PMC U.S. COVID-19 Report for January 5, 2026. pmc19.com/data

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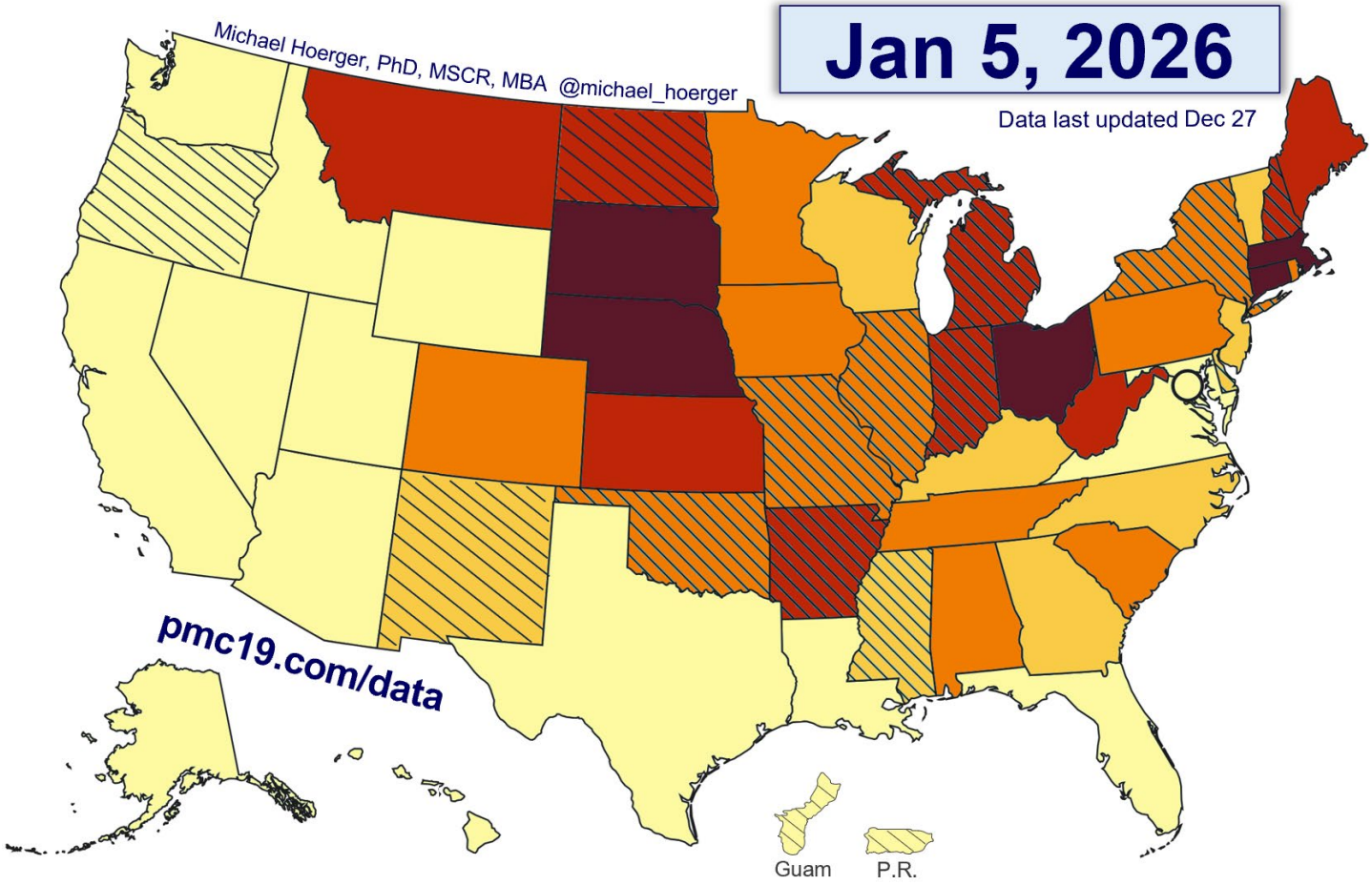

