Burden of COVID-19 on Milwaukee County children

Milwaukee County COVID-19 Epidemiology Intel Team

This report was updated on March 11, 2021 and includes data through March 9, 2021. Note that data for recent weeks may be under-reported due to pending test results.

This report focuses on children ages 0-18; however, maps include only those 0-17 due to a lack of availability of population (denominator) data for those age 18 alone. We include individuals of age 18 as some of this age are enrolled in K-12 schools.

COVID-19 summary statistics for Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under

Overall Summary Statistics: Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under
March 1, 2020 - March 9, 2021

	Milwaukee County	City of Milwaukee	Suburbs
Total tests performed	77,752	45,855	31,897
Percent positive of all tests performed	13.3%	14.5%	11.7%
Number of confirmed cases	13,522	8,864	4,658
Number of hospitalizations	187	153	34
Number of deaths	0	0	0
Case fatality rate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Weekly Summary Statistics: Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under
March 3, 2021 - March 9, 2021

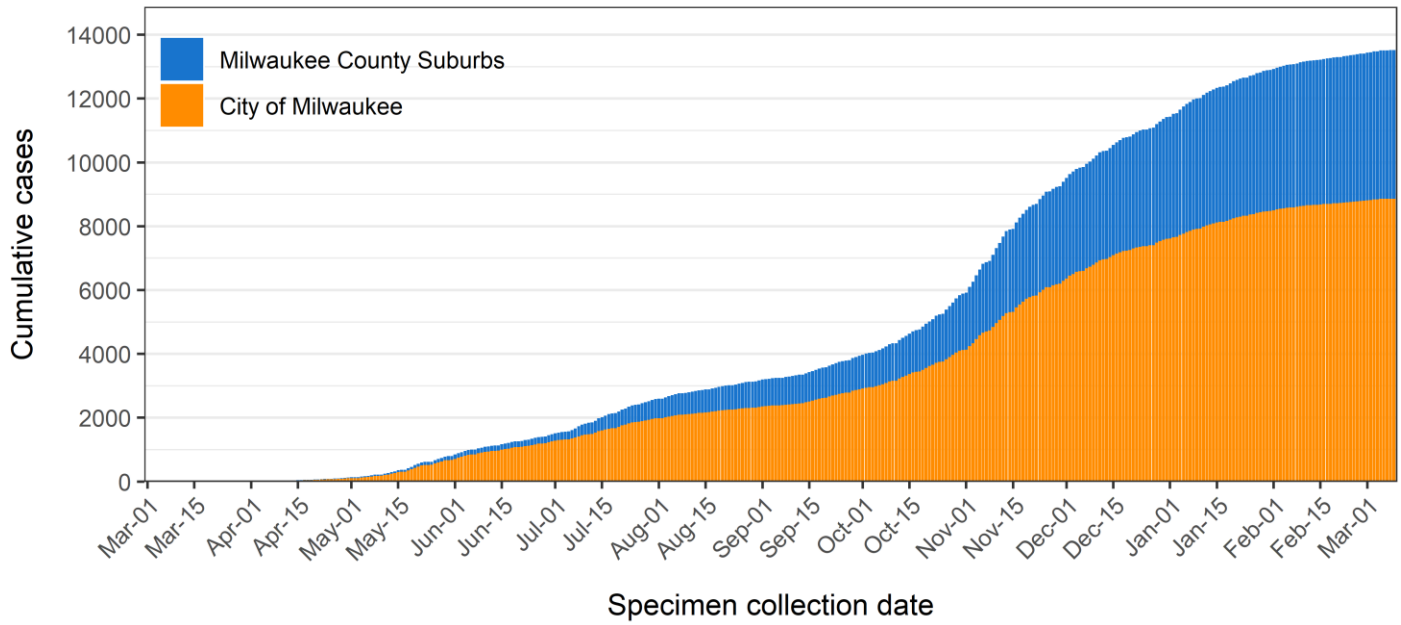
	Milwaukee County	City of Milwaukee	Suburbs
Total tests performed	1,067	518	549
Percent positive of all tests performed	5.3%	5.6%	5.1%
Number of confirmed cases	69	42	27
Number of hospitalizations	3	0	3
Number of deaths	0	0	0

Cases over time for Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under

There are now a total of 13522 cases among children ages 0-18 in Milwaukee County, with the first confirmed case on March 17, 2020. Over the last week, we observed 69 new confirmed cases, including 42 in the City of Milwaukee and 27 in the suburban jurisdictions. **Figure 1** shows the cumulative cases among children in the city and the suburbs. **Figure 2a** shows the daily incidence of new cases (bars) and the average daily incidence within the last 7 days (line), which provides a smoothing effect to enhance visualization, for both the city and the county. This figure was re-produced for ages 17 and under, **Figure 2b**, to look at trends without the contribution of 18 year olds who are a mixture of current high school students and graduates. To indicate a potential reporting delay, we shade the last seven days of data and exclude those days from the trend line.

