

RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis

Rural Data Update

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County-Level 14-Day COVID-19 Case Trajectories

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Background

This document updates maps and tables for the Rural Data Brief “County-Level 14-Day COVID-19 Case Trajectories” (https://ruprihealth.org/publications/policybriefs/2020/County_COVID_Trajectories.pdf). This data brief looks at the new case counts in every US county between July 25, 2021, and August 7, 2021, to quantitatively evaluate 14-day trends in metropolitan, nonmetropolitan, and noncore counties. Previous versions of this document can be found at: https://ruprihealth.org/publications/policybriefs/2020/COVID_Projects.html

Data on confirmed COVID-19 cases were obtained from the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 Data Repository¹. The number of cases in each county was aggregated for each week in the two-week period, and the totals for each week were compared. To minimize the impact of counties with very minor real variation in weekly counts, those with a change in case count of two or fewer (either increase or decrease) were coded as “Same number, both weeks.” Counties that saw more than a 25 percent increase or decrease in number of cases between the weeks were labelled “notable” (including counties that went from 3 or more to none [notable decrease] and counties that went from none to 3 or more [notable increase]). Counties in the 50 states and the District of Columbia were classified as metropolitan, nonmetropolitan, or noncore based on Urban Influence Codes².

Table 1. 14-day trends^a in newly confirmed COVID-19 cases, by county geography: 7/25/2021 – 8/7/2021

	Metropolitan (n = 1,166)	Nonmetropolitan (n = 641)	Noncore (n = 1,335)
No cases reported	15 (1.3%)	23 (3.6%)	107 (8.0%)
Decreasing, notable ^b	33 (2.8%)	22 (3.4%)	109 (8.2%)
Decreasing, not notable	56 (4.8%)	42 (6.6%)	57 (4.3%)
Same number, both weeks ^c	53 (4.5%)	67 (10.5%)	298 (22.3%)
Increasing, not notable	176 (15.1%)	65 (10.1%)	98 (7.3%)
Increasing, notable	833 (71.4%)	422 (65.8%)	666 (49.9%)

^aComparison of number of new cases in first week of 14-day period with new cases in second week.

^b“Notable” trends indicate weekly changes in new cases exceeding (either increasing or decreasing) 25 percent.

^cIncludes counties with an absolute change in count of two or fewer.



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Table 2. 14-day trends^a in newly confirmed COVID-19 cases, in counties with any cases, by county geography: 7/25/2021 – 8/7/2021

	Metropolitan (n = 1,151 of 1,166)	Nonmetropolitan (n = 618 of 641)	Noncore (n = 1,228 of 1,335)
Any decrease	89 (7.7%)	64 (10.4%)	166 (13.5%)
Notable decrease ^b	33 (2.9%)	22 (3.6%)	109 (8.9%)
Same number, both weeks ^c	53 (4.6%)	67 (10.8%)	298 (24.3%)
Any increase	1009 (87.7%)	487 (78.8%)	764 (62.2%)
Notable increase ^b	833 (72.4%)	422 (68.3%)	666 (54.2%)
Increase of 100% or more	201 (17.5%)	144 (23.3%)	344 (28.0%)

^aComparison of number of new cases in first week of 14-day period with new cases in second week.

^b"Notable" trends indicate weekly changes in new cases exceeding (either increasing or decreasing) 25 percent.

^cIncludes counties with an absolute change in count of two or fewer.

Figure 1.