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Announcements

News

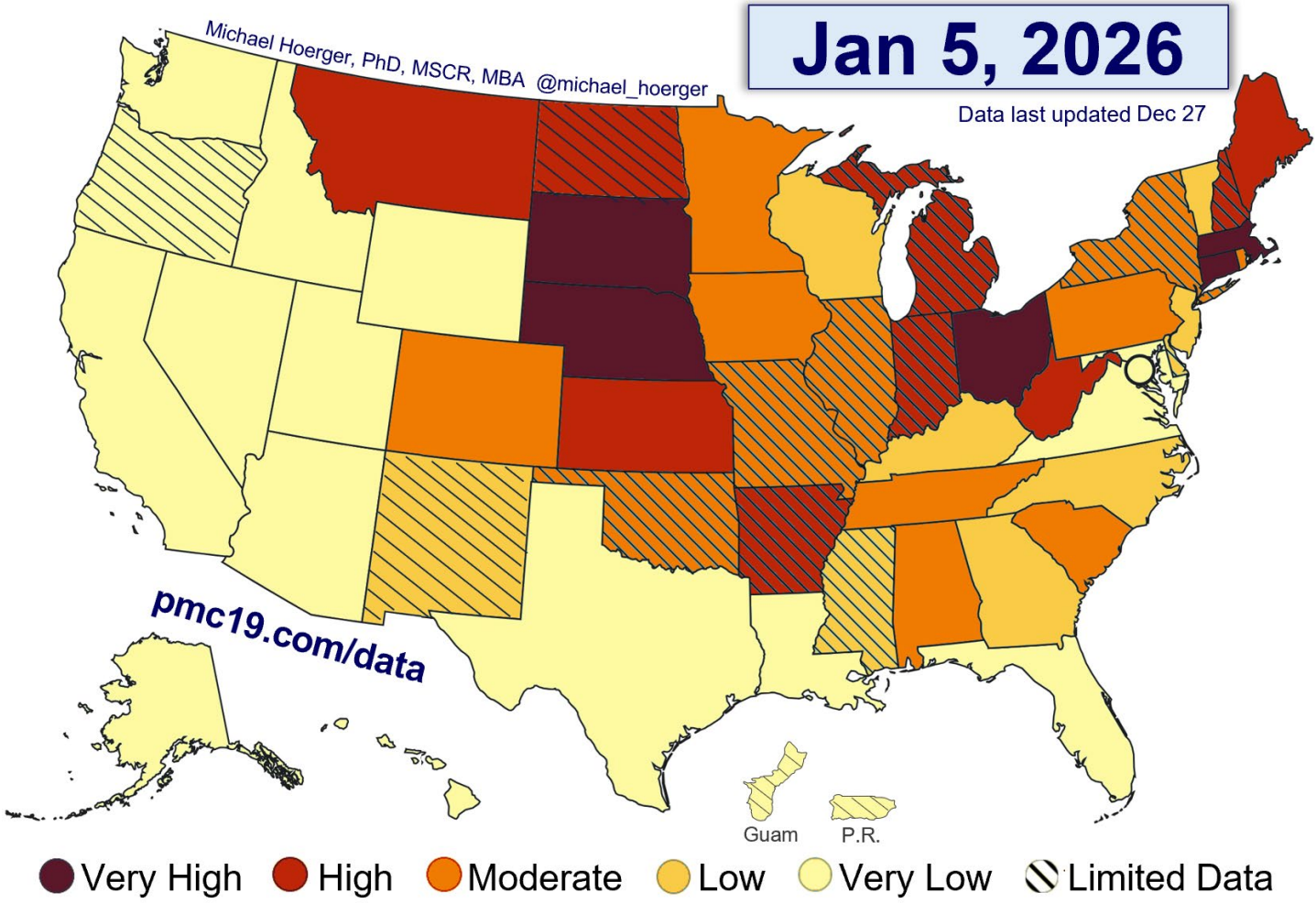
- **We've launched "Wave 2" of our Dashboard Survey.** If you have not completed it in 2026, please do so! We ran an earlier version last winter (2024-25). The survey allows us to 1) document the precautions people continue to use, 2) gain feedback to improve the dashboard, 3) and gain feedback to guide future research grant submissions to gain PPE funding for people with cancer, other serious conditions, or need and build knowledge to improve real-world public health. We will hold a community town hall, likely on Wednesday, March 11 (the 6th anniversary of the pandemic onset) to discuss the key findings. Please share the survey with anyone who uses the PMC dashboard via the website or informally through social media graphics. Link: https://tinyurl.com/pmc2026

