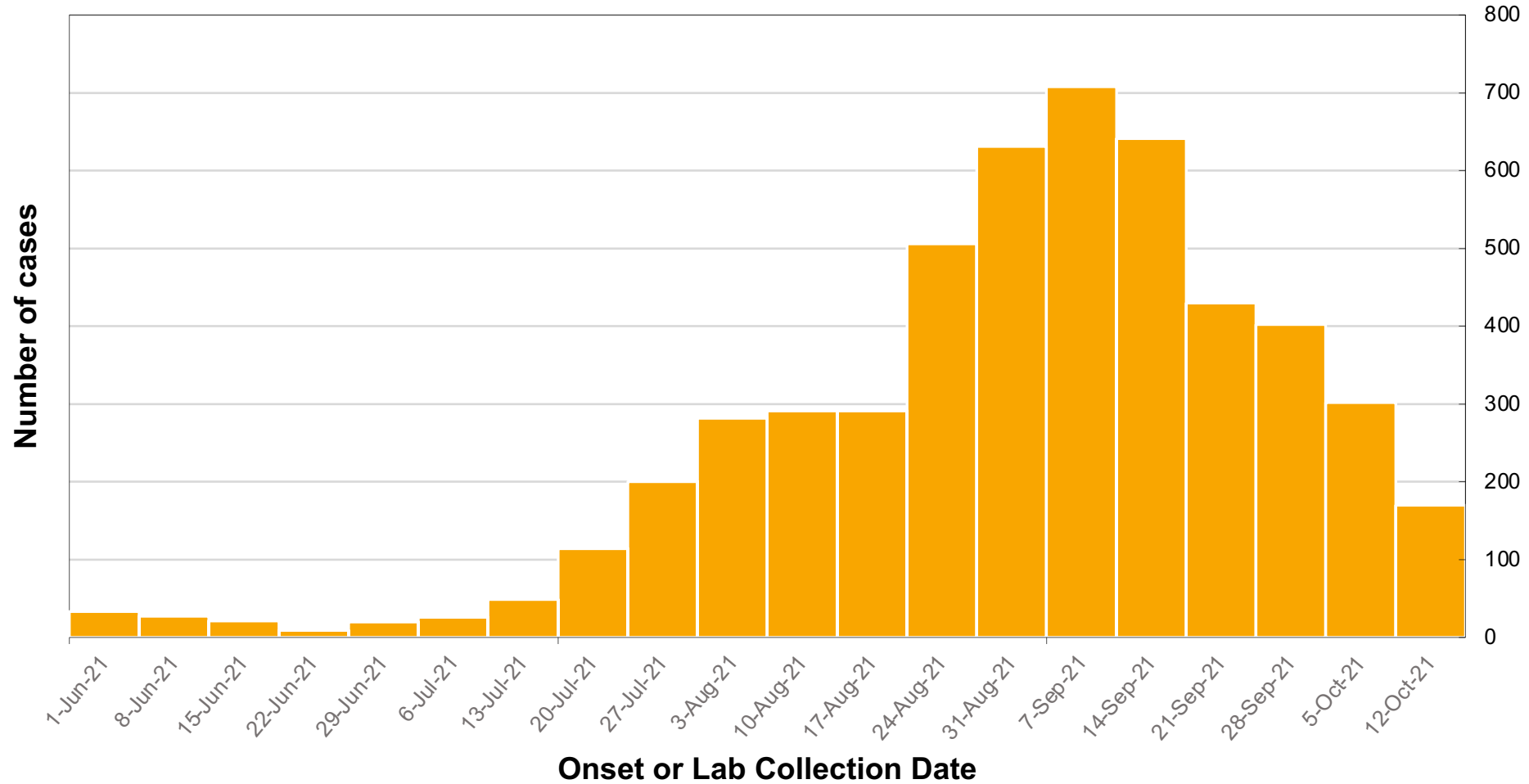
I'll take your questions now.

—Dr. Noelle Bissell, Director, New River Public Health District.