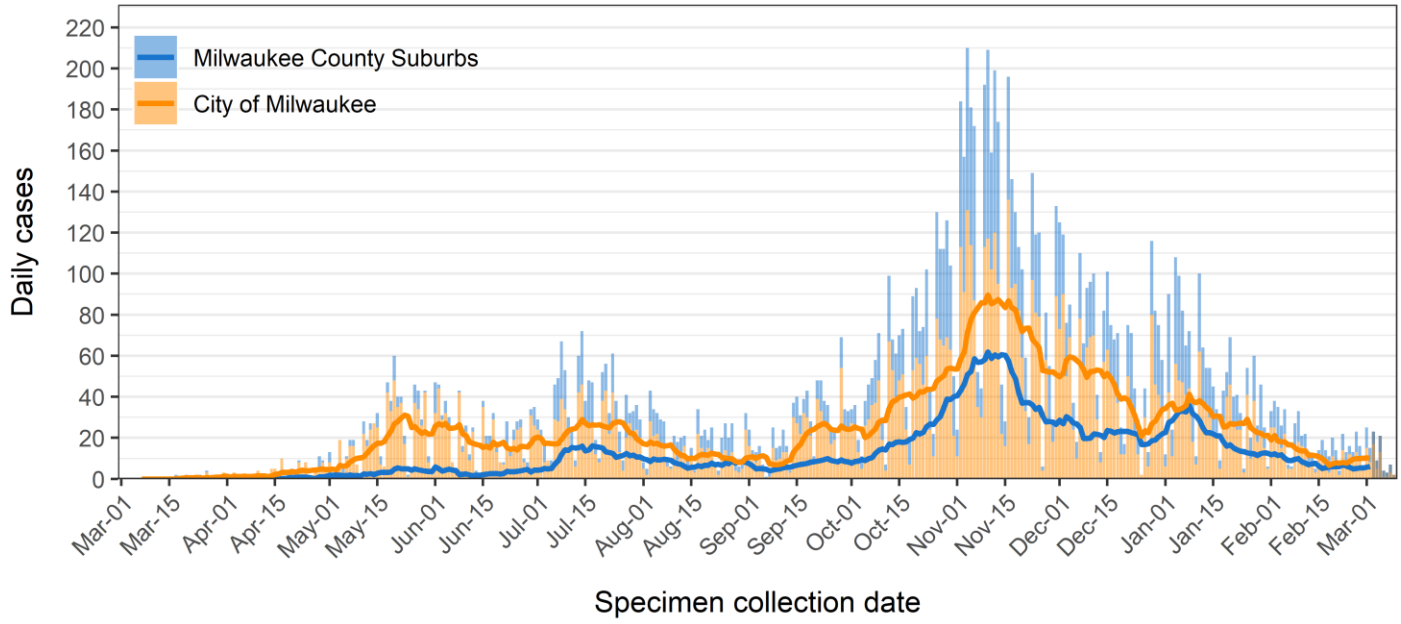
Over the last week we have seen a plateau in the daily case count among children in Milwaukee County. The highest daily case count since the beginning of the epidemic occurred on November 4, 2020, with 210 cases in the county overall. The highest daily case count over the entire period in the city occurred on November 16, 2020 with 136 cases confirmed, while the highest daily case count in the suburbs occurred on November 10, 2020 with 92 cases confirmed.

Figure 1: Cumulative cases in Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
Created by the Milwaukee County COVID-19 Epidemiology Intel Team

Figure 2a: Daily cases in Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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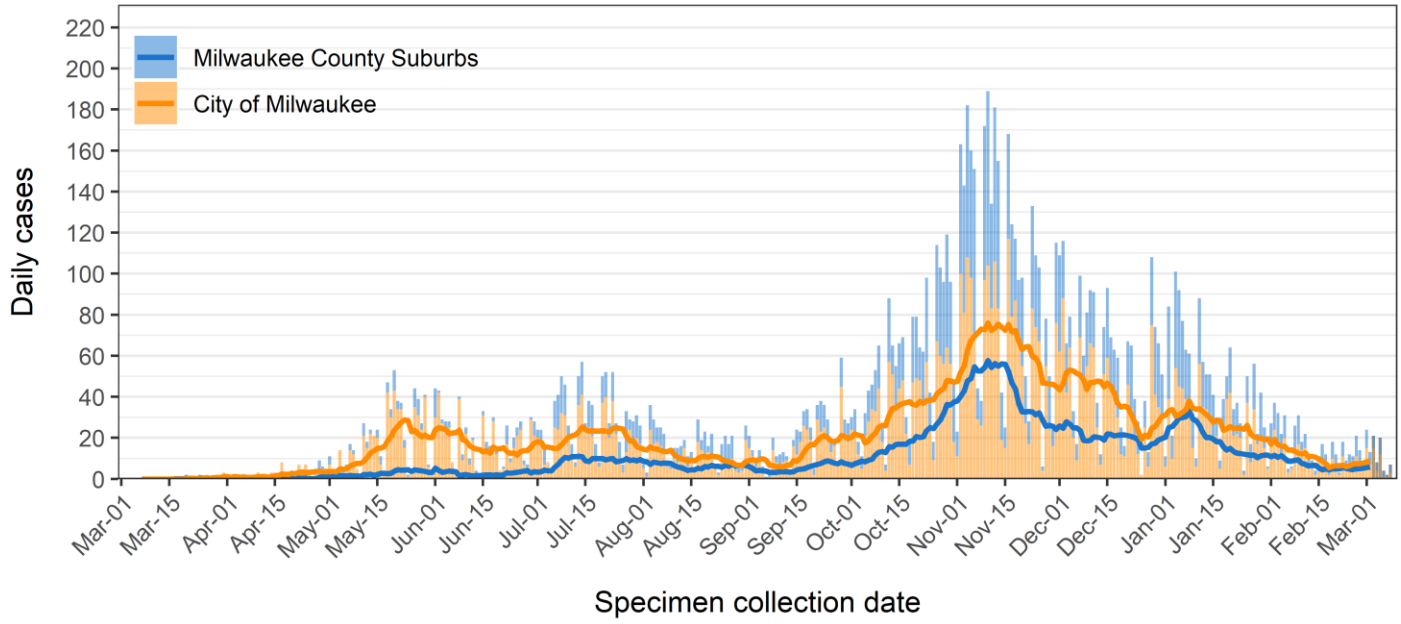
Figure 2b: Daily cases in Milwaukee County children aged 17 and under