- Career scientists at the CDC published an article this week in JAMA Internal Medicine noting the U.S. has experienced >100,000 direct deaths from COVID-19 each of the past two years, far higher than those recorded on death certificates. When factoring in excess deaths, as we and Swiss Re do, the figures are still higher. Nonetheless, breaking the 100,000 threshold, and the stability of the estimate over two years, should give pause. This is comparable to adding two deadly cancers to the population.

Data Quality

- The CDC (80% model weight) and Biobot (20% model weight) both reported this week, just late due to the holidays. About 1/3 of the states in the CDC data have missing or low-quality data due to the holidays. This makes estimates of the wave peak and forecasting particularly rocky. The wave peak has been corrected downward, but you may see the estimate rebound next week as better data come in.

COVID-19 Heat Map, Based on CDC Wastewater Data and Levels (U.S.)



The 12th COVID wave in the U.S. is peaking or may have peaked as early as December 27. Notice that 1/3 of the states and regions have poor data quality. The Midwest and Northeast have the highest transmission overall.

COVID-19 State Prevalence Estimates

pmc19.com/data

Jan 5, 2026

State	CDC Level	PMC Estimate, % Actively Infectious	Chances anyone is infectious in a room of 10 to 100 people			
			10	25	50	100
Alabama	Moderate	1 in 48 (2.1%)	19%	41%	65%	88%
Alaska	Very Low	1 in 152 (0.7%)	6%	15%	28%	48%
Arizona (1 week lag)	Very Low	1 in 201 (0.5%)	5%	12%	22%	39%
Arkansas	**High***	1 in 36 (2.8%)	25%	51%	76%	94%
California	Very Low	1 in 484 (0.2%)	2%	5%	10%	19%
Colorado	Moderate	1 in 49 (2.0%)	19%	40%	64%	87%
Connecticut	**Very High**	1 in 24 (4.2%)	35%	66%	88%	99%
Delaware	Low*	1 in 70 (1.4%)	13%	30%	51%	76%
District of Columbia	Very Low	1 in 5,835 (0.0%)	0%	0%	1%	2%
Florida	Very Low	1 in 284 (0.4%)	3%	8%	16%	30%
Georgia	Low	1 in 90 (1.1%)	11%	24%	43%	67%
Guam	Very Low	1 in 687 (0.1%)	1%	4%	7%	14%
Hawaii	Very Low	1 in 874 (0.1%)	1%	3%	6%	11%
Idaho	Very Low	1 in 169 (0.6%)	6%	14%	26%	45%
Illinois	Moderate*	1 in 56 (1.8%)	17%	36%	60%	84%
Indiana	**High***	1 in 34 (2.9%)	26%	52%	77%	95%
Iowa	Moderate	1 in 41 (2.4%)	22%	46%	71%	91%
Kansas	**High**	1 in 31 (3.2%)	28%	55%	80%	96%
Kentucky	Low	1 in 90 (1.1%)	11%	24%	43%	67%
Louisiana	Very Low	1 in 116 (0.9%)	8%	19%	35%	58%
Maine	**High**	1 in 38 (2.6%)	23%	49%	74%	93%
Maryland	Very Low	1 in 132 (0.8%)	7%	17%	32%	53%
Massachusetts	**Very High**	1 in 26 (3.8%)	32%	62%	86%	98%
Michigan	**High***	1 in 39 (2.5%)	23%	47%	72%	92%
Minnesota	Moderate	1 in 56 (1.8%)	16%	36%	59%	83%
Mississippi	Low*	1 in 76 (1.3%)	12%	28%	48%	73%

* Limited data reporting

Data last updated Dec 27

Note that Arizona did not report data this week, and several states have low data quality.

