

Health Care Workforce Census Dental Hygienists, 2021

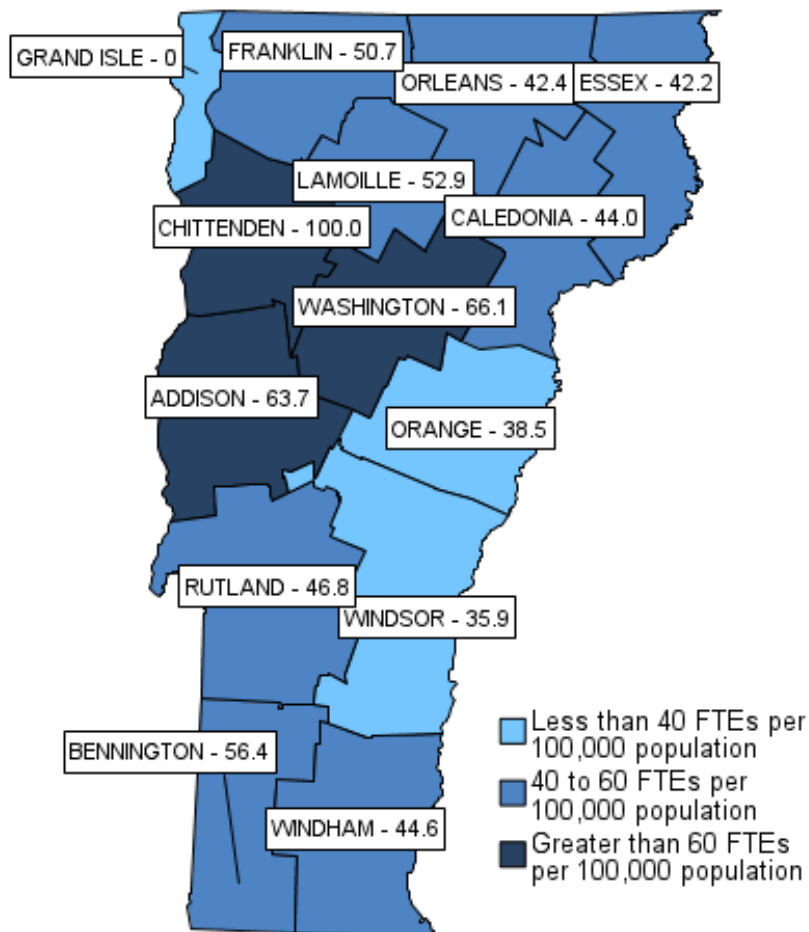
Revised June 2024

Overview

This dental hygienist census is part of the Vermont Department of Health's healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time. Vermont dental hygienists are relicensed every two years. Data for this report were obtained during the September 2021 relicensing period and represent a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Dental hygienists, working under the general supervision of a licensed dentist, provide screening procedures, teeth cleaning and other dental care, and oral health education to their patients.

Hygienist FTEs per 100,000 population by county



In Brief

Workforce

Census period – September 2021
 Response Rate: 99.8%
 Licenses renewed: 623
 Active in VT: 550
 Full-time Equivalents (FTEs): 402.4

Demographics

% Female: 97.6%
 Median Age: 45
 % 60 or older: 14.4%

Education and Training

% associate degree: 81.1%
 % bachelor's degree or higher: 18.9%
 % educated in VT: 70.1%
 % educated in Northeast: 96.4%

Current Employment

Working in a dental office: 85.1%
 Full-time hours at one site: 9.1%
 Full-time hours at all sites: 12.0%
 Working at multiple sites: 10.5%
 Plans to reduce hours: 6.7%
 Plans to retire or stop working in VT as hygienist: 1.8%

Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)
 Highest: 100.0, Chittenden County
 Lowest: 0, Grand Isle County

Trends in Statewide FTEs

2015: 398.2
 2017: 415.1
 2019: 414.1
 2021: 402.4

Workforce

- 623 hygienists renewed their licenses during the surveyed period and 622 completed the workforce census for a response rate of 99.8%.
- 20.8% (15/72) of hygienists that are not currently providing care in Vermont indicated they planned to do so within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 550 active hygienists who reported providing direct patient care in Vermont.