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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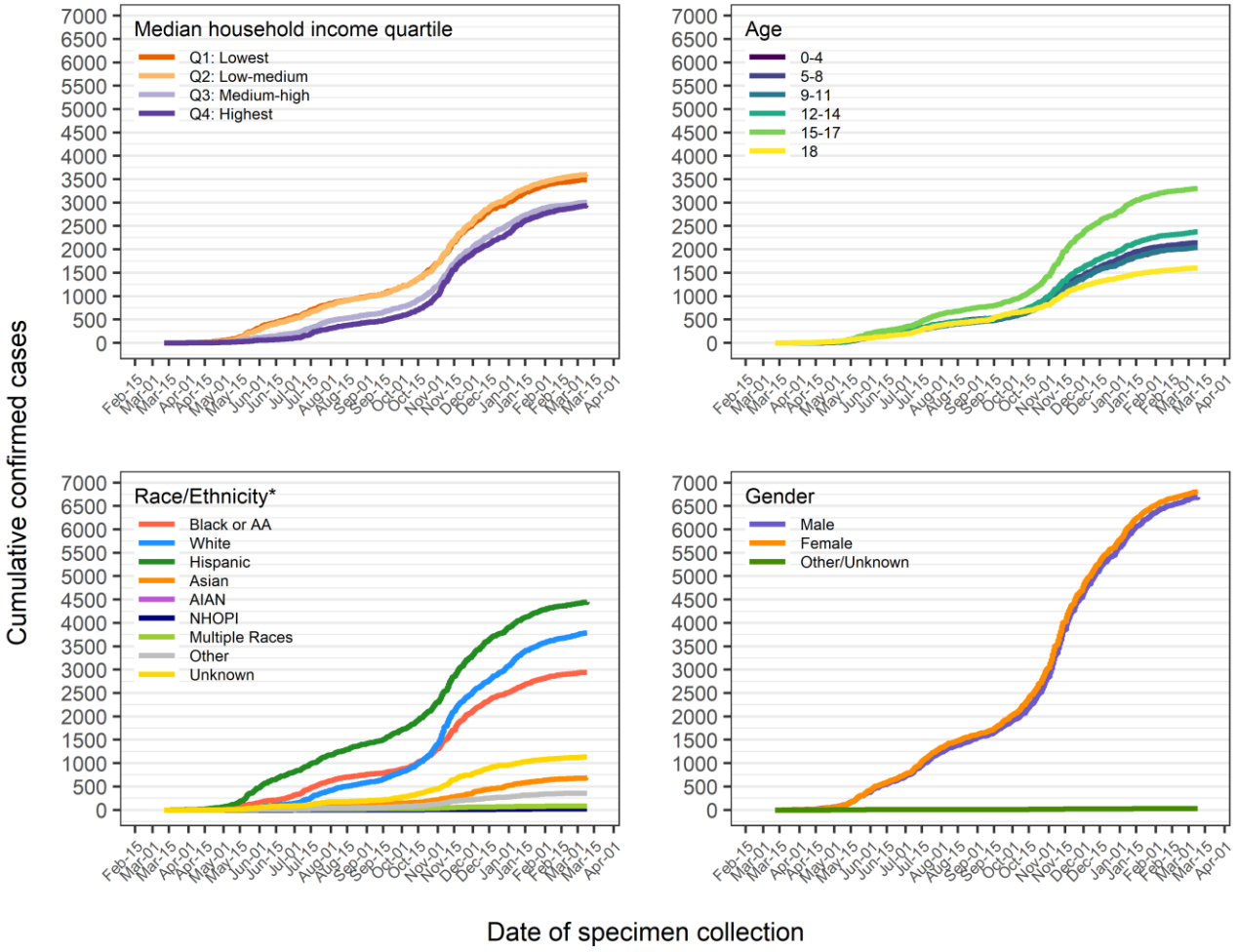
Demographic patterns in Milwaukee County cases aged 18 and under

COVID-19 cases among children vary by demographic characteristics. **Figure 3** shows cumulative case plots including confirmed positive cases with an available specimen collection date, plotted by census block group (CBG) median household income, sex, age, and race/ethnicity groups. Most diagnosed cases fall within the ages of 15-17 with 3301 cases, with confirmed cases among other age groups each much lower. Of all confirmed cases, 50.3% are female and 49.5% are male. The largest number of cases have been diagnosed among the Hispanic population (N = 4445), followed by non-Hispanic Whites (N = 3788), and then the Black/AA population (N = 2940). The lower two quartiles of median household income ($0 - $35,833, and $35,834 to $50,096) have a larger number of cases than the higher two quartiles ($50,097 to $68,393, and $68,394 to $250,001), with the fewest cases identified among the highest income group. Over the last week, we have observed increases among several age groups and those who are Hispanic, Black/AA, or non-Hispanic White.