COVID-19 State Prevalence Estimates

pmc19.com/data

Jan 5, 2026

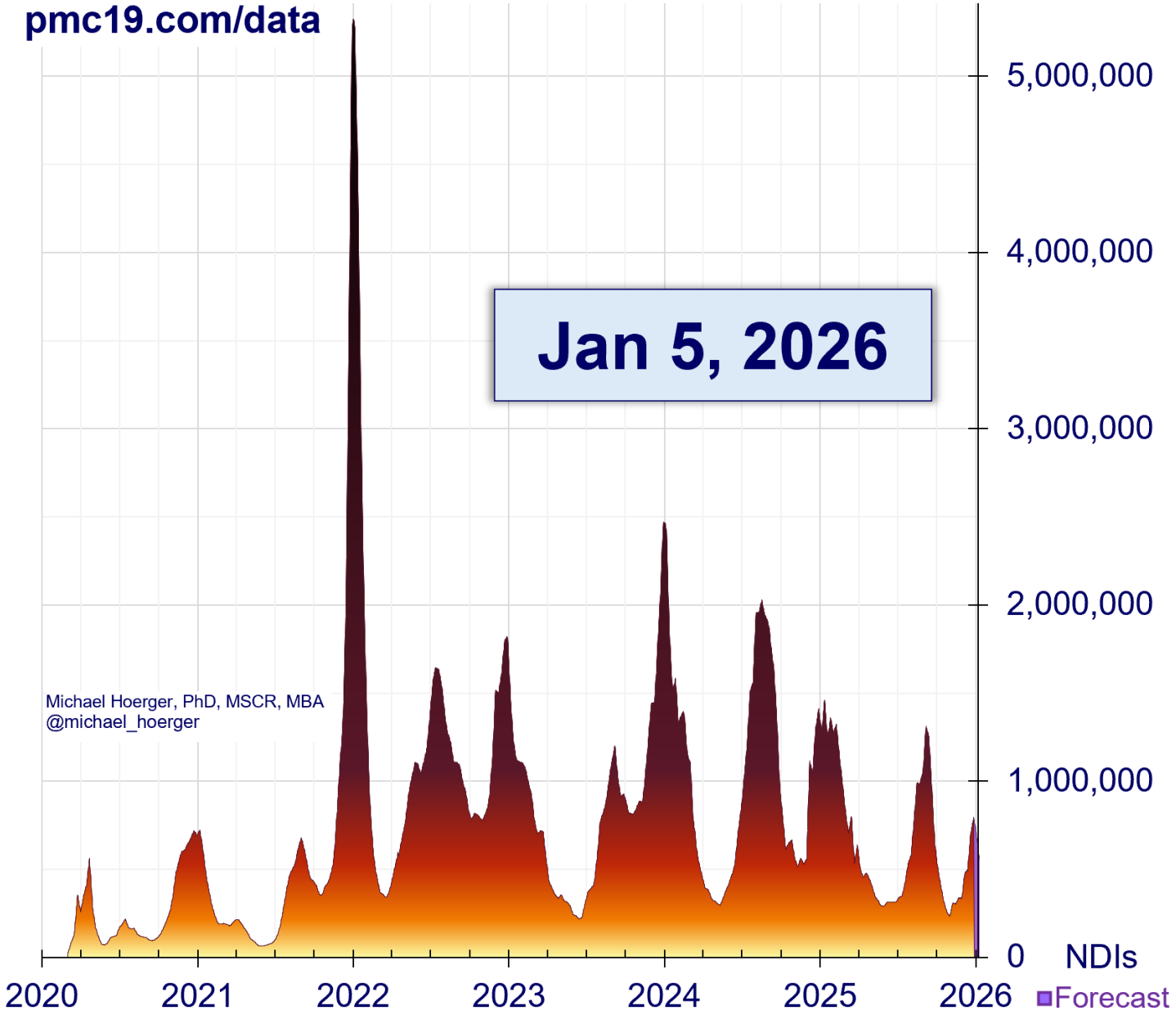
State	CDC Level	PMC Estimate, % Actively Infectious	Chances anyone is infectious in a room of 10 to 100 people			
			10	25	50	100
Missouri	Moderate*	1 in 42 (2.4%)	21%	45%	70%	91%
Montana	**High**	1 in 34 (2.9%)	26%	52%	77%	95%
Nebraska	**Very High**	1 in 26 (3.9%)	33%	63%	86%	98%
Nevada	Very Low	1 in 138 (0.7%)	7%	17%	31%	52%
New Hampshire	**High***	1 in 35 (2.9%)	25%	51%	76%	94%
New Jersey	Low	1 in 82 (1.2%)	12%	26%	46%	71%
New Mexico	Low	1 in 87 (1.2%)	11%	25%	44%	69%
New York	Moderate*	1 in 44 (2.3%)	20%	43%	68%	90%
North Carolina	Low	1 in 82 (1.2%)	12%	27%	46%	71%
North Dakota	**High***	1 in 34 (3.0%)	26%	53%	78%	95%
Ohio	**Very High**	1 in 27 (3.7%)	31%	61%	85%	98%
Oklahoma	Moderate*	1 in 62 (1.6%)	15%	34%	56%	81%
Oregon (1 week lag)	Very Low	1 in 170 (0.6%)	6%	14%	26%	45%
Pennsylvania	Moderate	1 in 44 (2.3%)	21%	44%	68%	90%
Rhode Island	Moderate	1 in 41 (2.4%)	22%	46%	71%	92%
South Carolina	Moderate	1 in 54 (1.9%)	17%	37%	61%	85%
South Dakota	**Very High**	1 in 24 (4.2%)	35%	66%	88%	99%
Tennessee	Moderate	1 in 62 (1.6%)	15%	33%	56%	80%
Texas	Very Low	1 in 152 (0.7%)	6%	15%	28%	48%
Utah	Very Low	1 in 141 (0.7%)	7%	16%	30%	51%
Vermont	Low	1 in 75 (1.3%)	13%	28%	49%	74%
Virginia	Very Low	1 in 215 (0.5%)	5%	11%	21%	37%
Washington	Very Low	1 in 254 (0.4%)	4%	9%	18%	33%
West Virginia	**High**	1 in 35 (2.9%)	25%	52%	77%	95%
Wisconsin	Low	1 in 81 (1.2%)	12%	27%	46%	71%
Wyoming	Very Low	1 in 498 (0.2%)	2%	5%	10%	18%

