

NC DHHS K-12 COVID-19 Response Updates

**State Board of Education
Meeting**
August 5, 2021

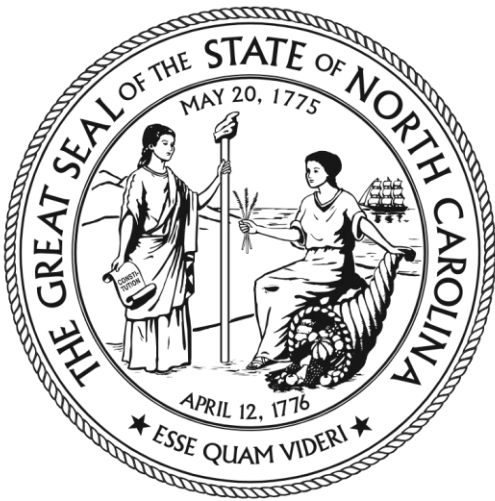


NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**



Agenda

- **Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends**
- **Delta Variant Concerns**
- **StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Changes/Recommendations**



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Statewide COVID-19 Updates & Data Trends

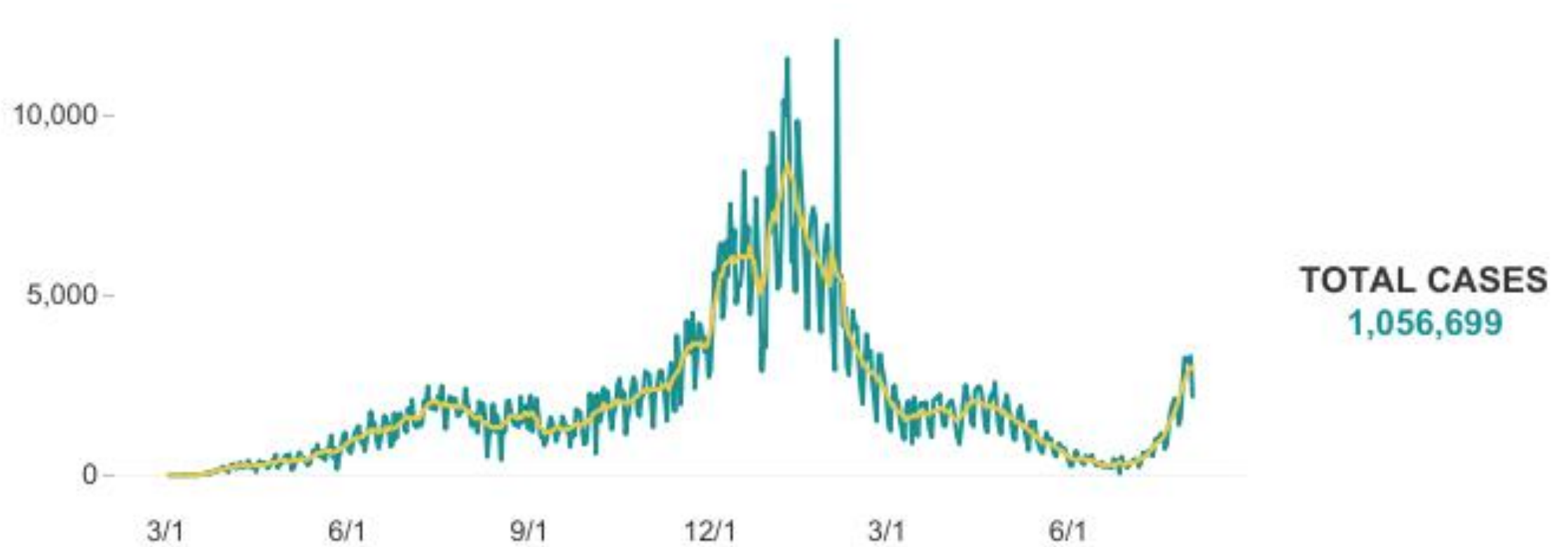
Dr. Susan Kansagra

Deputy Director, NC Division of Public Health

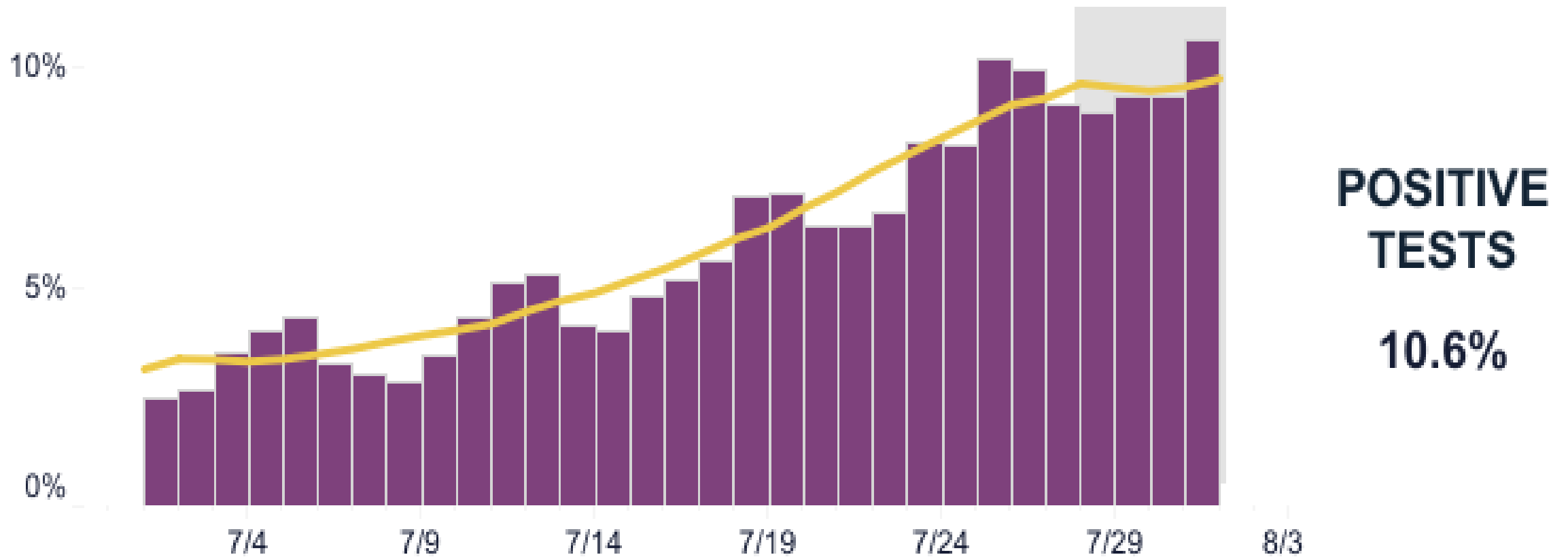
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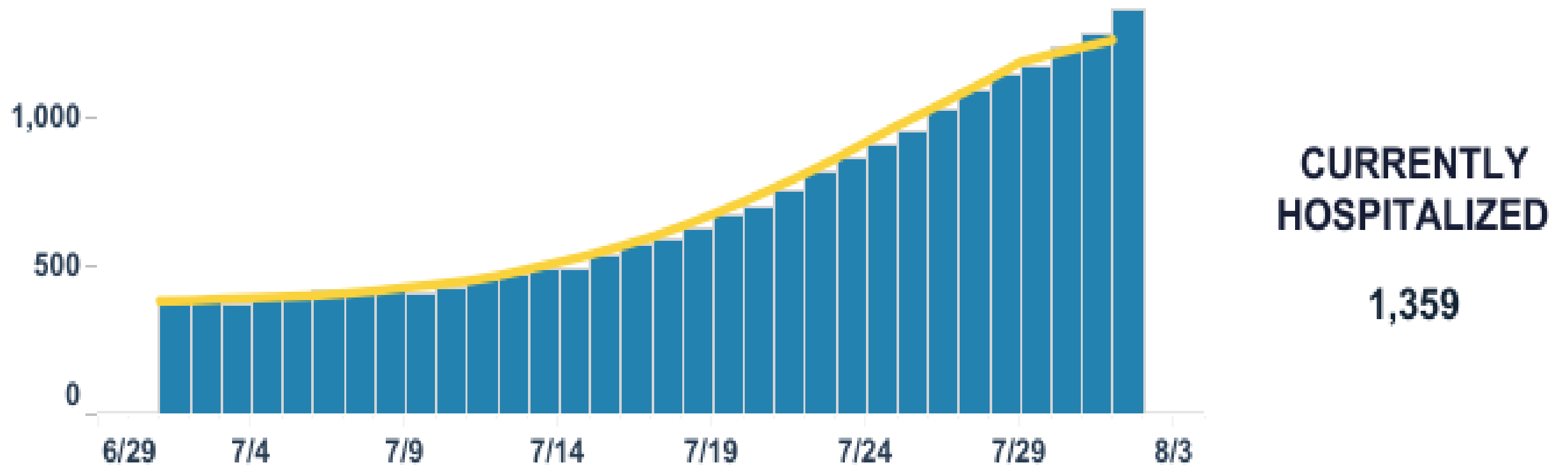
Cases are Rapidly Increasing