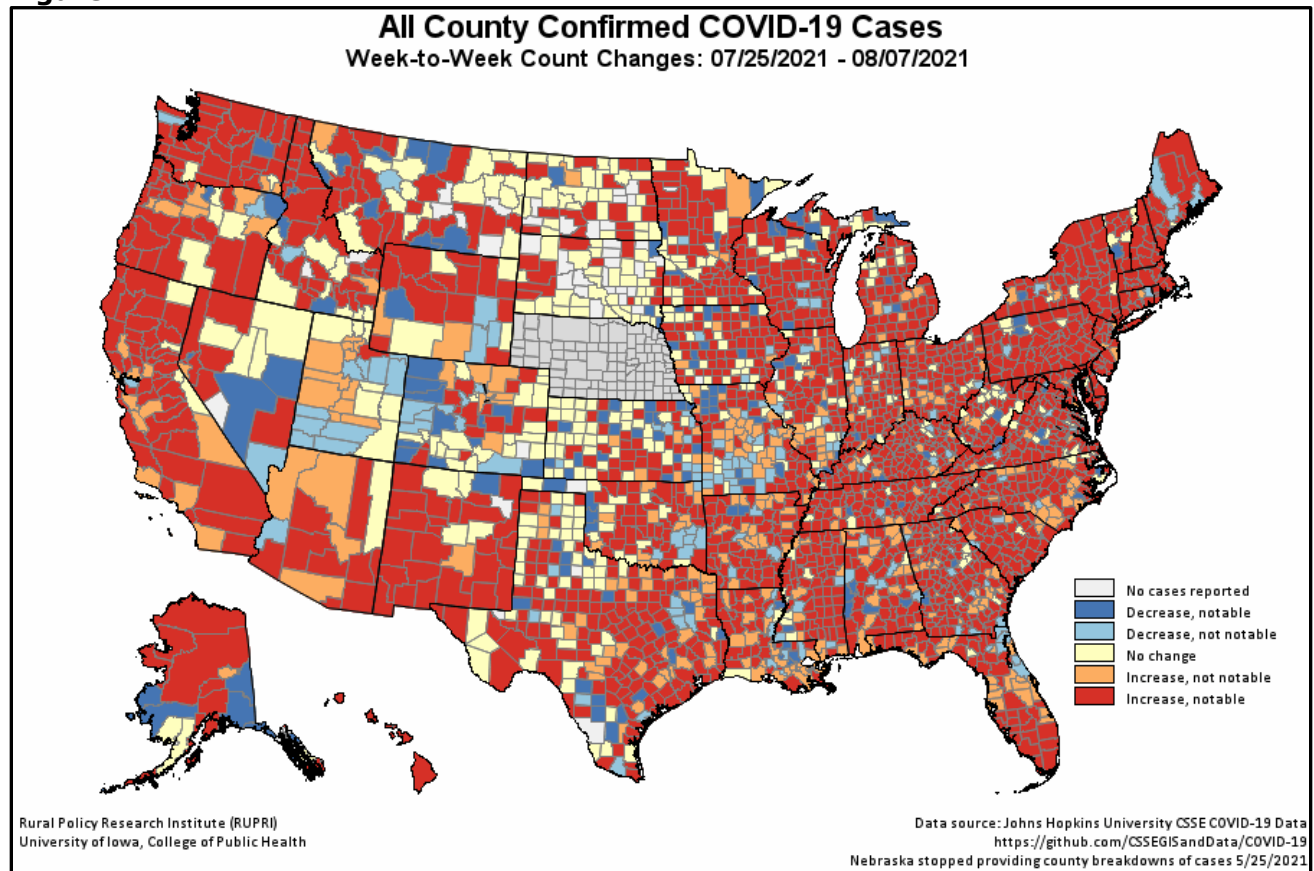


Figure 2.