* Limited reporting; ND has no data, averages MN, MT, & SD

Data last updated Dec 27

Note that while Puerto Rico provides qualitative estimates, useful for the heat map, quantitative levels do not appear to be reported publicly. Oregon did not report this week. Several other states have poor data quality, including New York.

SARS-CoV-2 New Daily Infections, Wastewater-Derived Estimates (U.S.)



The U.S. is in the middle of a 12th COVID wave. This week's data suggest the wave peaked on December 27 (still) but at a lower than anticipated height of 800,000 new daily infections. We may see this value rebound or shift toward a later peak date as higher quality holiday data come in.

National COVID-19 Estimates (U.S.)

Jan 5, 2026 **pmc19.com/data**

Infections

Proportion Actively Infectious	1 in 65 (1.5%)
New Daily Infections	749,000
Infections the Past Week	5,390,000
Infections in 2026	3,000,000
Cumulative Infections per Person	4.88

Long COVID

Long COVID Cases Resulting from New Daily Infections	37,000 to 150,000
Long COVID Cases Resulting from New Weekly Infections	270,000 to 1,080,000

Excess Deaths

Excess Deaths Resulting from New Daily Infections	220 to 370
Excess Deaths Resulting from New Weekly Infections	1,600 to 2,700

Not shown here, we estimate that there were 239 million SARS-CoV-2 infections in the U.S. in 2025. The estimate will change over time as data sources recalibrate their own wastewater level estimates.

National COVID-19 Risk Table (U.S.)