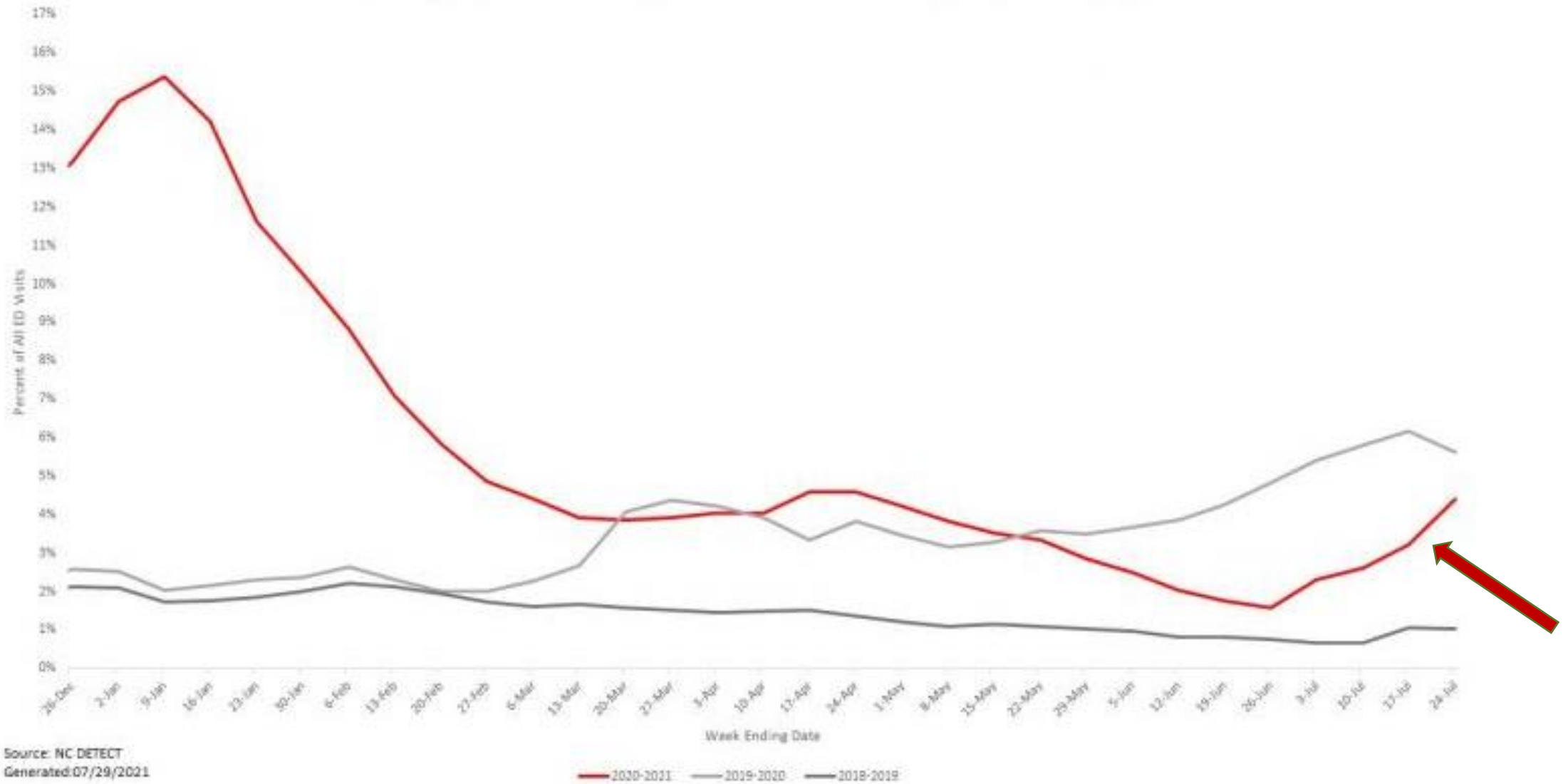
Percent of Tests that Are Positive Has Doubled Since Early July



