

The 2024 State Health Assessment is an overview of what we know about the health and well-being of people in Vermont. This data brief reflects findings about the health needs and experiences of all people statewide. It includes information from publicly available data and focus groups and interviews with community partners and individuals with lived expertise.

Key Findings

- **An aging population:** 34.8% of Vermonters are 55 years or older, compared to 29% in the US. This is the fastest growing age group in the state.
- **A changing population:** The number of Vermonters of color has doubled in the last 15 years.
- Problems with **housing, the high cost of living, and accessing medical and mental health/substance use services** are greater for Vermonters of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, older Vermonters, Indigenous Peoples, Vermonters with disabilities, and the unhoused community.

“I can't get into a counselor, there is no one is going to help me, so I am going to take a pill. I'm going to shoot up, I'm going to do whatever I got to do to get these bad thoughts out of my head. The help is just not there.”

- The rising cost of living has put many Vermonters in a **state of economic crisis**.
- **Even with insurance**, out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures further strain limited family incomes.
- In 2020, **26.1%** of calls to Vermont 2-1-1 were for housing, employment, or income support.
- **Homelessness rose by 197%** since 2020, and even more for people of color and Indigenous Peoples. There was also a 36% increase in homelessness for families with children from 2022-2023.

“Rent is rising and rising and rising, we're paying more for no changes in conditions of housing, right? It's just like an astronomical rise for no additional benefit.”

“It is not ok for someone with...leukemia to wait 4 months just to get in the door...some leukemias will be terminal in a shorter time than this.”

- **Healthcare provider shortages**, across the state, lead to long wait times for services. One-third of all Vermonters with long service wait times had **physical and psychological pain** and declines in overall health as a result.
- More than one-third of all Vermonters reported **anxiety** and **depression** symptoms in 2021. The growth in the **suicide** rate is among the fastest in the nation.

Increased rates of mortality in Vermont (per 100,000 residents)	VT	US
Coronary Heart Disease	101.3	91.5
Suicide	17.7	13.8
Unintentional Injury	59.7	50.4
Cancer	156.1	149.4

- Of the 6,000 Vermonters age 12-17 reporting depression symptoms in 2021, **41% did not get treatment**. 25% of all people who chose not to get mental health treatment did so because of **cost**.
- More Vermonters are turning to the **emergency room** for basic medical care and to their primary care doctors for help with social and economic needs, like finding safe, affordable housing and getting access to healthy foods.
- **Increasing substance use**: 22% of Vermonters ages 12 and older reported using cannabis in the last 30 days, compared to 12% nationally.
- Vermont saw a **10% increase** in opioid-related deaths from 2021-2022.
- Fewer and fewer Vermonters are going to the dentist, citing a lack of available providers.

“If you live in the more rural parts, you have to figure out how to get yourself there and if you cannot drive, do not have a vehicle, do not have a friend, good luck to you.”

References:

- [County Health Rankings](#), University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Resources include:
 - [VT Department of Health Population Health Surveys and Data](#)
 - [VT Agency of Education Data and Reporting](#)
 - [VT Cancer Registry](#)
 - [VT Crime Information Center](#)
 - [VT Department of Health Environmental Public Health Data Tracking](#)
 - [VT State Highway Safety Office](#)
 - [VT Vaccination coverage](#)
- [CARES database](#), University of Missouri. Data compilation is from many sources, including but not limited to:
 - US Census Bureau
 - American Community Survey (ACS)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS 2021\)](#)
- [Health Equity for Abenaki Indigenous People: Improving Access to Quality Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#) by Maria Mercedes Avila, Christine Begay Vining, Joshua Allison-Burbank, and Christine Velez
- [2022 Vermont Point in Time Report of People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Climate and Health. Infectious diseases.](#) VT Department of Health
- VT Legislative Joint Fiscal Office Issue Brief: [Vermont's population estimates by age group: 2021 compared with 2010](#)
- [VT Department of Mental Health Vision 2030](#)
- [Fatal Overdoses in Vermonters by Age and Circumstance](#), VT Department of Health
- [Health Center Program Uniform Data System \(UDS\) Data](#)
- [COVID Conversations: Preliminary Findings & Recommendations](#), REJOICE Project, Dec 2020
- [Policy Recommendations of Vermont's State Advisory Council Network](#)
- [VT Cancer Data Pages](#), VT Department of Health, February 2023
- [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)
- [3>4>50 Vermont](#). VT Department of Health