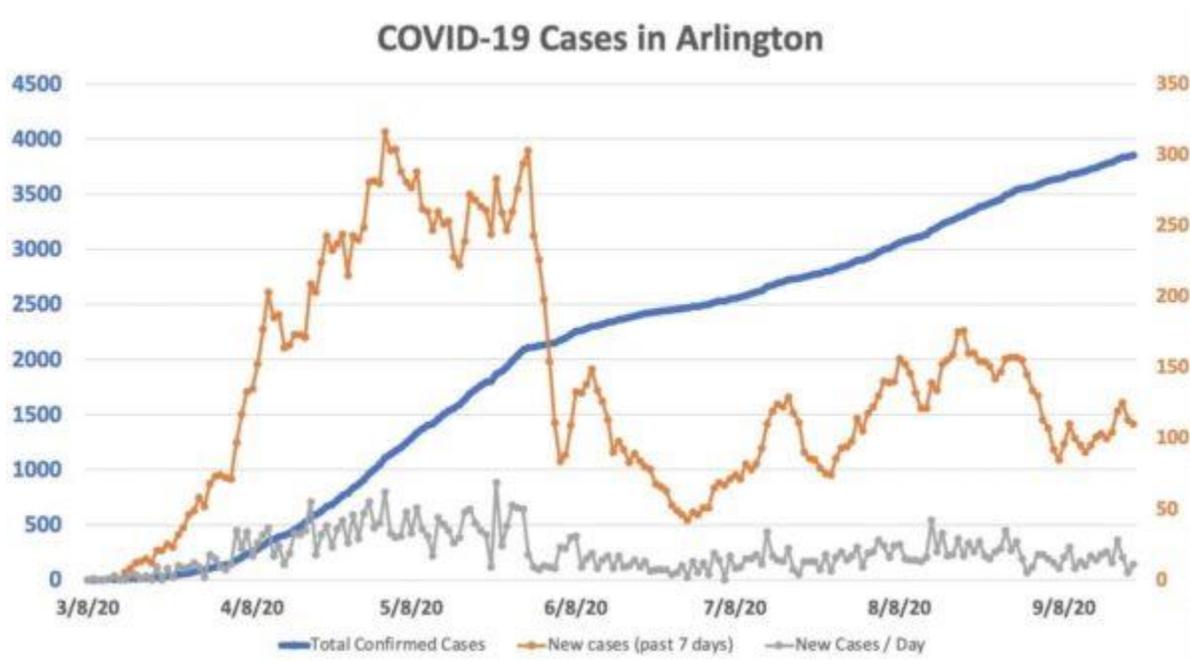


As Flu Season Approaches, New COVID-19 Cases Continue to Fluctuate

ARLNow September 21, 2020



Arlington County has seen three consecutive days of coronavirus cases below the seven-day moving average.

The relative reduction in cases over the weekend is welcome news, but the county is — like much of the rest of the country — continuing to see a baseline of new cases as colder weather and the flu season approach.

The seven-day moving average of new daily cases currently stands at 15.7, and has remained within a range of 12 to 21 since the beginning of the month.

As of Monday morning, Arlington had recorded 32 new cases, one new COVID-related death and two new hospitalizations since Friday, according to Virginia Dept. of Health data. The cumulative totals for all three currently stand at 3,851 cases, 493 hospitalizations and 147 deaths.

The case fatality rate — the percentage of deaths compared to reported cases — has continued to fall over the past couple of months, and is currently 3.8%. Arlington’s test positivity rate is also currently 3.8%.

Virginia Hospital Center ER chief Mike Silverman, in a weekly update [posted to social media](#), said on Friday that healthcare providers have been getting better at treating COVID patients since the start of the pandemic, using steroids, the antiviral drug Remdesivir, and other treatments and techniques to bring down the death rate — though there’s no silver bullet yet.

He said that the hospital has seen other positive trends lately.

Masks and social distancing remain our best strategies and I think we're seeing the benefits. Our overall hospital positivity rate continues to trend down. In the [Emergency Department], we're definitely see less COVID than a month ago. We have less symptomatic patients presenting to the ED week over week for about a month and their test positivity rate continues to trend down. Our overall testing rate in the ED is also trending down. We also have less hospitalized COVID patients than we've had in the recent past. All of these metrics are good news for today, though we continue to plan for whatever COVID and the flu bring us later this fall and winter.

Silverman continued to urge people to get flu shots, though there's some hope that the fast-approaching flu season might not be as bad as once feared.

Flu season is just around the corner. If you haven't already gotten your flu shot yet, please do so over the next couple of weeks. We always look to the Southern Hemisphere to see what their flu season is like since theirs precedes ours. The good news is that flu appeared mild in many countries that we track. This is most certainly related to mask wearing and having a flu season that occurred during times of significant social distancing. I'm relatively optimistic that mask wearing and social distancing will reduce flu transmission this year. On the other hand, if kids return to school and increase their social activities, and people become complacent with masks and social distancing, we could have a bad winter.