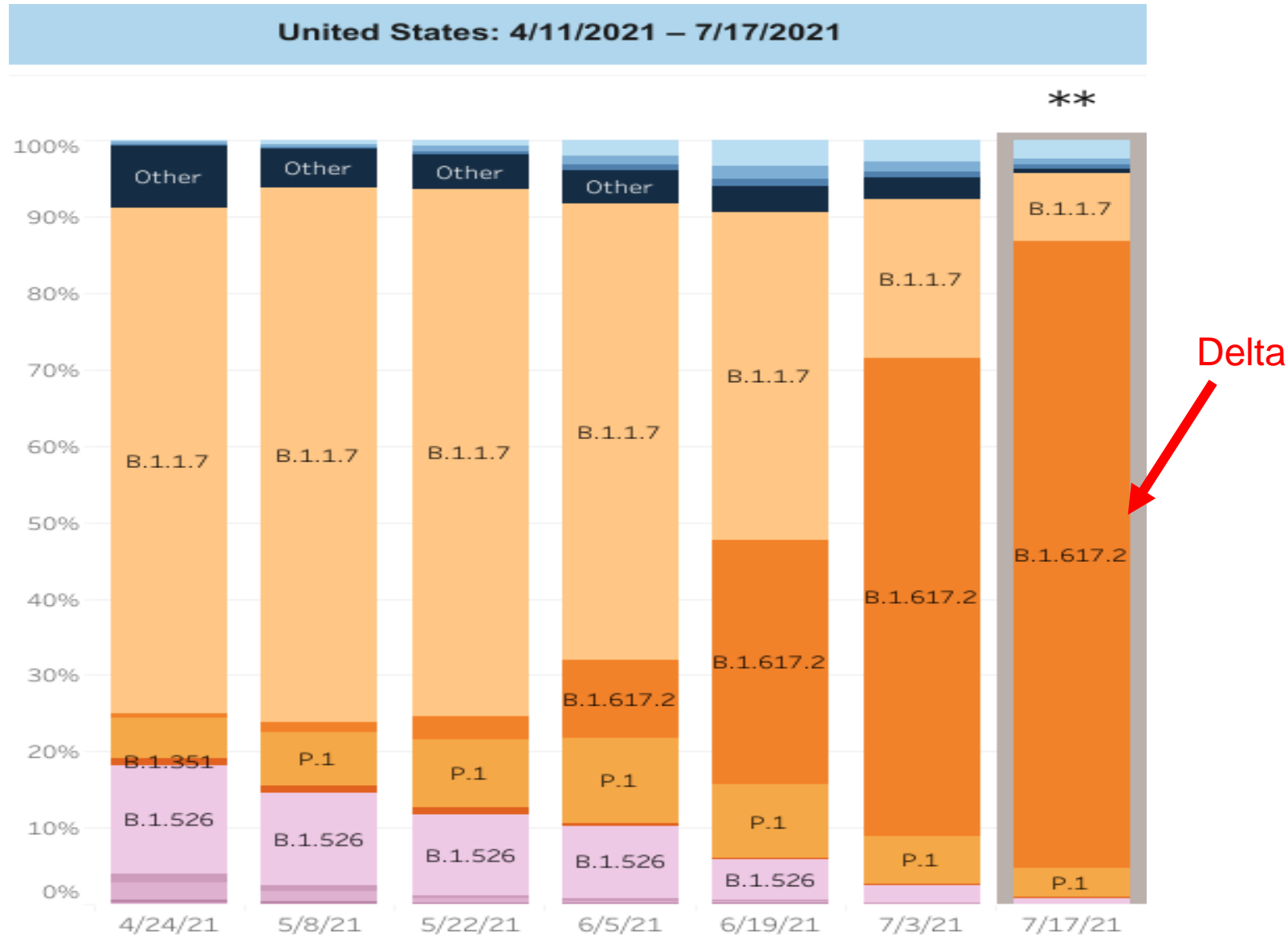
Number of People Hospitalized has Doubled since July 9th