Figure 3: Cumulative confirmed cases in Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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**Race and ethnicity were combined into one variable where the Hispanic category includes Hispanics of any race.*
AIAN stands for American Indian or Alaska Native and NHOPI stands for Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Hospitalized cases in Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under

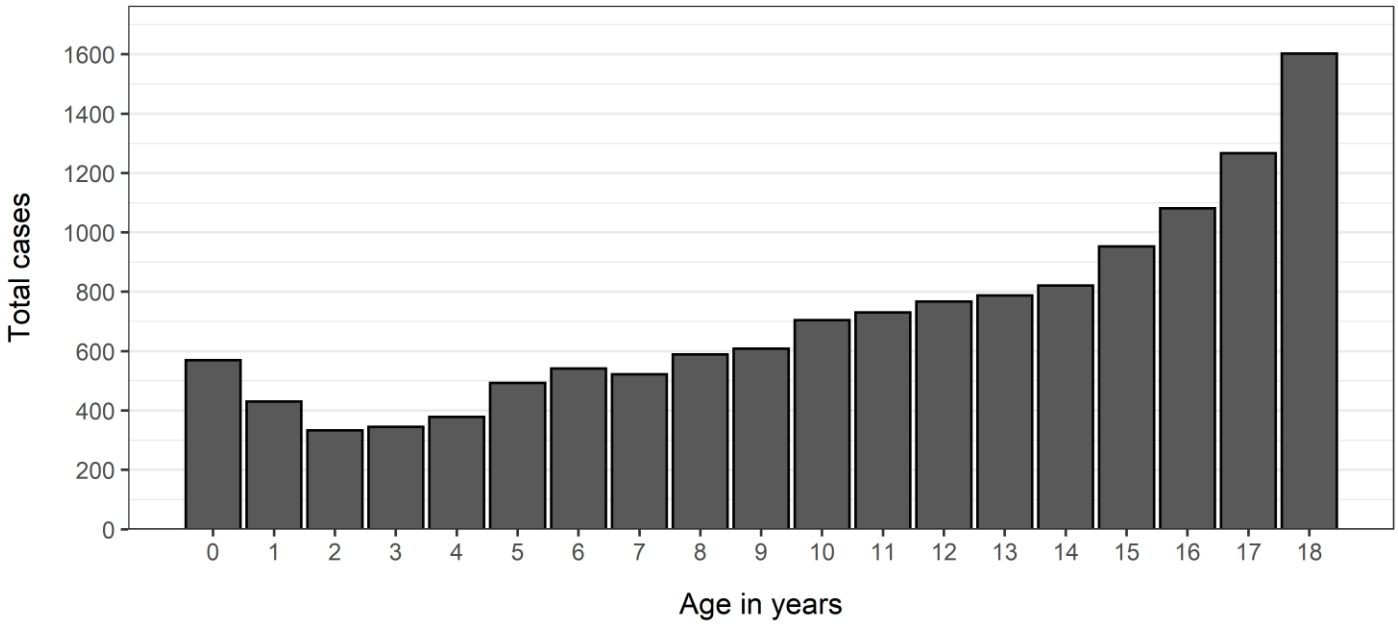
A total of 187 children aged 18 and younger have been hospitalized due to COVID-19 in Milwaukee County. The average age of hospitalized children is 9.4, ranging from infants through 18-year-olds. Hospitalizations are greater among males at 51.9%. Fully 47.6% of hospitalizations have occurred among Black/AA children, with 32.6% among Hispanic/Latinx children. Only 13.4% of hospitalizations are among non-Hispanic Whites. These percentages contrast with the distribution of cases by race and ethnicity, with 28.0% non-Hispanic White, 32.9% Hispanic, and 21.7% Black/AA among all cases aged 18 and younger.

Variable	Hospitalized cases (N = 187)
Age	
Mean (SD)	9.44 (6.68)
Median [Q1, Q3]	11.00 [2.00, 16.00]
Min, Max	0.00, 18.00
Age categories	
0-4	63 (33.7 %)
5-8	17 (9.1 %)
9-11	16 (8.6 %)
12-14	26 (13.9 %)
15-17	50 (26.7 %)
18	15 (8.0 %)
Gender	
Female	90 (48.1 %)
Male	97 (51.9 %)
Race/Ethnicity	
Black or AA	89 (47.6 %)
White	25 (13.4 %)
Hispanic	61 (32.6 %)
Asian	<10
Unknown	<10

Total cases and tested individuals through March 9, 2021 by year of age

Age is a considerable factor in confirmed cases among children. As shown in **Figure 4**, overall, confirmed cases increase with age. It is notable that 569 cases have been diagnosed among those less than 1 year old. As shown in **Figure 5**, the distribution of confirmed cases mirrors the distribution of testing among children, with many more tests conducted among older teenagers, particularly those aged 18, as compared to the younger age groups.

