

## Developing the 2024 State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan

### Approach and Timeline

It is expected that the State Health Assessment (SHA) will be published by the end of 2024 and the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) by summer 2025. See below for further information about the timeline and key phases of the project.

#### **Planning (January – June 2023)**

The Department of Health hired a consultant, the Center for Behavioral Health Integration (C4BHI), to design and implement a community engagement process for the State Health Assessment. They will engage organizational partners serving the community and individuals with lived experience to understand and document the health and well-being of people in Vermont, including strengths, needs, and priorities for action.

The Department of Health also established a Steering Committee of 20 individuals who represent a cross-section of key sectors that influence health and reflect populations experiencing inequities. The Steering Committee refined the project workplan and crafted a vision and values to guide its work. Read more about Steering Committee responsibilities and membership below.

#### **Collect and analyze data (July 2023 – May 2024)**

C4BHI will review existing data, assessments, and reports (both quantitative and qualitative – the numbers and the voices of people with lived experience) to understand what is already known about the health and well-being of people in Vermont and to avoid duplicative data collection. Data sources will include, but are not limited to, hospital community health needs assessments, the Vermont Social Vulnerability Index, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the State Youth Advisory Group Health Equity Report, and reports of the Health Equity Advisory Commission. The review – also called an environmental scan – will focus on populations experiencing the greatest health inequities in Vermont: Vermonters of Color; Indigenous Vermonters; LGBTQ+ Vermonters; Vermonters with disabilities; unhoused Vermonters; and older Vermonters.

C4BHI will use the findings of this environmental scan to tailor community engagement efforts to fill gaps in understanding. They will conduct focus groups and interviews with individuals and community partners across the state to gain a fuller picture of the strengths and needs of people in Vermont.

### **Write the SHA (June – November 2024)**

The Department of Health, with support from the Steering Committee, will bring together findings from the environmental scan and community engagement process into a comprehensive narrative that summarizes the health and well-being of Vermont and of populations experiencing the greatest health inequities. The State Health Assessment will be shared for public comment before being finalized.

### **Develop the SHIP (June 2024 – May 2025)**

Based on the findings outlined in the State Health Assessment, the Steering Committee will identify the top 3-5 priorities to include in the State Health Improvement Plan. These are the priorities that various sectors and organizations in the state will focus on for the next five years.

Once priorities are selected, workgroups will be convened to develop strategies that outline what the state plans to do to address each priority, and indicators to track progress. The State Health Improvement Plan will be shared for public comment before being finalized.

### **Implement and monitor (June 2025 – onward)**

This is where the work really starts! Throughout the five-year period of the State Health Improvement Plan, there will be ongoing, collaborative efforts across various sectors and organizations to implement the strategies outlined in the SHIP. The Department of Health will also develop a data dashboard to monitor progress over time and share annual progress and performance updates with partners.

## [Applying a Health Equity Lens](#)

The Department of Health and the SHA/SHIP Steering Committee are committed to using an equity lens in both the process for developing the SHA/SHIP and in the final product. Some guiding questions that will inform the approach include:

- Why are different populations being impacted more than others?
- What are the systemic, root causes contributing to these inequities?
- Where is the power imbalance to maintain these inequities?
- What is our role in addressing these root causes beyond addressing the health conditions?
- Who has decision-making power and the authority to influence individuals and organizations?
- How are resources being allocated and distributed? And who decides?
- What assumptions or deeply held beliefs are influencing the way we think, how we talk and what we do to address inequities?

## Steering Committee

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide advice to an external consultant, who will lead a process for engaging the community in the project.
- Identify gaps in data to be collected (what we know and do not know about the health of Vermonters).
- Help to interpret and give context to qualitative and quantitative data.
- Prioritize health issues and indicators to include in the State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of workplans for the State Health Improvement Plan.

### Membership

Name	Organization
Sandi Hoffman	Department of Vermont Health Access
Jason Pelopida	Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living
Jacqueline Rose	Department of Corrections
Kheya Ganguly	Department of Mental Health
Abby Erwin	Department of Children and Families
Xusana Davis	Office of Racial Equity
Emma Harrigan	Vermont Association of Hospital and Health Systems
Mary Kate Mohlman	BiState Primary Care Association
Breena Holmes	Vermont Chapter of the AAP / Vermont Child Health Improvement Program
Matt Wolf	Vermont Afterschool
Yacouba Bogre	Association of Africans Living in Vermont
Amanda Rohdenburg	Outright Vermont
Ruby Baker	Community of Vermont Elders
Sophia Gawel	LISTEN Community Services
Sam Peisch	Vermont Legal Aid
Sarah Launderville	Vermont Center for Independent Living
Britaney Watson	Rights and Democracy
Weiwei Wang	Vermont Health Equity Initiative / Vermont Professionals of Color Network
Chief Don Stevens	Chief of the Nulhegan band
Jasper Lorien	Vermont Youth Council
Ruth Steinmetz	Health equity advocate