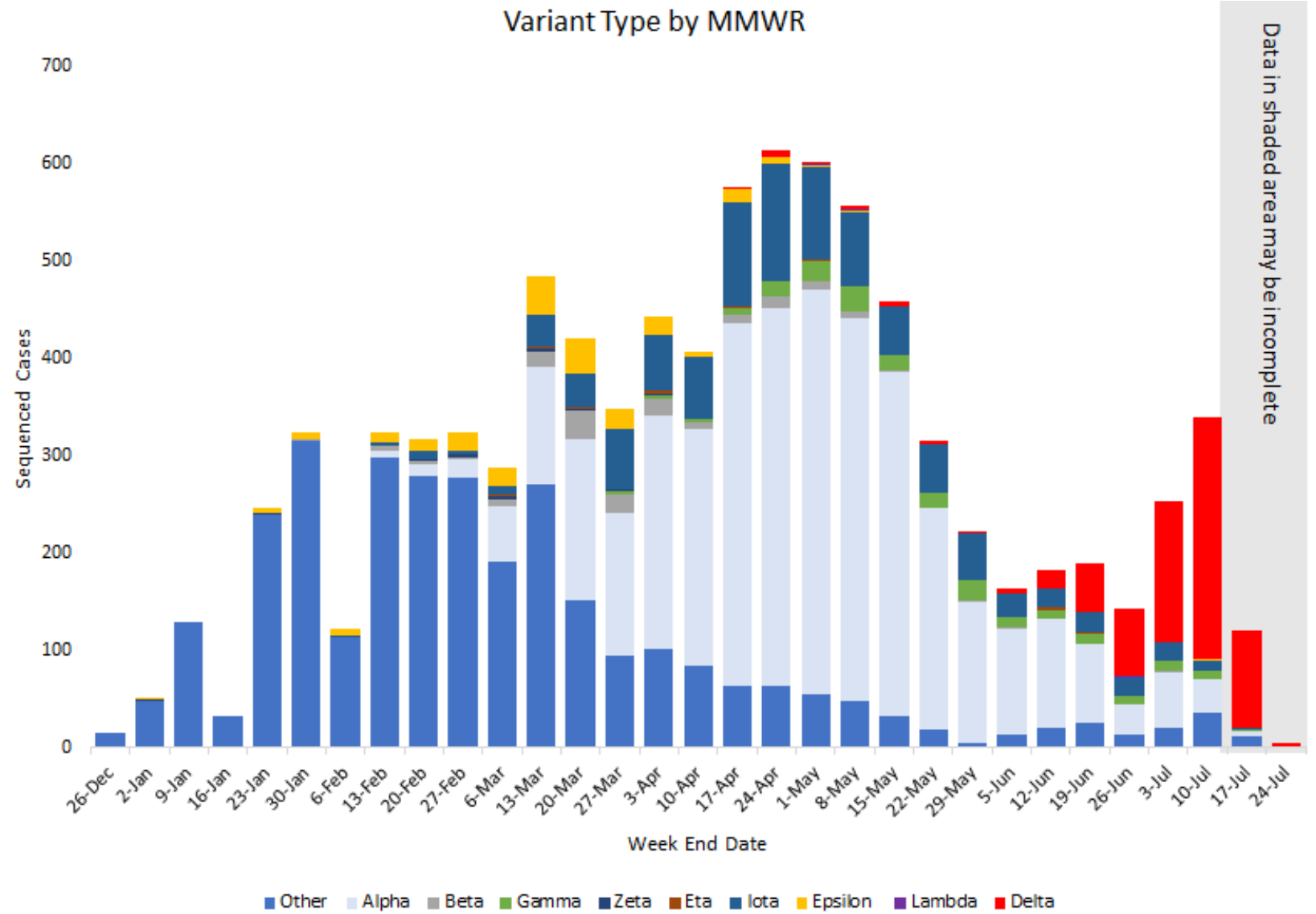
COVID-Like Illness in Emergency Rooms is Increasing