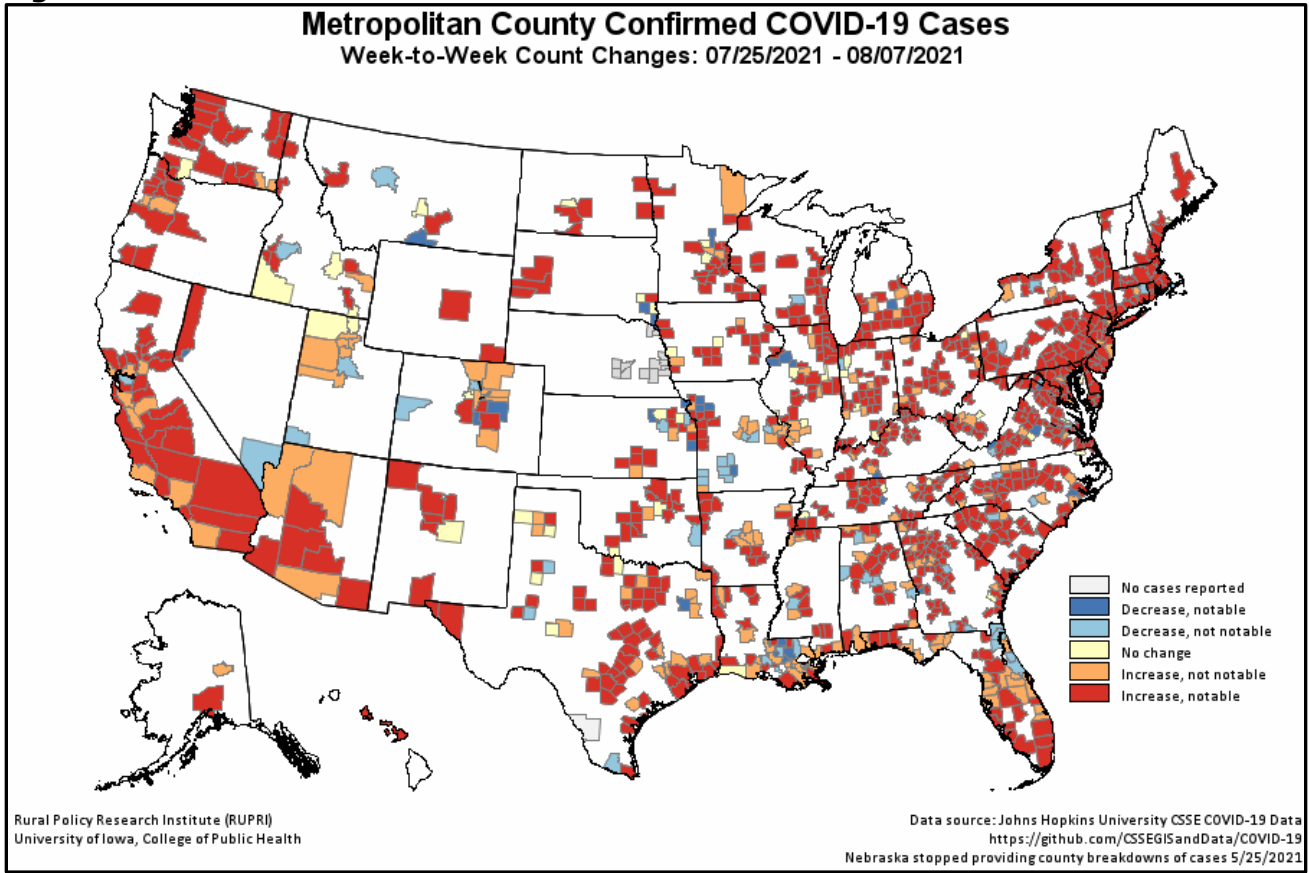


Figure 3.