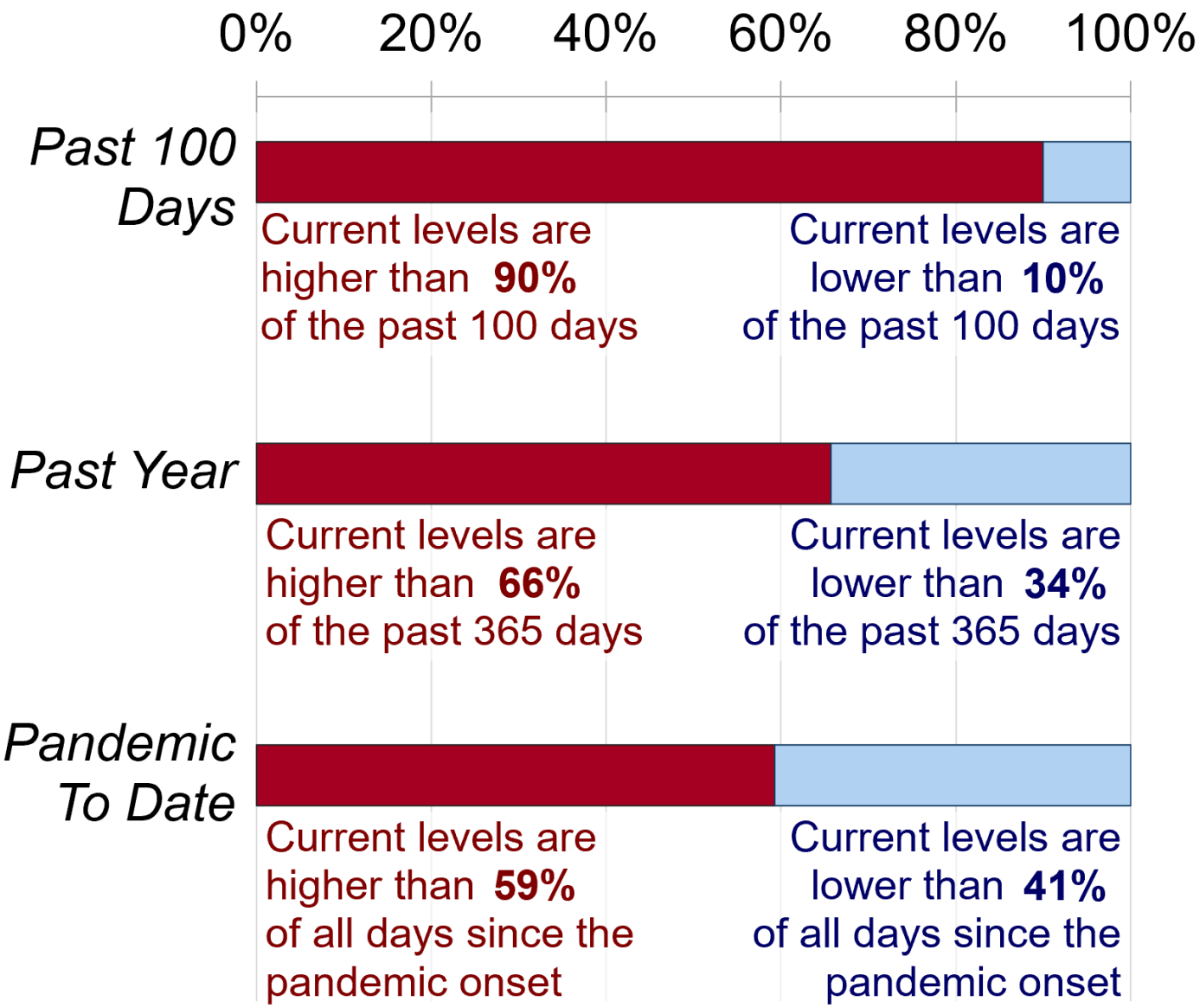
Jan 5, 2026 **pmc19.com/data**

Number of People	Chances Anyone is Infectious
1	1.5%
2	3.0%
3	4.5%
4	6.0%
5	7.4%
10	14.3%
15	20.7%
20	26.5%
25	32.0%
30	37.0%
50	53.8%
75	68.6%
100	78.6%
200	95.4%
300	99.0%

This national risk table indicates the probability of a SARS-CoV-2 exposure based on number of social interactions, if the individuals are of average national risk and not engaging in testing or isolation protocols. With 1 in 65 people (1.5%) estimated actively infectious, exposure risk remains high in group settings.