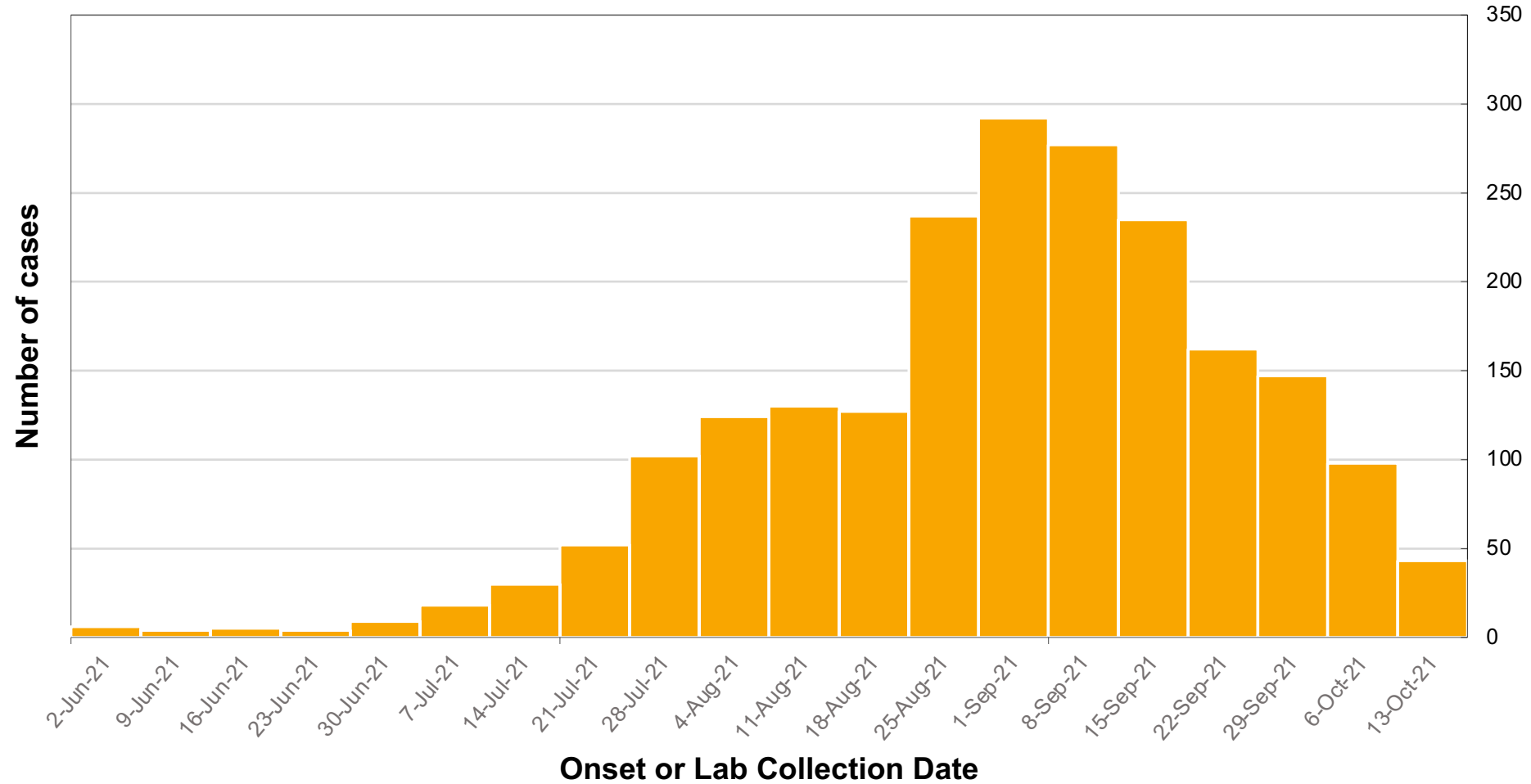
www.NRVRoadToWellness.com | www.vdh.virginia.gov | [#BeCommittedBeWell](https://twitter.com/BeCommittedBeWell)

Be committed. Be well.