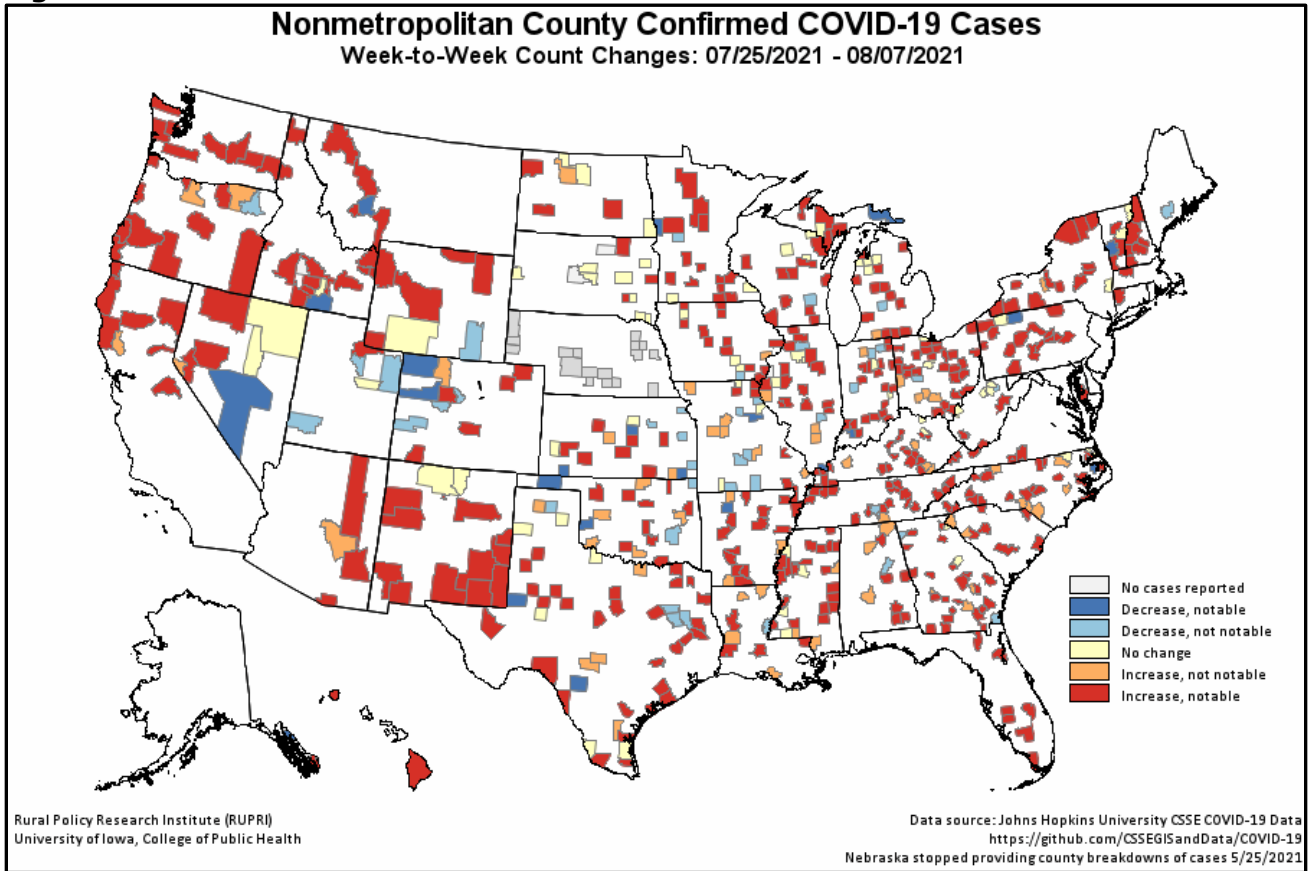
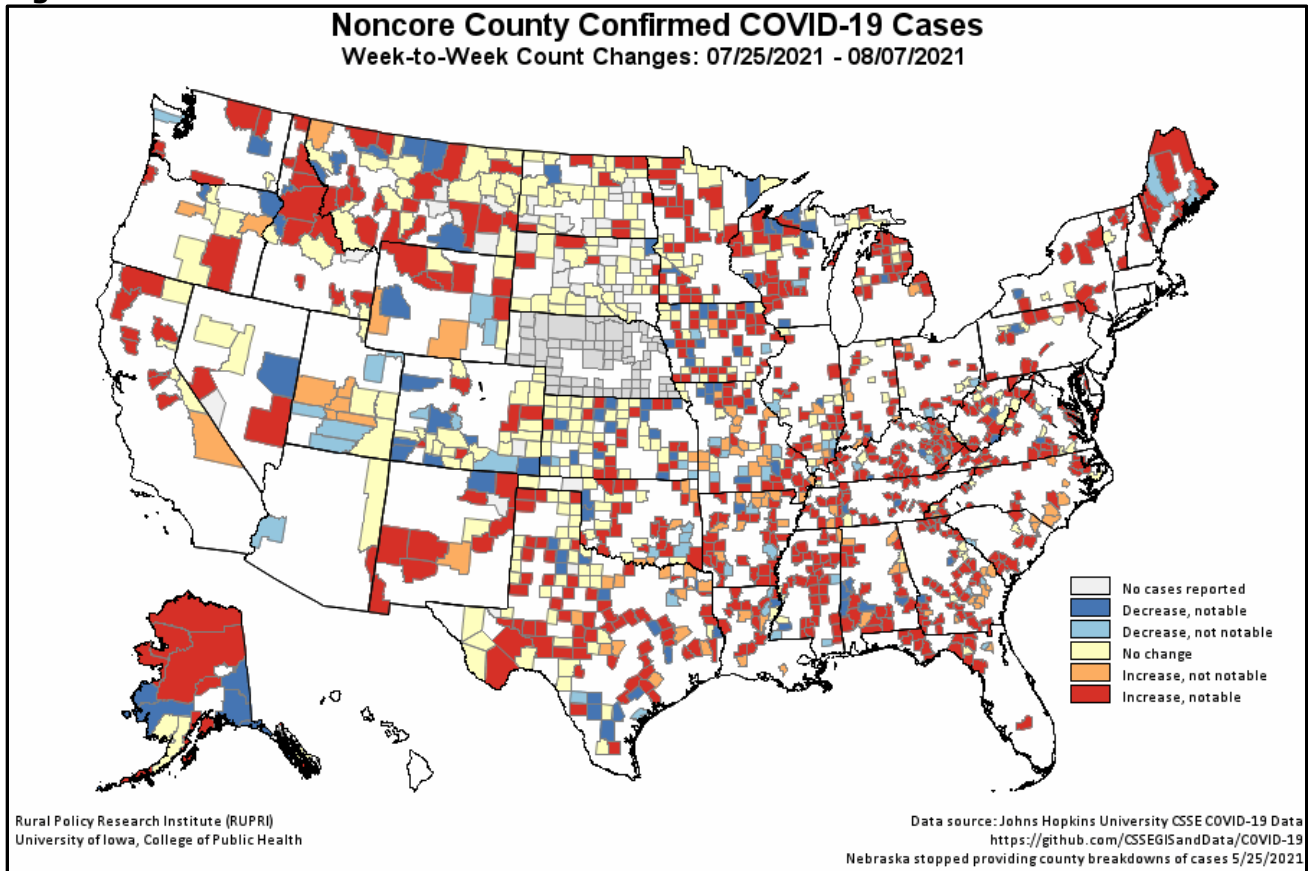


Figure 4.



¹ COVID-19 case and death data for this ongoing report were previously obtained from [USAFacts.org](https://usafacts.org). Reports after 8/15/2020 use data from the [COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering \(CSSE\) at Johns Hopkins University](https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19). While both sources employ similar approaches and resources to produce their data, the Johns Hopkins data is released in a more timely fashion making it more suitable for use in these reports.

Additional changes were made to the report starting 4/26/2021 to better account for the Utah practice of providing aggregated incidence and mortality data for less populous counties.

Nebraska stopped reporting county-level case and mortality data on 5/25/2021. Therefore, total cases/deaths for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counts are undercounts.

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (2019). "Urban Influence Codes." Retrieved May 20, 2020 from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/urban-influence-codes/>.