Figure 4: Total confirmed cases by age among Milwaukee County children



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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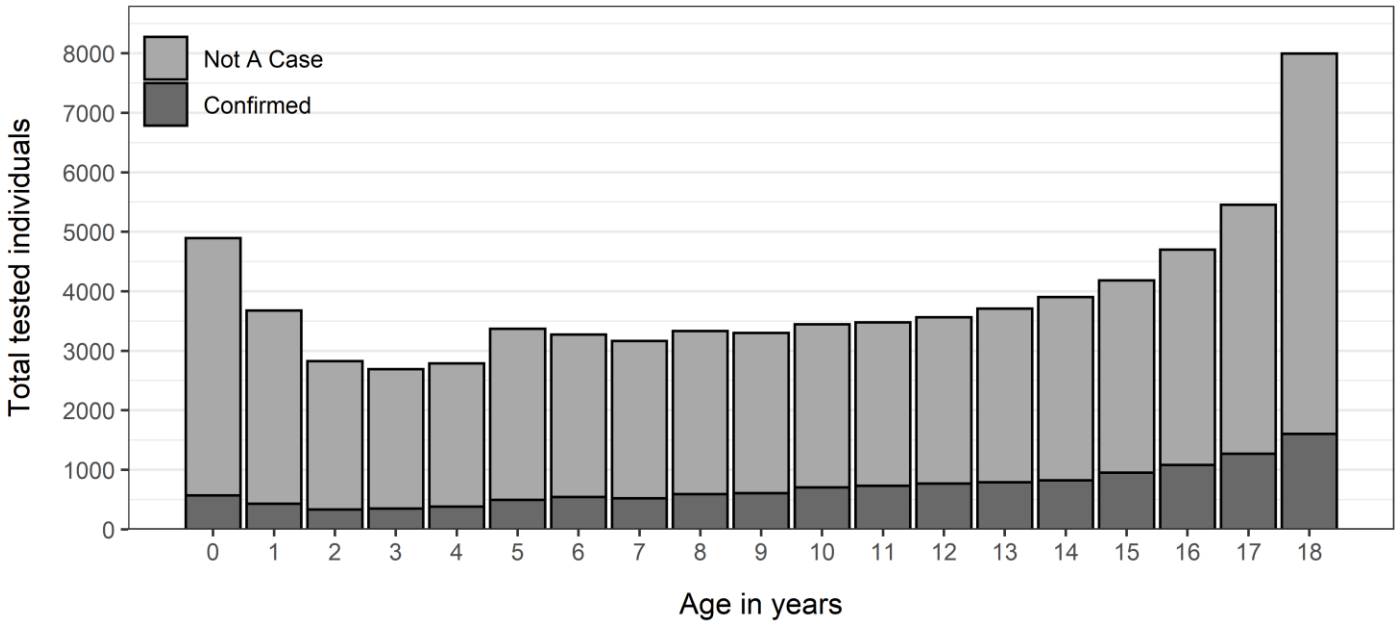
Figure 5: Total tested children by age in Milwaukee County



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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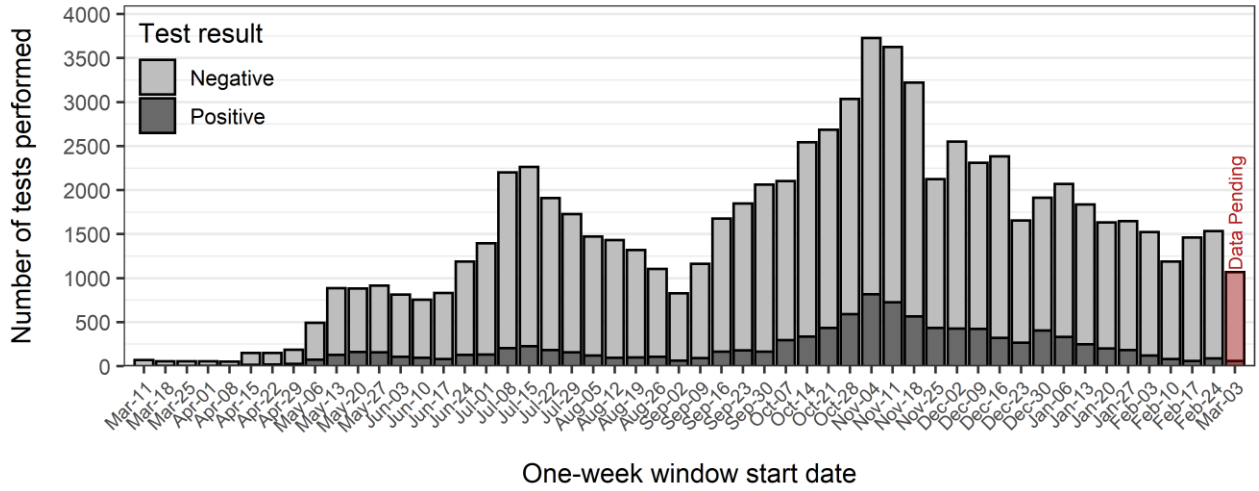
Total tests through March 9, 2021 for children aged 18 and under

Testing for the novel coronavirus is an important public health response to limiting the spread of the infection. Testing capacity was limited in Milwaukee County and across the country earlier in the epidemic, but then increased. Since the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in a child in Milwaukee County on March 17, 2020, a total of 77752 COVID-19 tests have been performed among children ages 0-18, with 67374 negative results and 10378 positive results. This represents a positive test rate of 13.3% since the beginning of the epidemic.

As shown in **Figure 6**, very few tests were conducted among children early in the epidemic; it is likely that COVID-19 cases among children were not identified. Testing among children increased until early July and then declined, with another increase beginning in September and peaking in early November, followed by a decline. Testing was low during the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the New Year. As shown in **Figure 7**, the 14-day trend in percent positive tests among children shows no significant change. Percent positive should be interpreted in the context of potential data delays given the large numbers of tests conducted in recent weeks, and considering that data entry for positive tests is prioritized.