Delta Variant is the Predominant Strain in NC and US



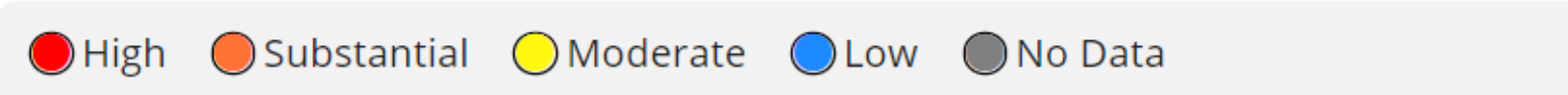
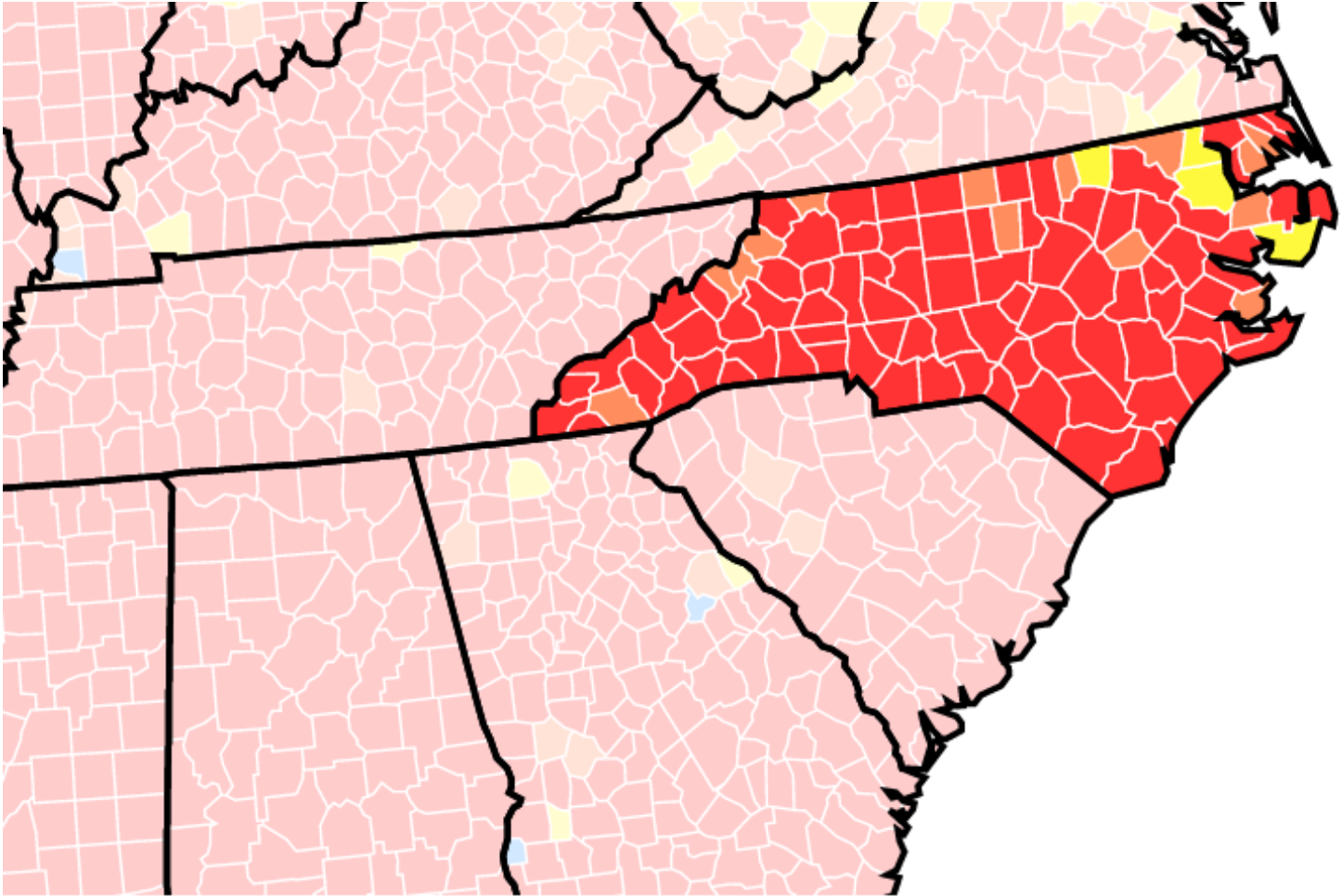
Delta variant is the most common variant in NC

