Barry-Eaton District Health Department

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Positivity Rate Explained

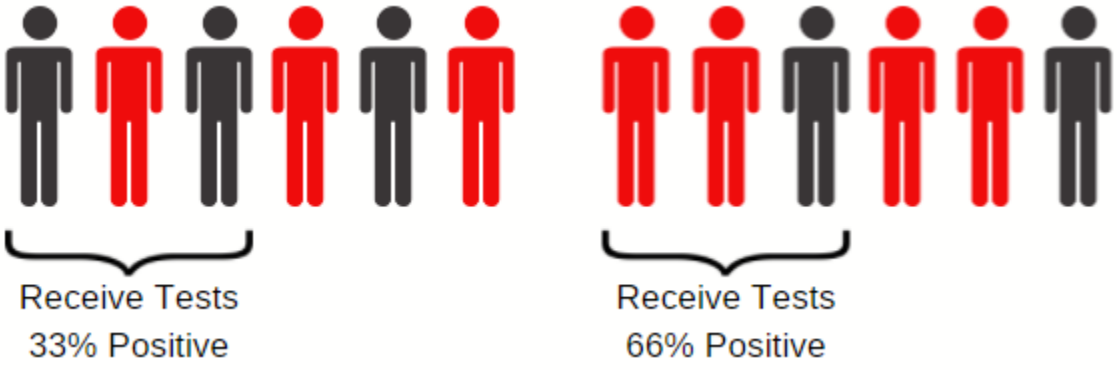
The use of data is very important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Different kinds of data can tell us different types of information about the pandemic. Some examples are:

- Number of total cases in the community
- Proportion (or rate) of cases per million people so one community can be compared to another
- Number of new cases per day
- Number of deaths
- **Positivity rate**
- Average number of close contacts of COVID-19 positive cases

These types of data are calculated in different ways and tell us different things. It's important to view these data points in context to best understand what they are telling us about the status of the pandemic in our counties.

Positivity Rate (or Percent Positive) is a useful measure of how much COVID-19 is spreading in a community. Positivity rate tells us the percent of **COVID-19 tests** that come back as positive out of all the tests that were taken in that time period. Positivity rate **does not** tell us how many people in the community are, or have been, sick with COVID-19, case rates or case numbers are a better reflection of that.

Not everyone in the community gets tested. This means that the number of total cases in the community that BEDHD knows about is **likely to be lower than reality**. When the positivity rate of COVID-19 tests increases, it can mean that more virus is spreading in the community. **If the number of people tested stays the same, but the percent positive increases, there is more virus in the community.**