Figure 6: Number of tests per week among Milwaukee Co. children 18 and under



Data source: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS)
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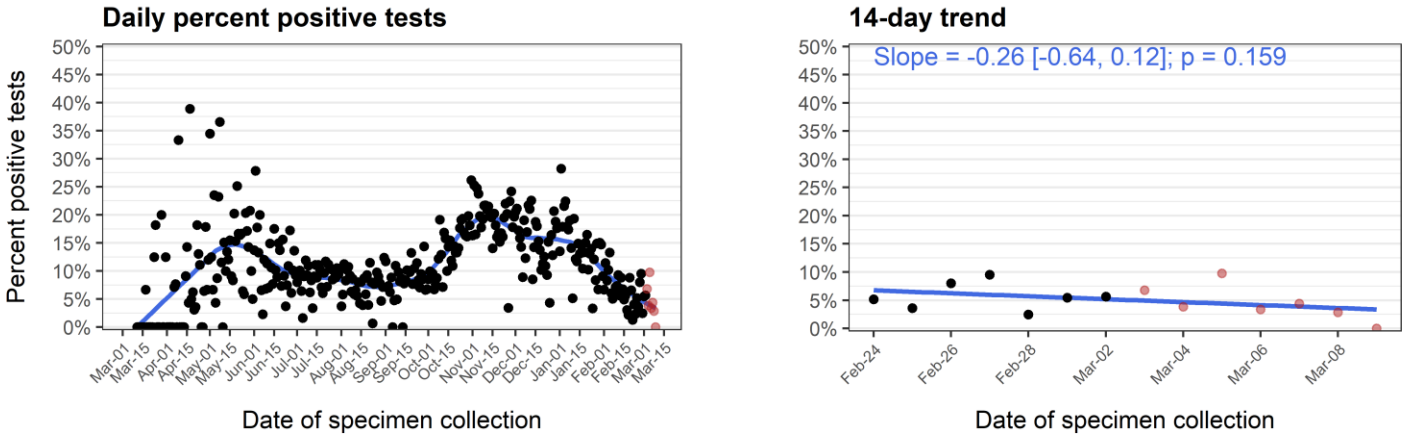
Figure 7: Percent positive tests among Milwaukee County children aged 18 and under



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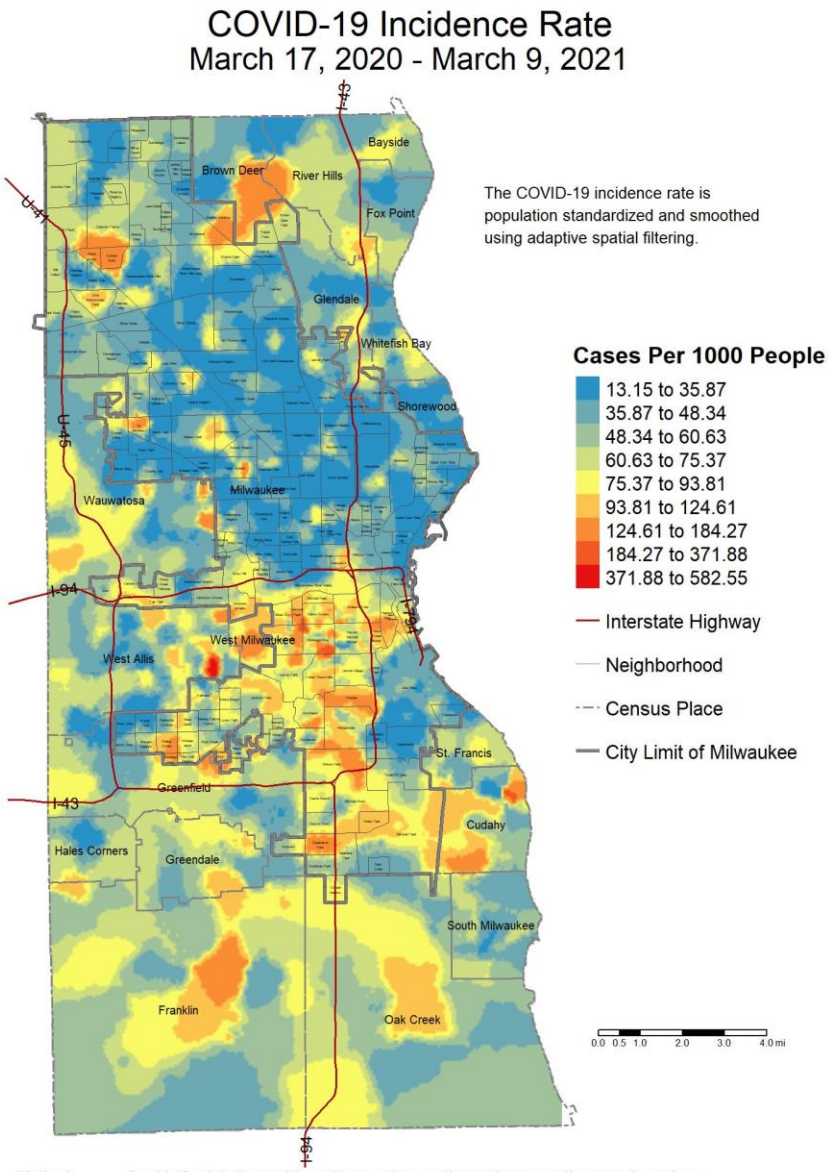
Spatial patterns of COVID-19 in Milwaukee County children

COVID-19 spread is spatially patterned. **Map 1** below illustrates the cumulative burden (all confirmed cases) of COVID-19 in Milwaukee County children. **Map 2** shows cases confirmed in children over the last four weeks. **Map 3** depicts the percentage of tests that were confirmed positive. **Map 4** shows cumulative COVID-19 related hospitalizations among children. All are crude rate maps created using census block group level COVID-19 data from WEDSS and population data from the US Census. The maps are smoothed to protect confidentiality and ensure that rates are stable while still providing geographic detail. High rates are depicted in red with lower rates depicted in blue.