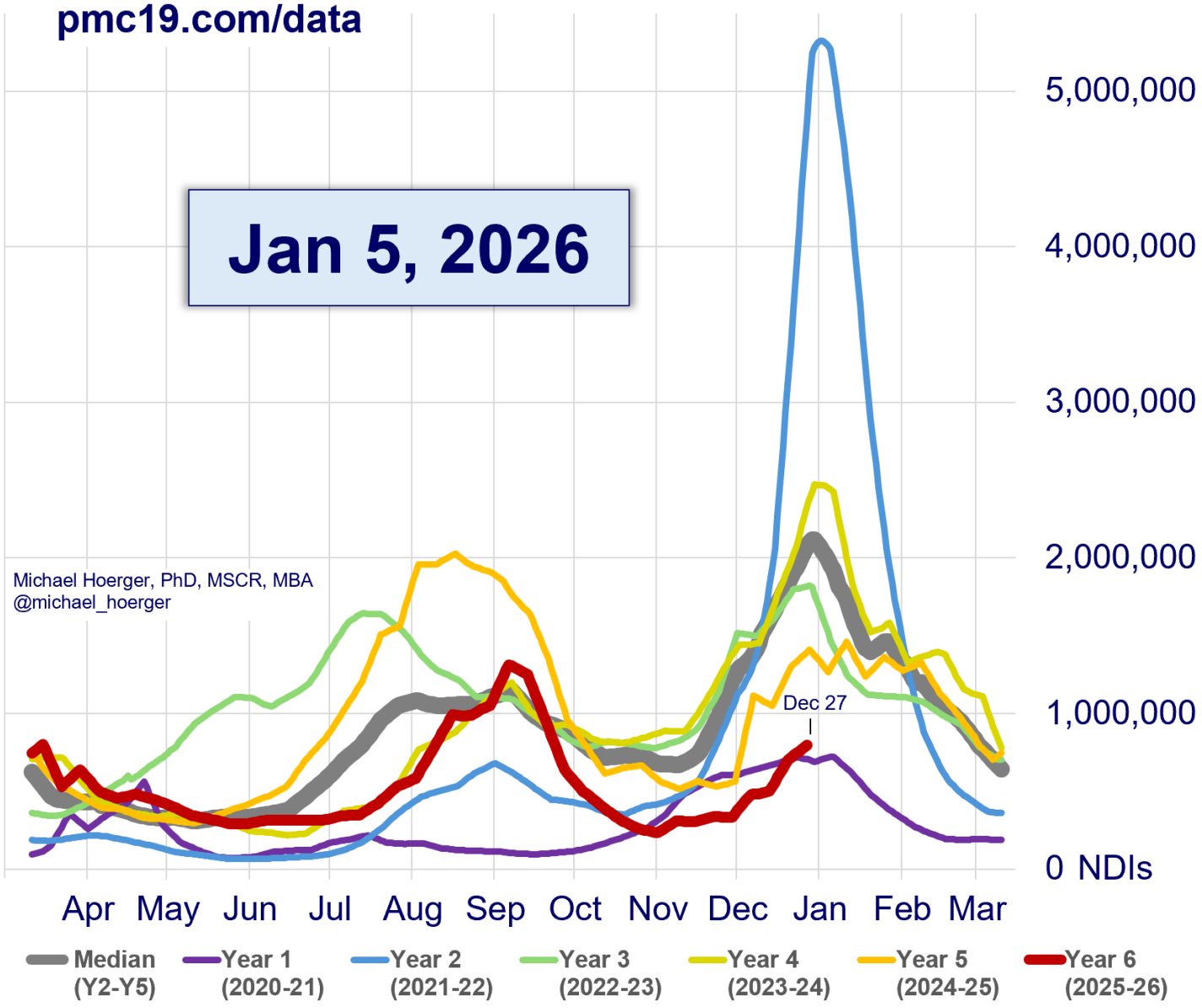
SARS-CoV-2 Relative Transmission "Barometer" (U.S.)

Jan 5, 2026 pmc19.com/data



These gauges show high relative transmission, particularly relative to the past few months and past year.

