Vermont Prescription Monitoring System

Quarterly Report
1st Quarter 2023

April 2023

What is the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System?

The Vermont Prescription Monitoring System (VPMS) is a statewide, electronic database of controlled substance prescriptions dispensed by Vermont-licensed pharmacies.

- VPMS is a clinical tool to promote appropriate prescribing, while deterring the misuse, abuse, and diversion of controlled substances.

- VPMS is also a surveillance tool that is used to monitor statewide trends in the dispensing of controlled substances.

VPMS Quarterly Report Data Inclusions

This report summarizes VPMS data for all Schedule II – IV prescriptions that were dispensed by Vermont-licensed pharmacies between 1/1/2023 and 3/31/2023.

The drug types included in this report are:

- **Opioid Analgesic** – opioids used to treat pain
- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)** – opioids used to treat opioid use disorder
- **Benzodiazepines** – sedatives used for anxiety, insomnia and other conditions
- **Stimulants** - medication used to increase alertness, attention, energy

Vermont-licensed pharmacies that are located out of state and that mail prescriptions into Vermont are also required to submit these prescription data to VPMS.

Prescriptions for opioid use disorder treatment provided at a physician's office, sometimes called a "spoke," are dispensed at a pharmacy and are included in VPMS data.

VPMS Quarterly Report Data Exclusions

VPMS **does not** collect data on prescriptions dispensed by:

- Emergency rooms
- Veterinarian offices
- Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) that dispense methadone and buprenorphine for opioid addiction, sometimes called a "hub'.
- Pharmacies not licensed in Vermont, such as those in New Hampshire or Massachusetts. Vermont residents can and do pick up prescriptions from these pharmacies and this data is not in VPMS.
- MOUD opioids dispensed in correctional facility settings.

Some prescriptions may not be included on this report if there were delays in data submission. Final data is reconciled in the Annual Report totals.

Data submitted to VPMS by pharmacies can contain errors. Each data upload is screened for errors and sent back to the pharmacy to be corrected if errors are discovered. However, not all errors are found or corrected.

VPMS data is on prescriptions dispensed. The VPMS does not contain information about if a medication was prescribed but not filled, the associated diagnosis, instructions, or how a prescribed medication is used once it has been picked up.

Why does this report use Morphine Milligram Equivalents (MME) to measure opioid prescriptions?

Using Morphine Milligram Equivalents (MME) allows for comparison between types and strengths of opioids.

MME is a way to express the strength of an opioid analgesic prescription as though the prescription were converted to morphine.

For instance, the following medications each provide 50 MME/day:

- 10 tablets of hydrocodone/acetaminophen 5/300
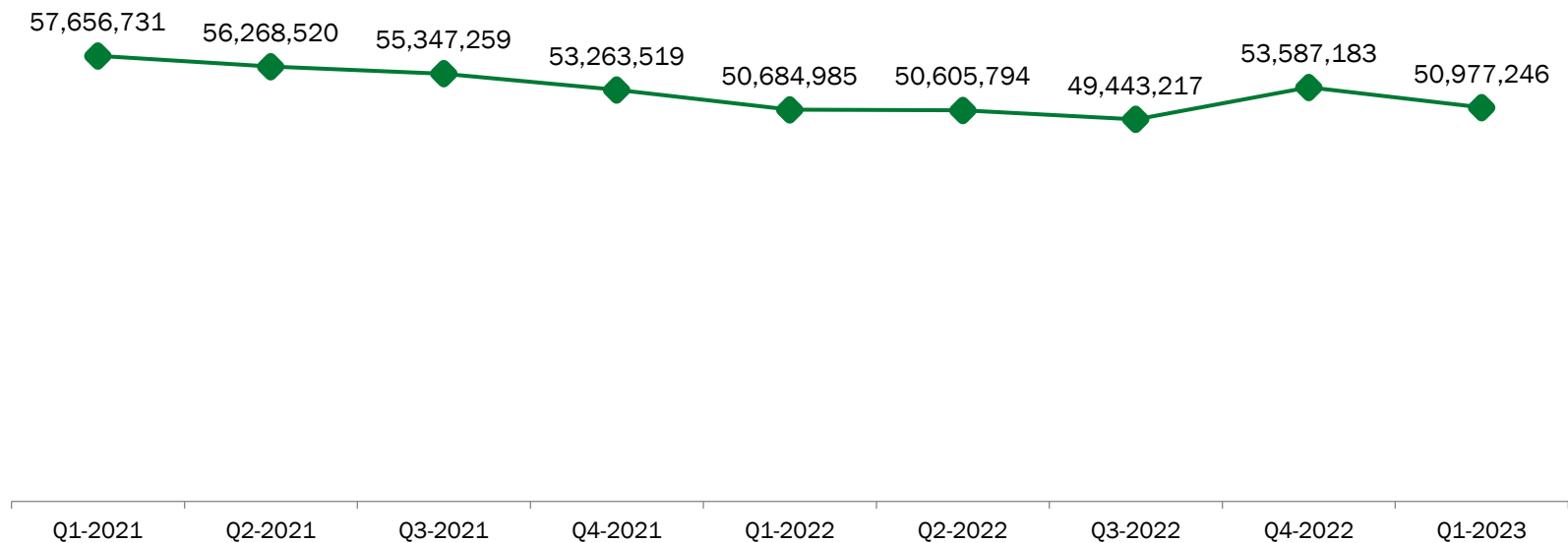- 2 tablets of oxycodone sustained-release 15 mg
- <3 tablets of methadone 5 mg