Map 1: All confirmed cases of COVID-19 in children aged 0-17



Method: A grid of points is used to estimate rates continuously across the map, based on the nearest cases with a minimum of 15 confirmed cases included.
Data Sources: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) (incidence data)
2018 American Community Survey (population data)
City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal (neighborhood boundaries)
Census Bureau TIGER/Line Shapefiles (census place boundaries)
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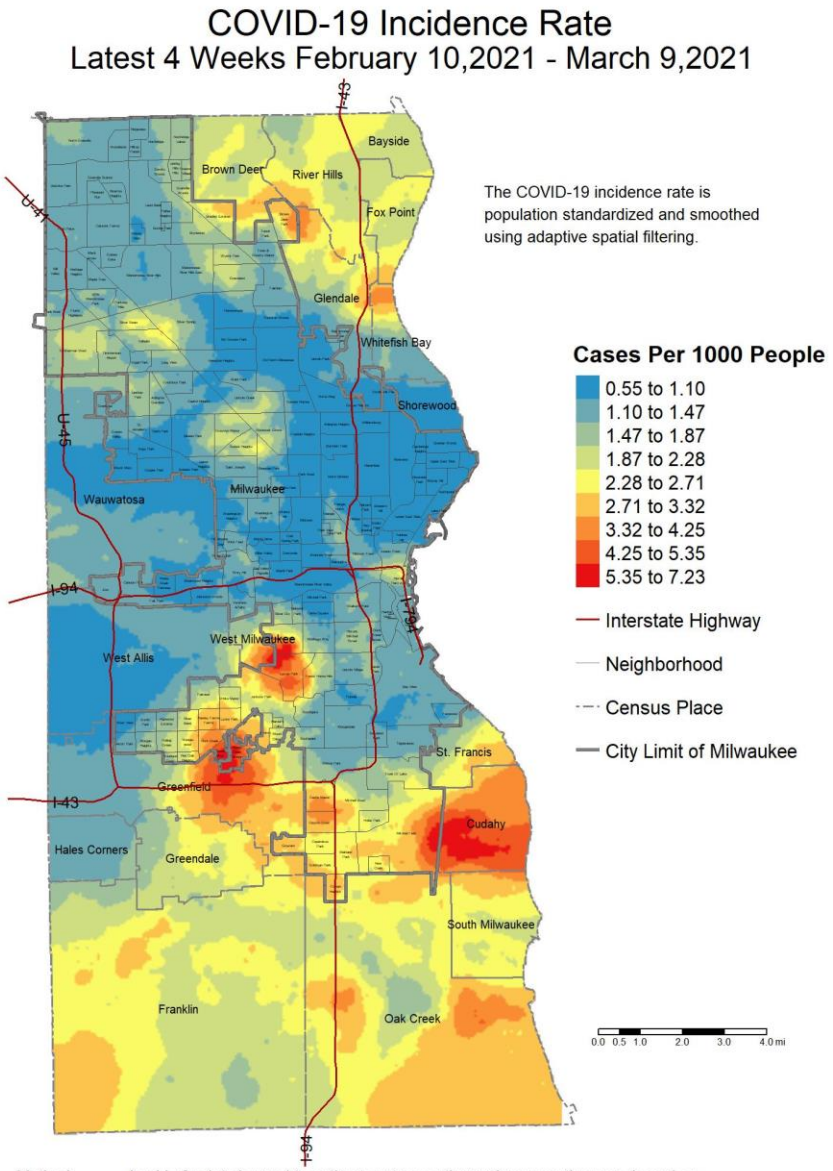
Map 2: Confirmed cases of COVID-19 over the last four weeks in children aged 0-17



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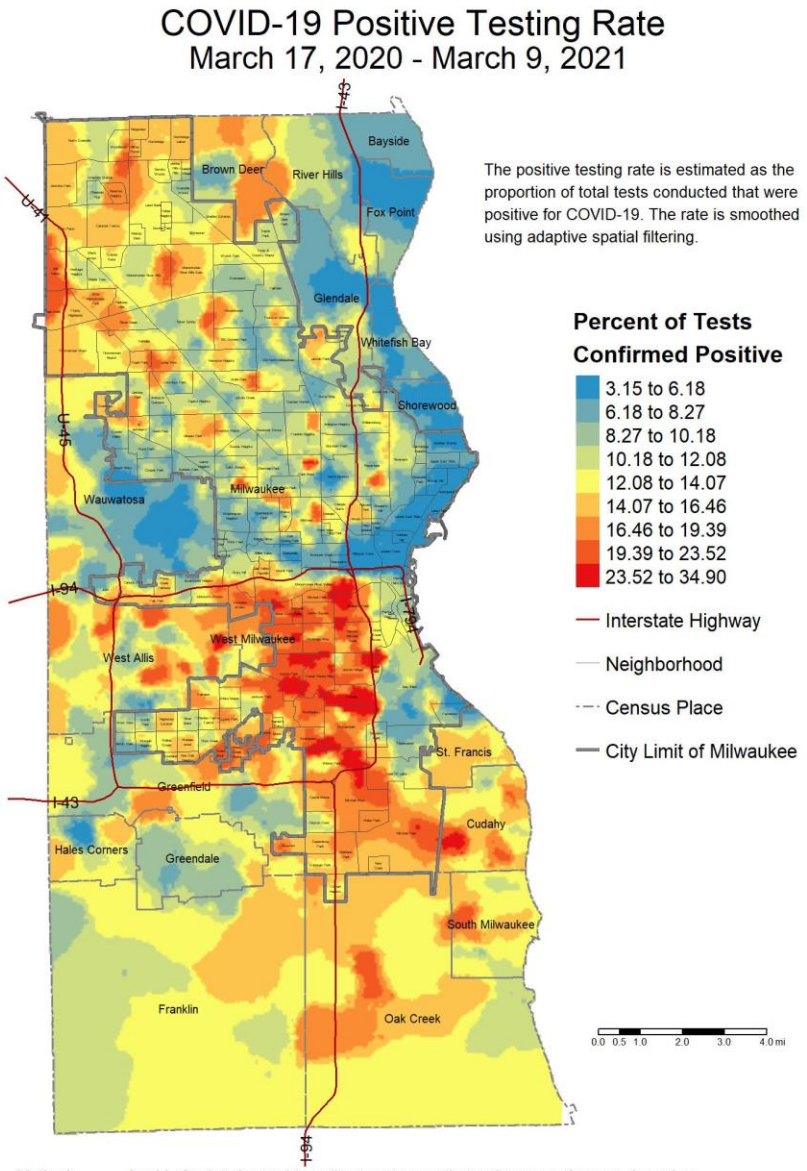
Map 3: Percentage of tests that were confirmed positive in children aged 0-17