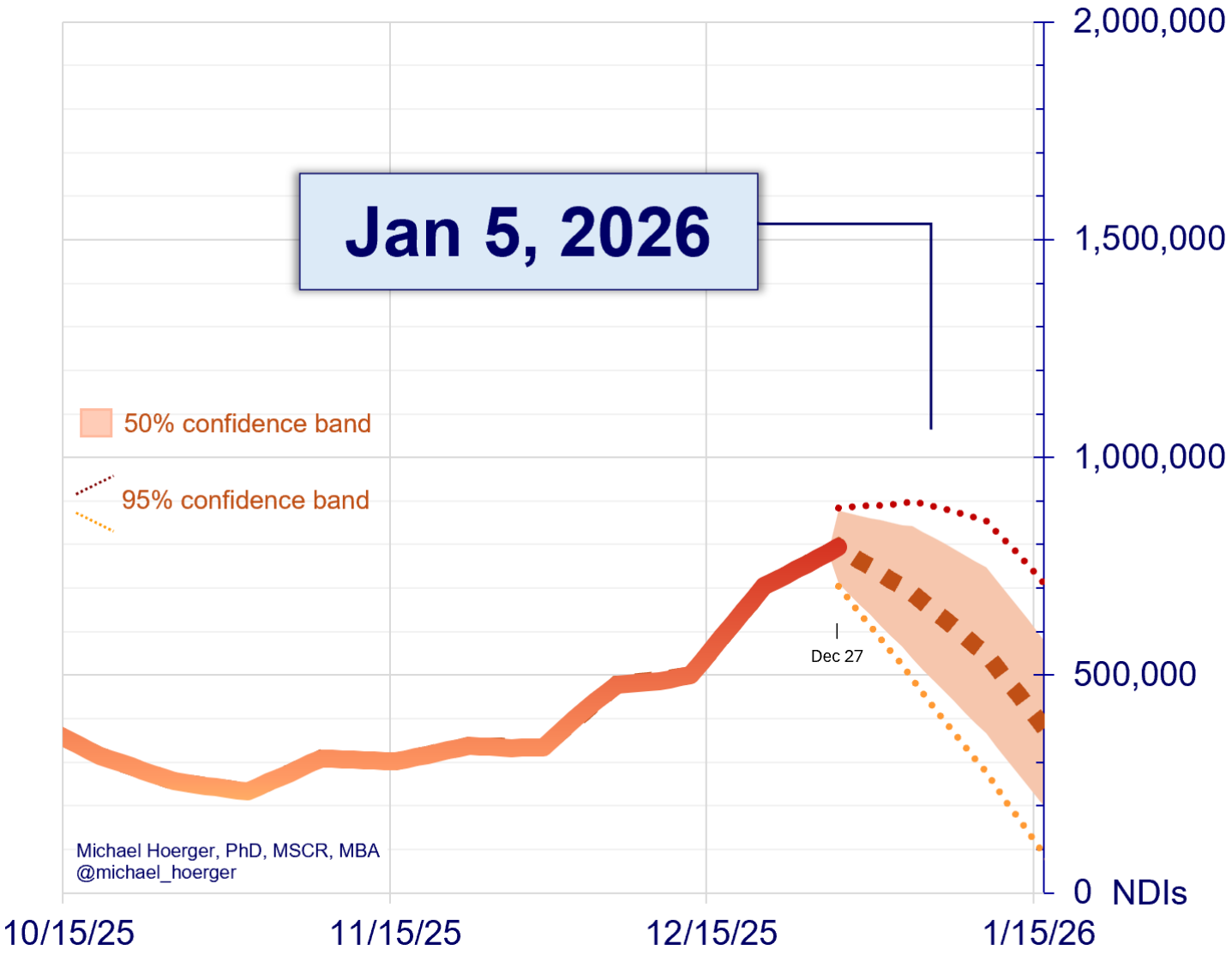
SARS-CoV-2 Year-Over-Year Estimates of Transmission (U.S.)



Transmission (red) looks very similar to last year's pattern, albeit at relatively lower levels. Notice that last year transmission remained near peak levels from mid-December to mid-February. This provides a helpful reminder to maintain precautions.

SARS-CoV-2 Transmission Forecast, Wastewater-Derived Estimates (U.S.)

pmc19.com/data



The central forecast suggests that transmission may decline quickly. However, the forecast may be over-optimistic if transmission looks more like last year and less like prior years. Consider the upper bound (red dotted line) or high percolating transmission as possibilities. Confidence intervals are worse than depicted due to low data quality.

A separate document called a Technical Appendix appears on the dashboard page and has more methodologic info. Search for key answers there first, and then send a public comment tagging Dr. H. on Twitter if further help is needed.