Note on the 2022 Quarter 4 Report: The number of analgesic opioid prescriptions for which an MME can be calculated has increased as of this quarter due to data quality improvements. The increase in total MME dispensed can be attributed to this change rather than an increase in prescribing trends.

The total amount of opioids dispensed has primarily decreased over time

Vermont Total MME Dispensed by Quarter

* See note on slide 5 for more information on the increase in total MME for 2022 Quarter 4 as compared to previous quarters.

Quarter	MME
Q1-2021	57,656,731
Q2-2021	56,268,520
Q3-2021	55,347,259
Q4-2021	53,263,519
Q1-2022	50,684,985
Q2-2022	50,605,794
Q3-2022	49,443,217
Q4-2022	53,587,183
Q1-2023	50,977,246

Q1: January-March   Q2: April-June   Q3: July-September   Q4: October-December

The percent of Vermonters receiving at least one opioid prescription has remained relatively stable over the past two years

Percent of Vermont Population Receiving at Least One Opioid Analgesic Prescription by Quarter

Q1-2021	Q2-2021	Q3-2021	Q4-2021	Q1-2022	Q2-2022	Q3-2022	Q4-2022	Q1-2023
4.0%	3.9%	3.9%	3.8%	3.7%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%	3.8%

Q1: January-March   Q2: April-June   Q3: July-September   Q4: October-December
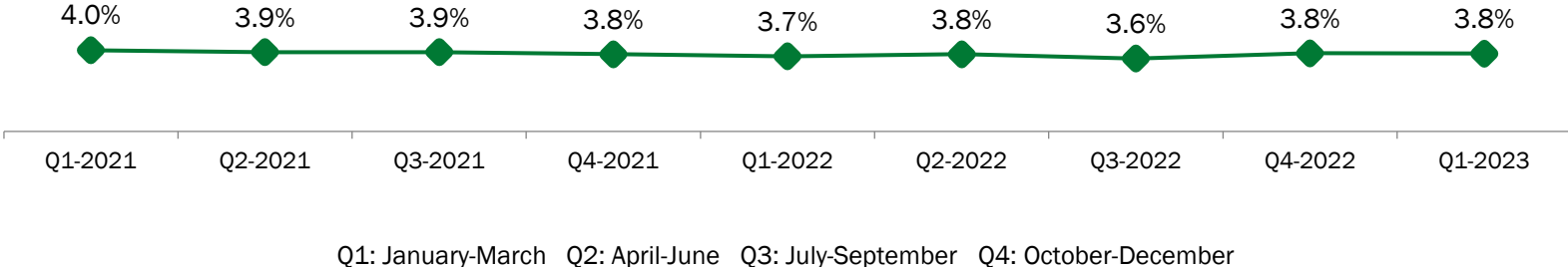
The average daily MME has remained stable over the past two years