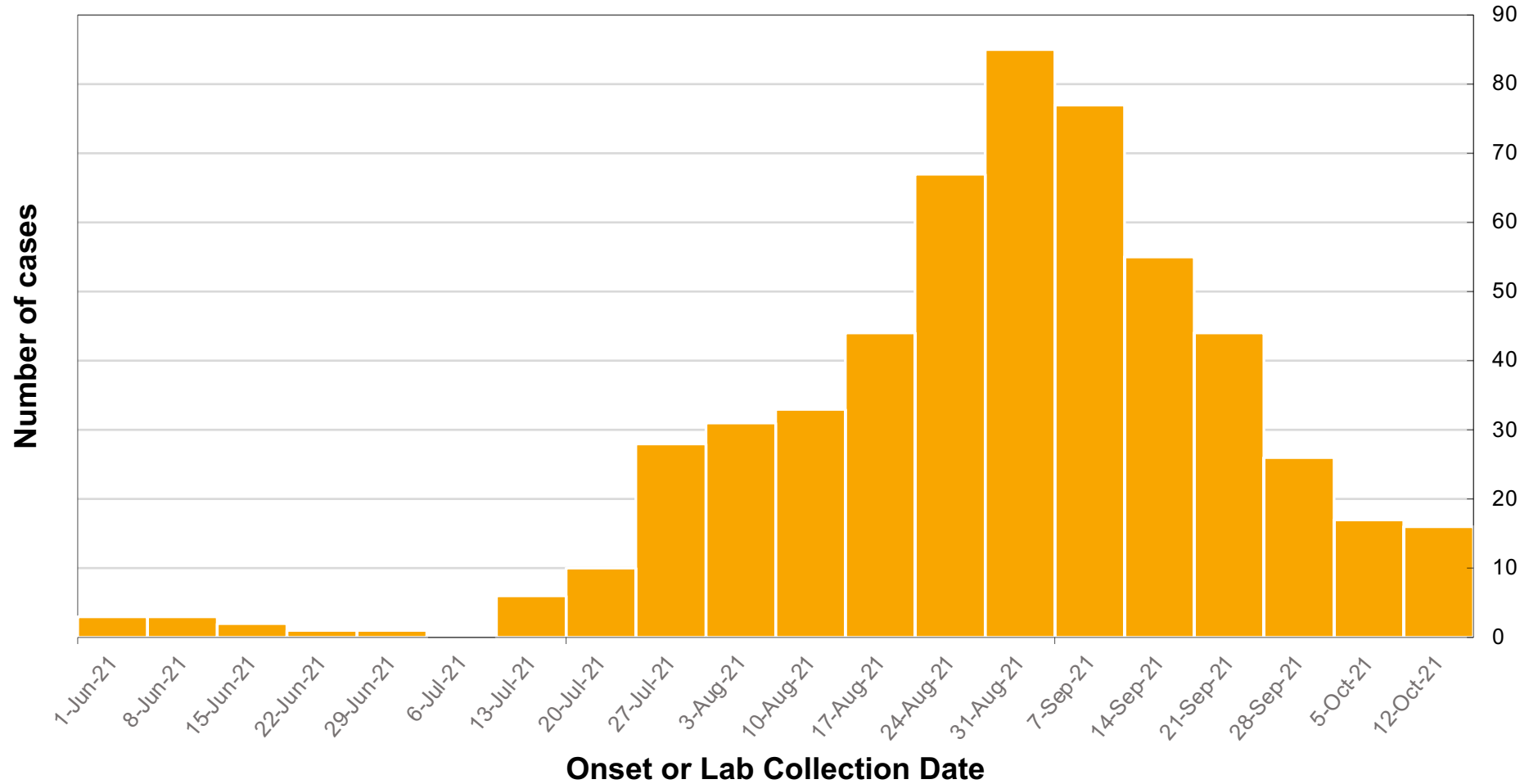
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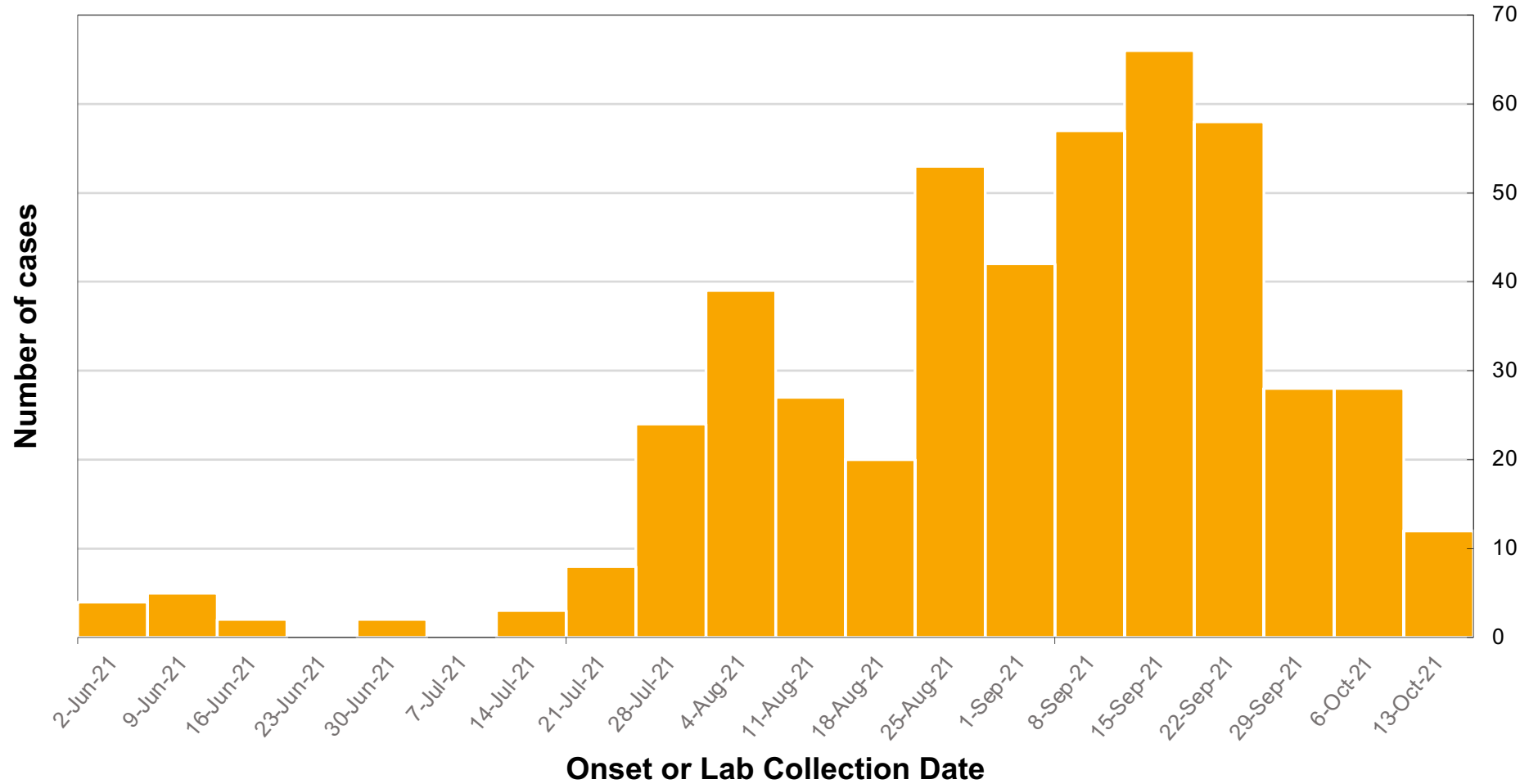
Montgomery Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun – 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



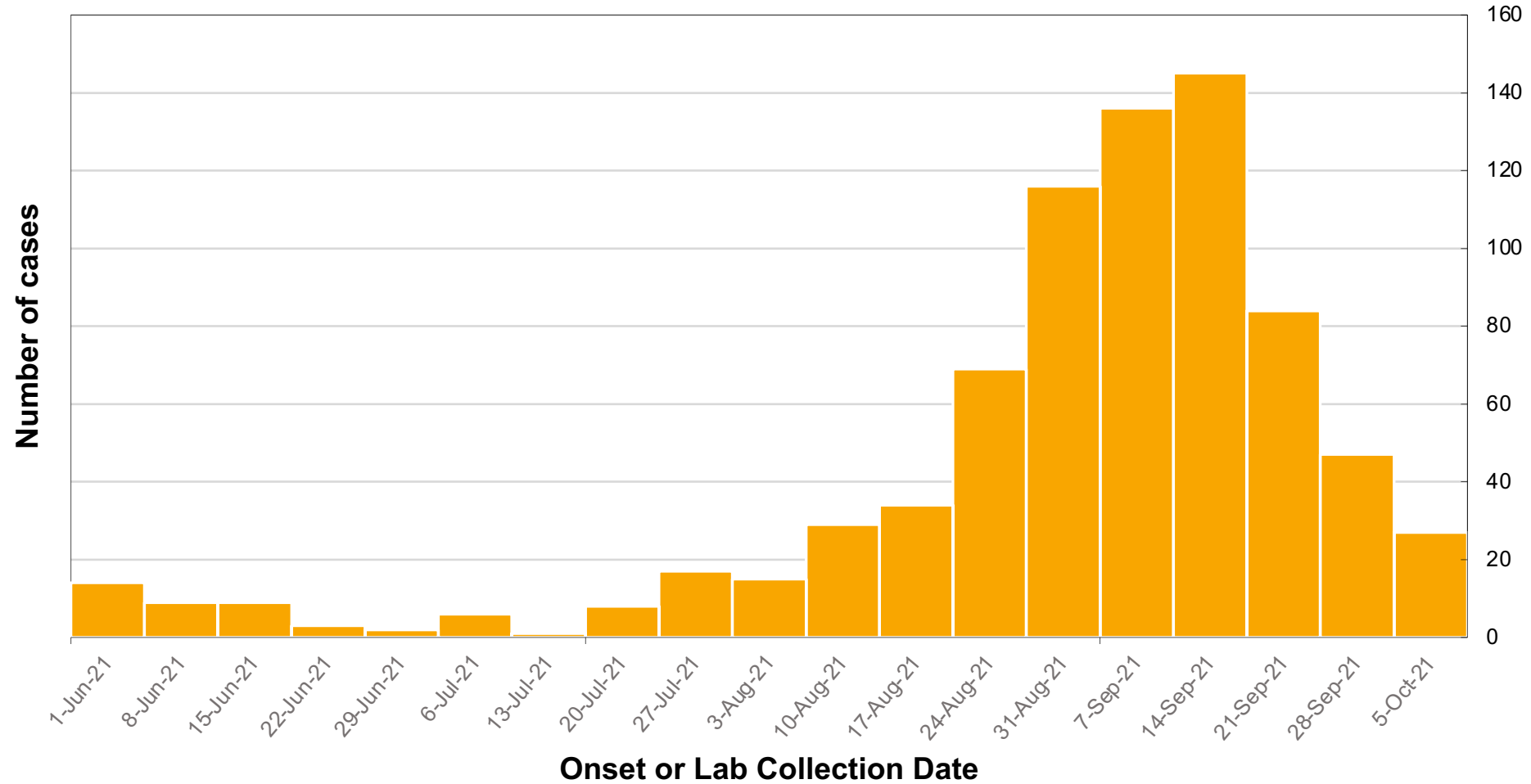
Radford City, COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun – 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



