



Hepatitis A in King County, 2019 - 2022

Modified on 6/1/2022

On November 29, 2021, the Washington State Department of Health and Public Health – Seattle & King County reported that the hepatitis A outbreak among people living homeless appeared to be over. For more information, please visit:

[Washington State Department of Health: "Update on hepatitis A cases in Washington"](#)

[Public Health - Seattle & King County: "Steep reduction in local cases of hepatitis A among people living homeless"](#)

Hepatitis A virus spreads easily. It is usually transmitted person-to-person through the fecal-oral route or consumption of contaminated food or water. The virus gets into the body through the mouth after someone touches an object, food, or drink that is contaminated with the virus. If an infected person doesn't wash their hands well, especially after the using toilet, undetectable amounts of the virus can spread from the hands of that person to other objects, surfaces, and foods. In recent years, hepatitis A outbreaks have occurred in many urban areas in the U.S., primarily among people experiencing homelessness (lack housing or are living in unstable or non-permanent housing), people who use drugs (injection and non-injection), and men who have sex with men. Washington State declared a statewide hepatitis A outbreak among people living homeless or who use drugs in July 2019.

In King County, 202 confirmed cases of hepatitis A have been reported since January 1, 2019 (relative to 5-16 cases per year over the past decade). The majority (119 out of 202) have been among people who are experiencing homelessness or who use drugs. Of the 202 cases, 123 were hospitalized, and hepatitis A was a contributing factor in 2 deaths. These numbers are subject to change.

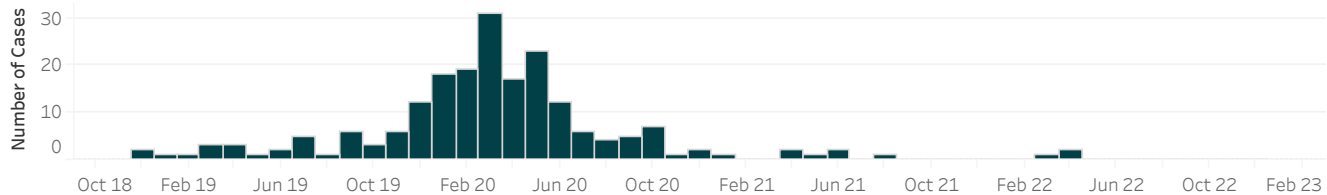
Cases reported since January 1, 2019

Cases Reported:
202

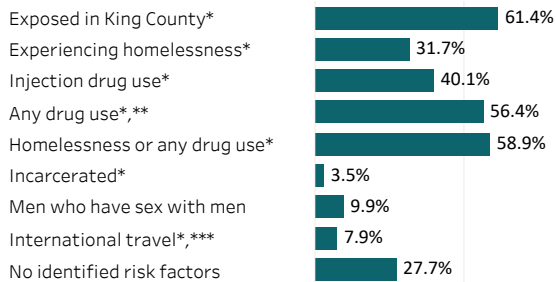
Hospitalizations:
123 (60.9%)

Related Deaths:
2 (1.0%)

Symptom onset for cases reported since January 1, 2019

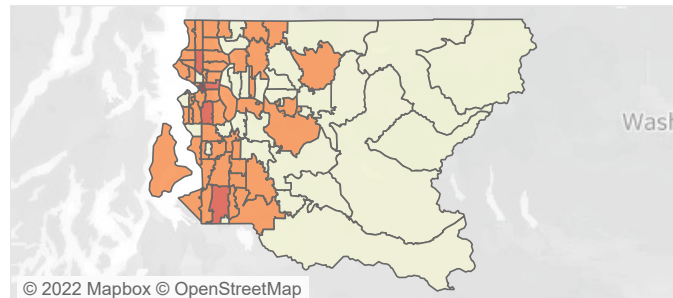


Reported risk factors

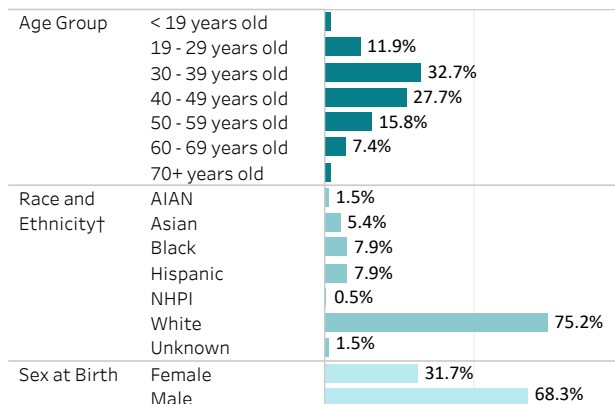


* In the two months preceding onset of symptoms.
 ** Any drug use (injection or non-injection).
 *** International travel but no other risk factors.

ZIP Code of residence

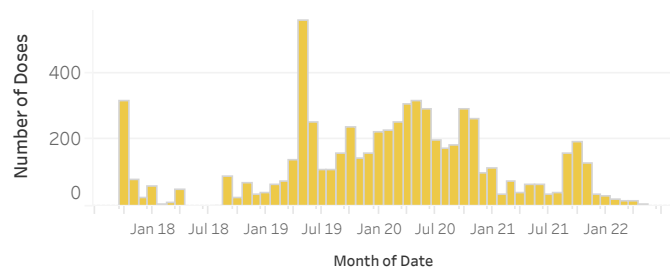


Demographics



† Hover over the bar for more information about the categories. People who identified as Hispanic are only included in that group, regardless of race.

Hepatitis A vaccines administered by Public Health - Seattle & King County



In October 2017, Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHSKC) began holding free hepatitis A vaccination clinics for people at high risk of infection, including people experiencing homelessness, people who use drugs, and men who have sex with men. Thousands of doses of hepatitis A vaccine have been administered by PHSKC staff and community partners including emergency departments, community health clinics, and homeless service providers to people at high risk of infection.