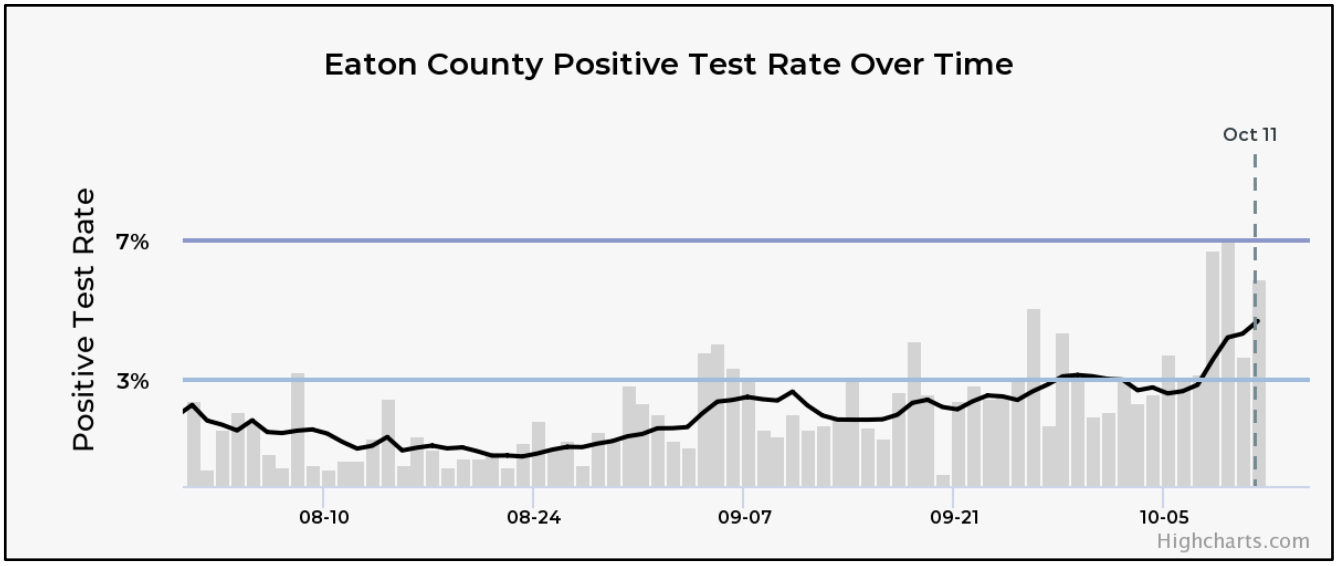


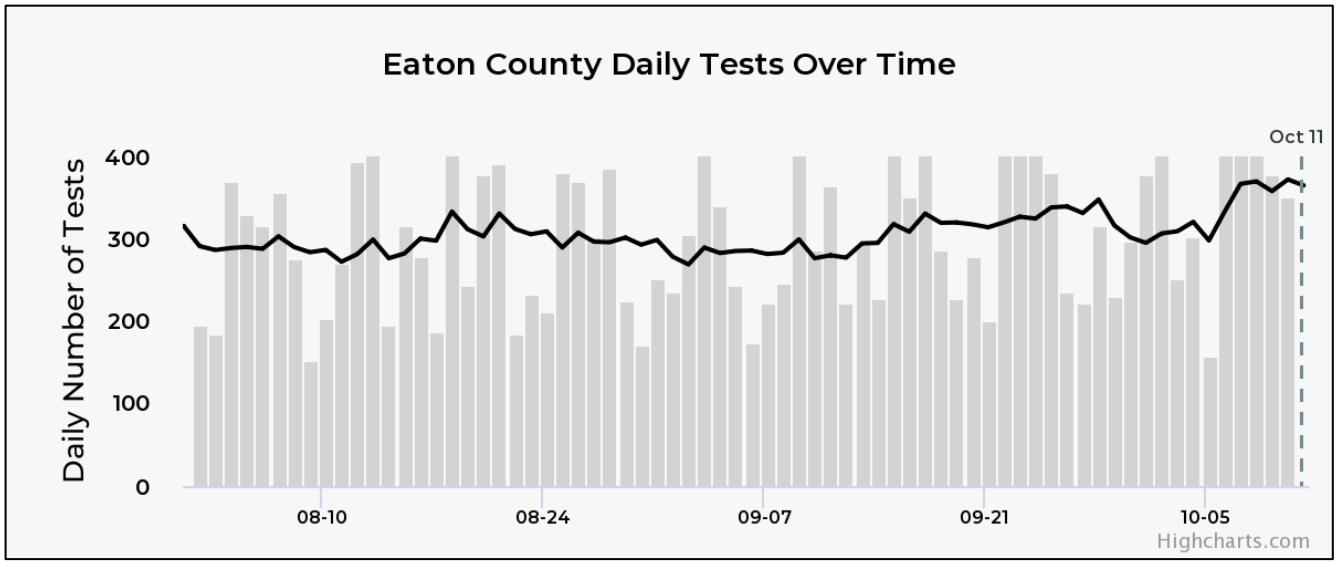
Note: These examples are for illustrative purposes only. People in **RED** are positive for COVID-19.

Positivity rate may change depending on the **number of people tested**. If the same number or an increasing number of people are tested, we are even more confident that an increase in positivity rate is concerning. We are also often asked the difference between a case and a positive test result. Each time a test is performed, it becomes part of the calculation of positivity rate for that day. However, positive cases represent individual people, and are only counted once, regardless of how many positive tests are run.