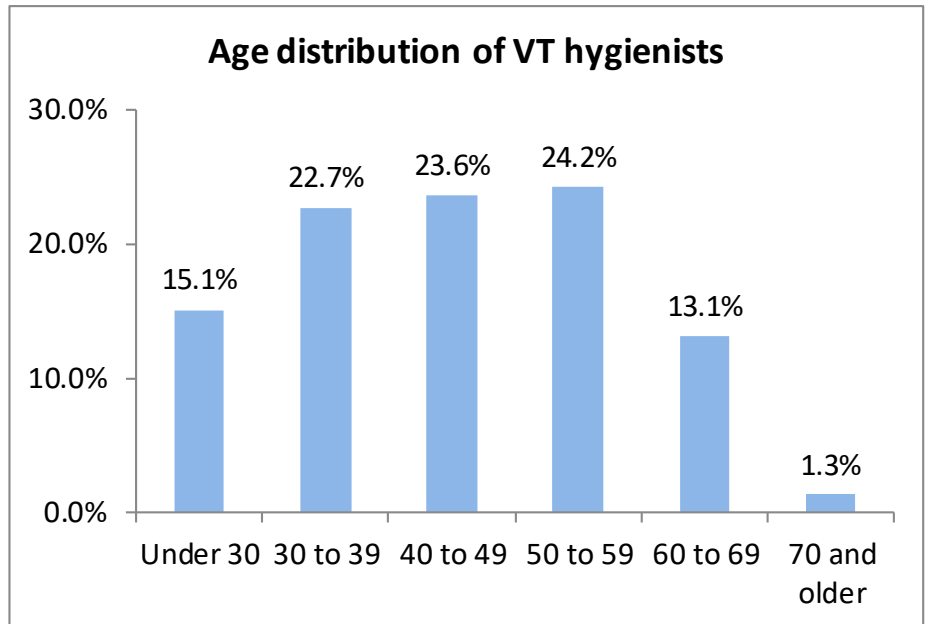
Demographics

Gender

- 97.6% of active hygienists were female.
- 2.0% of active hygienists were male.
- 0.4% of active hygienists did not report gender.

Age

- Median age of active hygienists was 45. This is younger than many other VT health professionals.



Race and ethnicity

- Dental hygienists were asked to select their race and could select multiple responses or choose not to answer, so numbers may not equal the total number of hygienists.
- 94.0% of dental hygienists were white (517), 0.9% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% were Asian, <0.5% were Black, 0.7% were another race that was not listed, and 4.2% preferred not to answer or did not answer.
- 1.1% of dental hygienists were Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and 95.3% (524) were not. 3.6% preferred not to answer or were missing data about ethnicity.

Education and Training

- 81.1% of dental hygienists had an associate degree.
- 18.9% of dental hygienists had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 70.1% of dental hygienists received their schooling in VT.

Highest degree awarded in...	Number	Percent
Vermont	384	70.1%
Northeast excluding Vermont	144	26.3%
Midwest	8	1.5%
South	5	0.9%
West	3	0.5%
Outside US	4	0.7%
* Missing data from 2 individuals		

Practice Characteristics

Number of sites

- 89.5% (492) worked at a single location.
- 9.6% (53) worked at 2 locations.
- 0.9% (5) worked at 3 or more locations.

Practice setting

- 85.1% (468) of hygienists' main practice setting were in dental practices.

Main Setting	Number	Percent
Solo dentist practice	171	31.1%
Practice of 2 dentists	167	30.4%
Practice of 3 or more dentists	130	23.6%
Health center	48	8.7%
Educational/Training Center	10	1.8%
Hospital/Clinic	5	0.9%
Local Health Office	4	0.7%
Other Public Health/Community Health setting	4	0.7%
Head Start (including Early Head Start)	3	0.5%
School Health Service (Tooth Tutors, etc.)	1	0.2%
All other settings	7	1.3%

- 84.1% (459) provided primary care (general or pediatric dentistry) at their main site.

Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)

- 550 hygienists provided 402.4 FTEs.
- Most hygienists (72.2%) worked 20 to 39 hours a week at their work locations.
- 12.0% of hygienists worked 40 hours or more at their work locations.
- 47.2 FTEs, 11.7% of total hygienist FTEs, were provided by the 79 dental hygienists ages 60 or older.

Average weekly hours - all sites	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	87	15.8%
20 to 39 hours	397	72.2%
40 hours or more	66	12.0%

Current Experience and Future Plans

- Median years licensed in Vermont: 15.
- 27.0% of hygienists in Vermont have been licensed here for over 25 years.

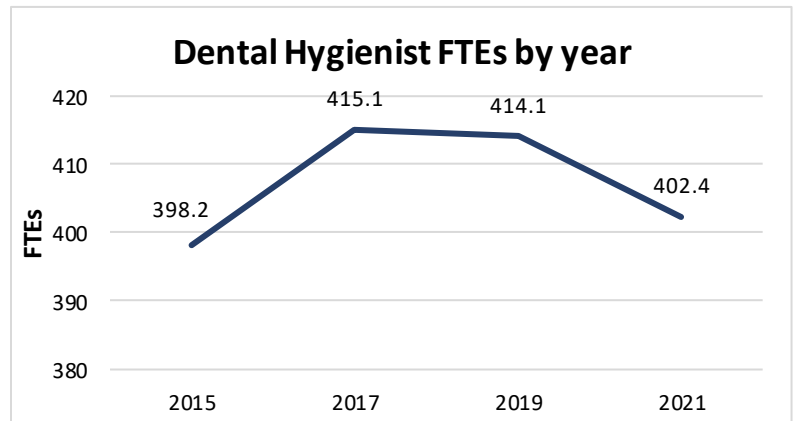
Years licensed in Vermont	Number	Percent
0 to 5 years	117	21.3%
6 to 10 years	81	14.8%
11 to 15 years	82	14.9%
16 to 20 years	66	12.0%
21 to 25 years	55	10.0%
Over 25 years	148	27.0%
Missing data from 1 individual		

In the next 12 months

- 86.5% are planning to continue working as they are.
- 2.2% are planning to increase hours.
- 6.7% are planning to decrease hours.
- 1.8% are planning to seek employment in a different field, stop working in VT, or retire.

Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Hygienist FTEs increased by 17 from 398.2 in 2015 to 415.1 in 2017.
- FTEs remained steady between 2017 and 2019 and decreased to 402.4 in 2021.



Key Takeaways

- Hygienists in VT are one of the younger health professional groups with a median age of 45.
- Most hygienists work 20 – 39 hours a week.
- Chittenden County has the largest FTE per population ratio at 100.0 - most other counties in VT have an FTE per population ratio around half of that.
- There was an increase in hygienist FTEs from 2015 to 2017, followed by a decrease in FTEs through 2019 and 2021 to nearly 2015 levels.

Hygienists are one of the younger health professions in VT with only 14.4% of the workforce age 60 or older.

For more information, contact: AHS.VDHPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov

Appendix

Active hygienist

A hygienist who reported working in Vermont as such (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

Census

The census was taken during the biennial hygienist relicensing process which ended on September 30, 2021. The data include all licensed hygienists except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (June–August 2021), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of September 30, 2023. Census questions available upon request.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. Reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

Maps

For county map, colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus, totals may vary from table to table.

Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2021 and were provided by the Department of Health.

Primary Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The primary or main practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice with the greatest number of reported annual hours per individual.

States

States were grouped into the following regions:

Northeast	Midwest	South		West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	North Carolina	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Oklahoma	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	South Carolina	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Tennessee	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Texas	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Virginia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Washington DC	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland	West Virginia	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi		New Mexico
	Ohio			Oregon
	South Dakota			Utah
	Wisconsin			Washington
				Wyoming

Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours is based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours * (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for an individual working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks) is 20.