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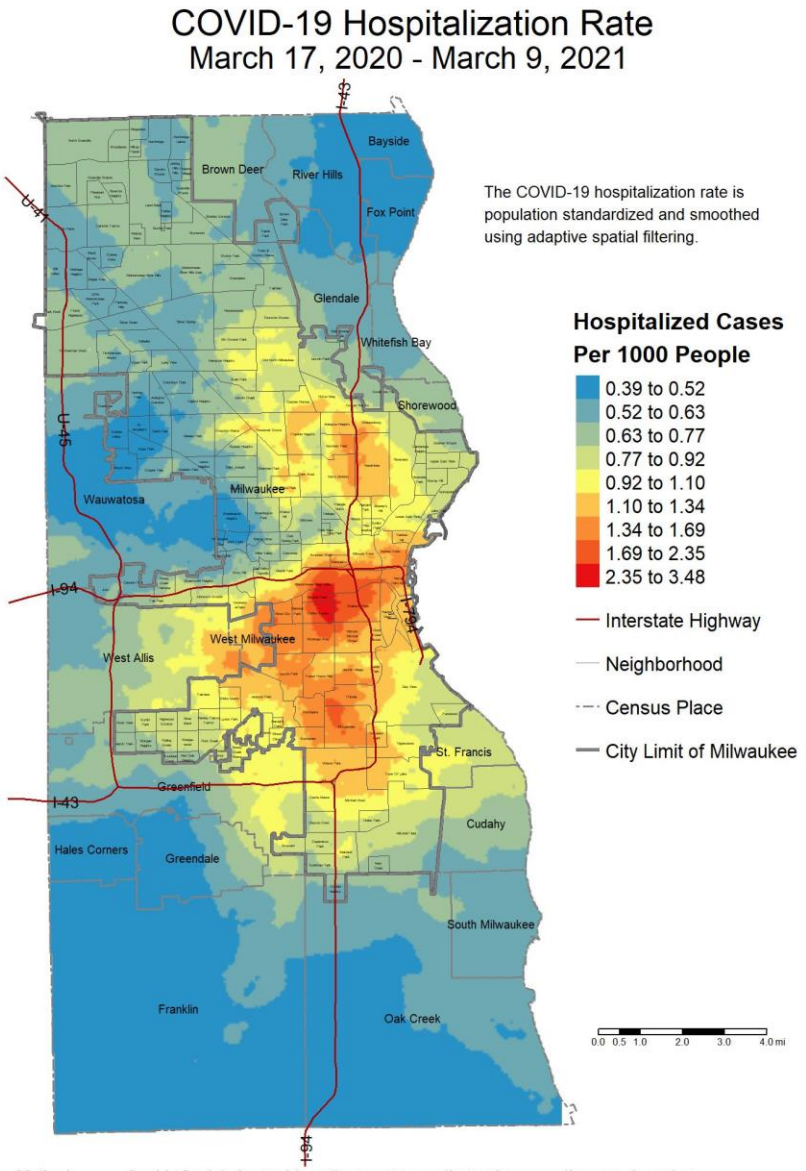
Map 4: COVID-19 related hospitalizations in children aged 0-17



Method: A grid of points is used to estimate rates continuously across the map, based on the nearest cases with a minimum of 15 hospitalized cases included.
Data Sources: Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) (incidence data)
2018 American Community Survey (population data)
City of Milwaukee Map Milwaukee Portal (neighborhood boundaries)
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Data Sources & Acknowledgments

This report was created by faculty and staff in the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) Institute for Health and Equity (IHE) in partnership with representatives from local health departments and faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Zilber School of Public Health. Data sources include the Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS), the US Census Bureau, the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's office, the Emergency Medicine Resource, and publicly available data obtained from local health and emergency response agencies. Data from the Wisconsin Electronic Data Surveillance System (WEDSS) summarized for the week includes data from March 3, 2021 through March 9, 2021. This work was funded by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Contact Information

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