Eaton County Positivity Rate and Number of Tests

Source: MI Start Map

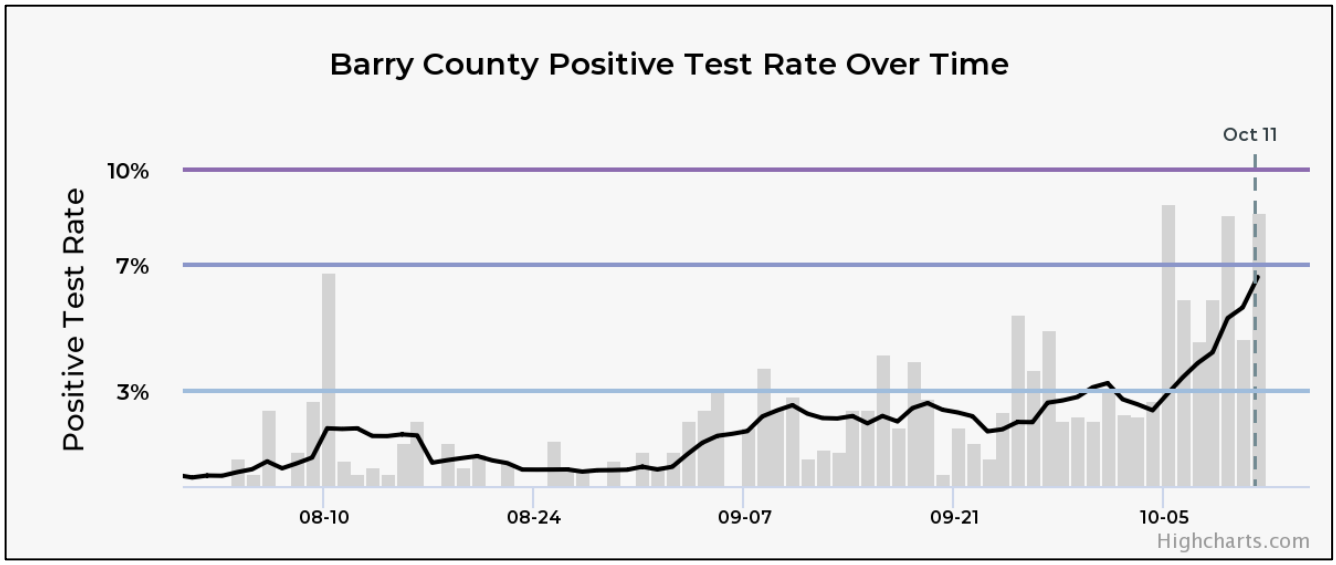


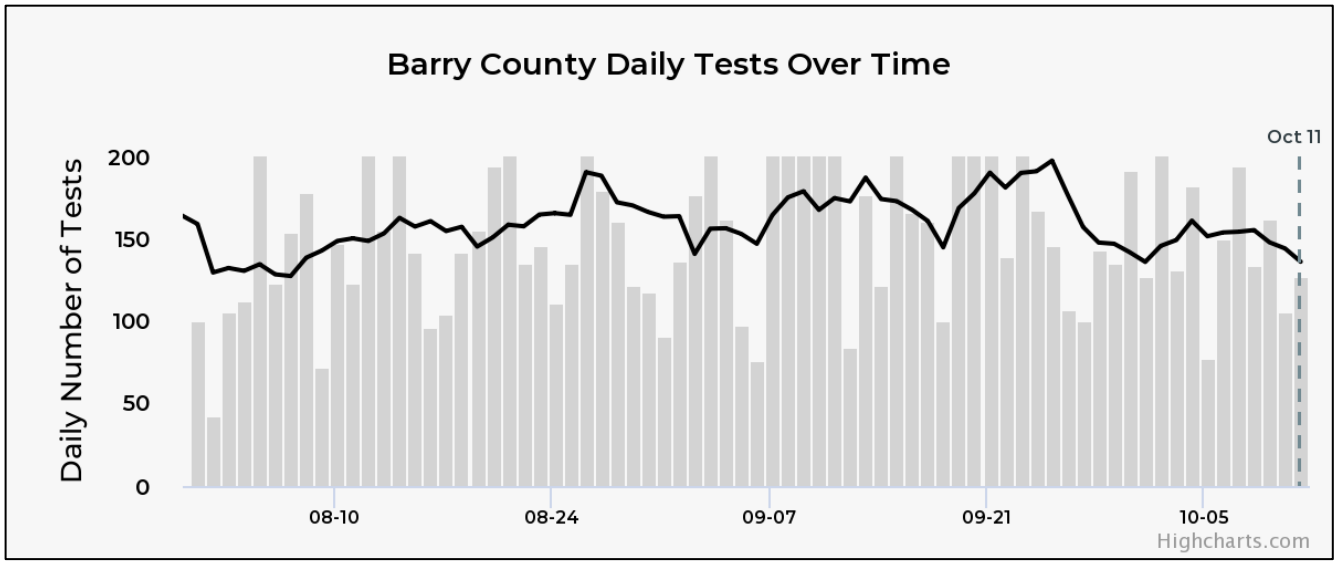


The number of tests in Eaton County has stayed very consistent since August 1st, but the positivity rate has somewhat increased. This suggests there is more COVID-19 circulating in Eaton County now than there was last month. As of October 11th, the positivity rate is 4.7% and the average number of daily tests is 364.9 for this period.

Barry County Positivity Rate and Number of Tests

Source: MI Start Map





The number of tests in Barry County has stayed fairly consistent (no upward or downward trend) since August 1st, but the positivity rate has sharply increased. This suggests there is much more COVID-19 circulating in Barry County now than there was last month. As of October 11th, the positivity rate is 6.6% and the average number of daily tests is 136.1 for this period.