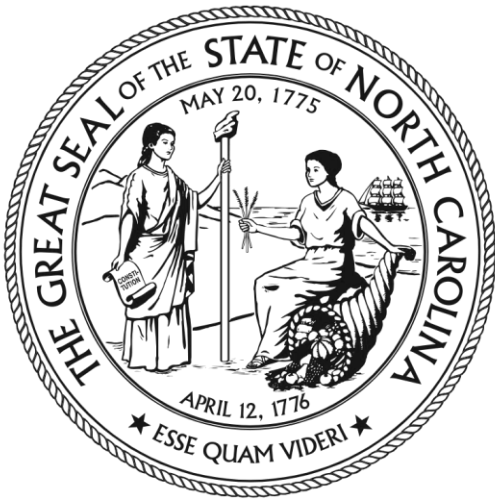


Delta Variant – What We Know

- **More transmissible**
- **May lead to more severe disease**
- **Vaccine is still effective in preventing infection and especially severe disease, hospitalization, and death**
- **If a post-vaccination case occurs, the individual may be able to transmit infection as well as an unvaccinated individual**
 - Updated CDC Guidance: Everyone, regardless of vaccine status, should wear masks indoors in counties with substantial to high community spread

Most of NC has High or Substantial Community Transmission





NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

StrongSchoolsNC Toolkit Changes/Recommendations

Susan Gale Perry
Chief Deputy Secretary

State Board of Education Meeting

August 5, 2021

Key Changes

The StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit has been updated to align to the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools updated on July 9 and more recently on July 27.

Recommendations prioritize strategies that have been shown to be most effective in lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in school sessions and activities.

- Strategies that **should** be implemented by all schools. These are strategies that, if not implemented, create conditions of high risk for COVID-19 exposure and spread. NCDHHS strongly advises that school leaders adopt all the strategies in the should sections.
- Strategies that school leaders **could consider** adopting. These are strategies to provide additional layers of prevention to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

Key Changes

- The Toolkit includes several preventive measures, including that all schools should require all children and staff in schools K through 12th grade wear masks, regardless of vaccine status.
- Added information on offering and promoting COVID-19 vaccination and testing strategies.
- Added language on the importance of offering in-person learning.
- Removed numerous requirements including:
 - Conduct daily symptom screening
 - Provide remote learning options for students unable to be at school due to illness or exposure

Key Changes

- Added **modified quarantine guidance for students after a close contact in which both people were wearing masks:**
- Students do not need to quarantine if exposed as a close contact in K-12 settings if:
 - both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks at the time of exposure; and
 - other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