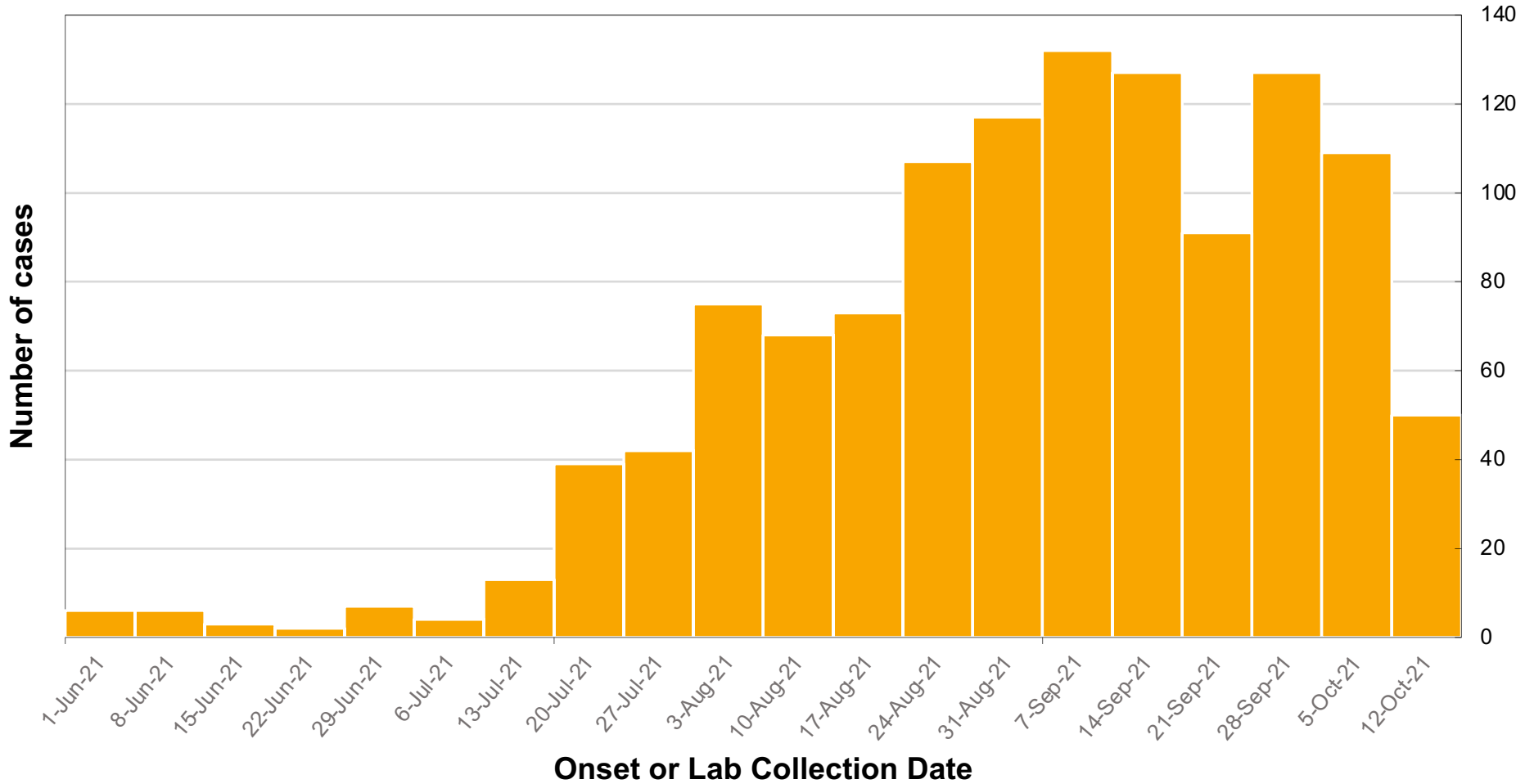
Floyd Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun – 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



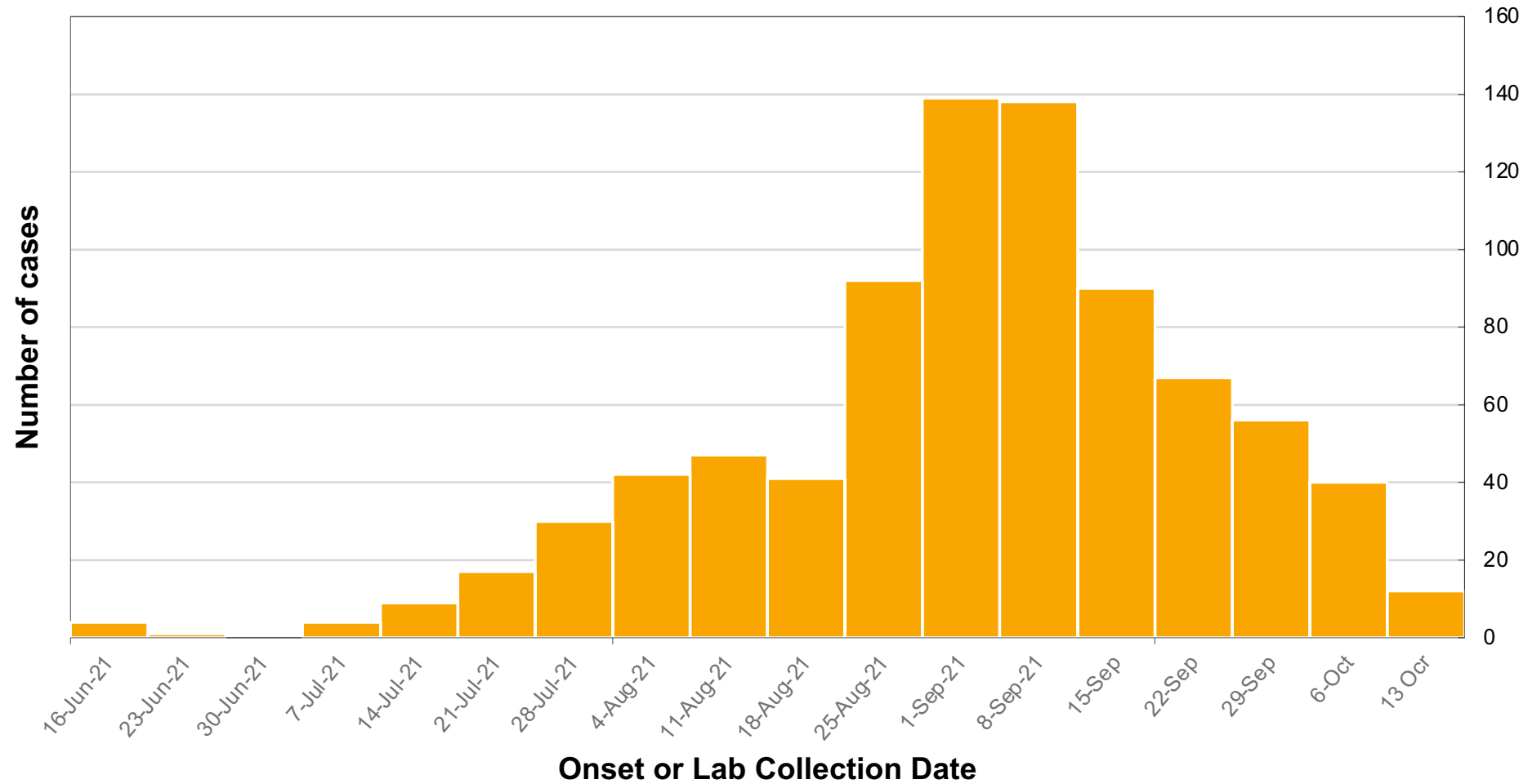
Giles Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun - 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Pulaski Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Jun – 18 Oct, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



NRHD School – Aged Children (5-17 years old), 1 Jun – 18 Oct



NRHD College Students vs. General Pop. vs. School-Aged by MMWR Week

Montgomery County, MMWR Week of Onset or Lab Collection,
University vs. School-Aged vs. General Pop. as of 10/18/2021