Vermont Average Daily MME Per Prescription by Quarter

53.3 52.5 52.1 52.6 52.3 51.4 50.1 51.2 50.4

Q1-2021 Q2-2021 Q3-2021 Q4-2021 Q1-2022 Q2-2022 Q3-2022 Q4-2022 Q1-2023

Q1: January-March   Q2: April-June   Q3: July-September   Q4: October-December
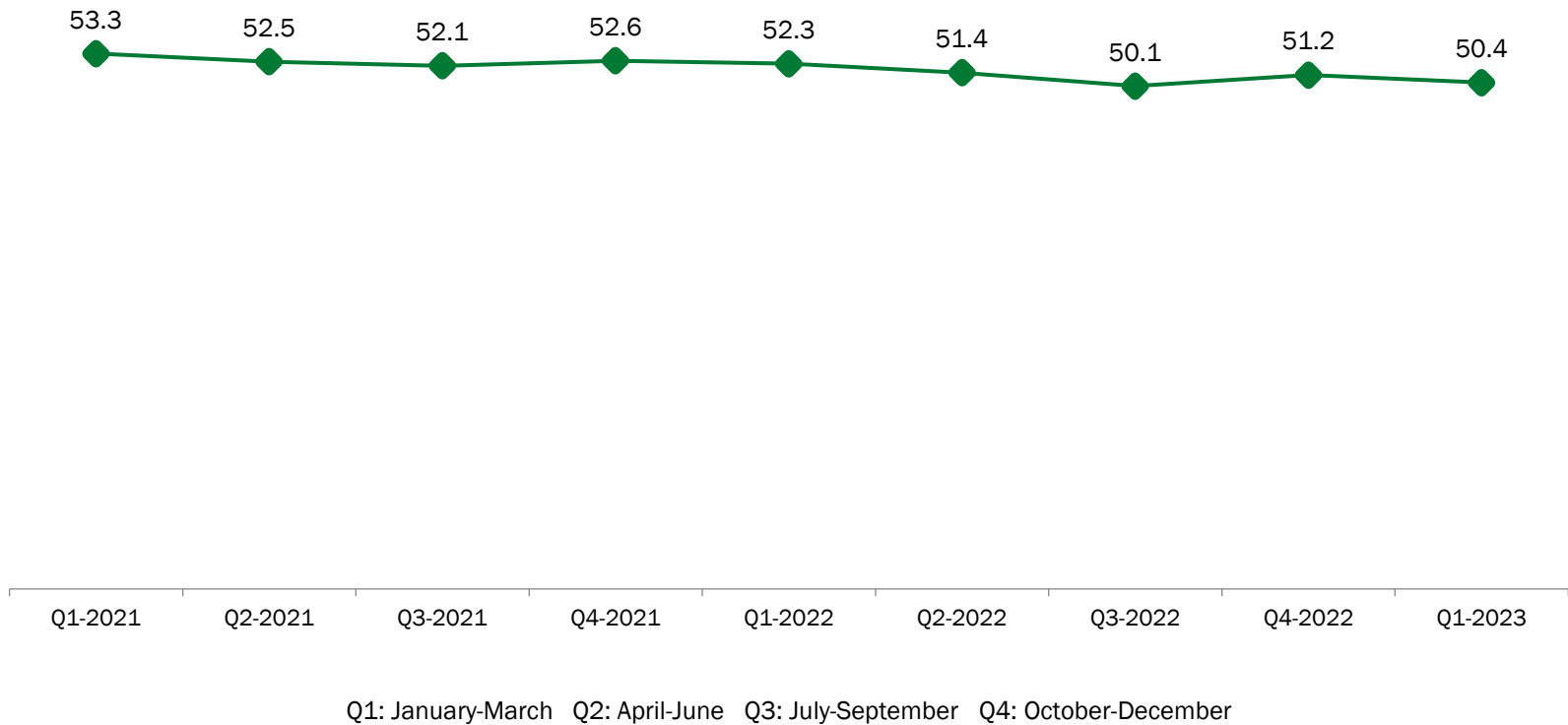
The percent of the population receiving at least one prescription varies by county

Percent of Population Receiving At Least One Prescription in Drug Class, January - March 2023

	OPIOID ANALGESIC	MOUD	BENZODIAZEPINE	STIMULANT
ADDISON	3.7%	1.1%	3.6%	3.2%
BENNINGTON	4.1%	1.7%	4.2%	3.6%
CALEDONIA	3.3%	0.9%	3.3%	3.6%
CHITTENDEN	3.2%	0.9%	3.8%	3.8%
ESSEX	2.7%	0.7%	2.3%	1.8%
FRANKLIN	4.2%	2.1%	3.4%	2.5%
GRAND ISLE	3.9%	1.5%	3.2%	2.9%
LAMOILLE	3.8%	1.3%	3.6%	3.2%
ORANGE	3.1%	1.1%	3.3%	2.7%
ORLEANS	4.8%	1.2%	4.8%	4.0%
RUTLAND	4.4%	1.6%	4.0%	3.2%
WASHINGTON	3.6%	0.9%	4.3%	3.8%
WINDHAM	3.8%	0.8%	4.1%	4.3%
WINDSOR	2.5%	0.9%	2.6%	2.2%
Vermont	3.8%	1.1%	3.9%	3.7%

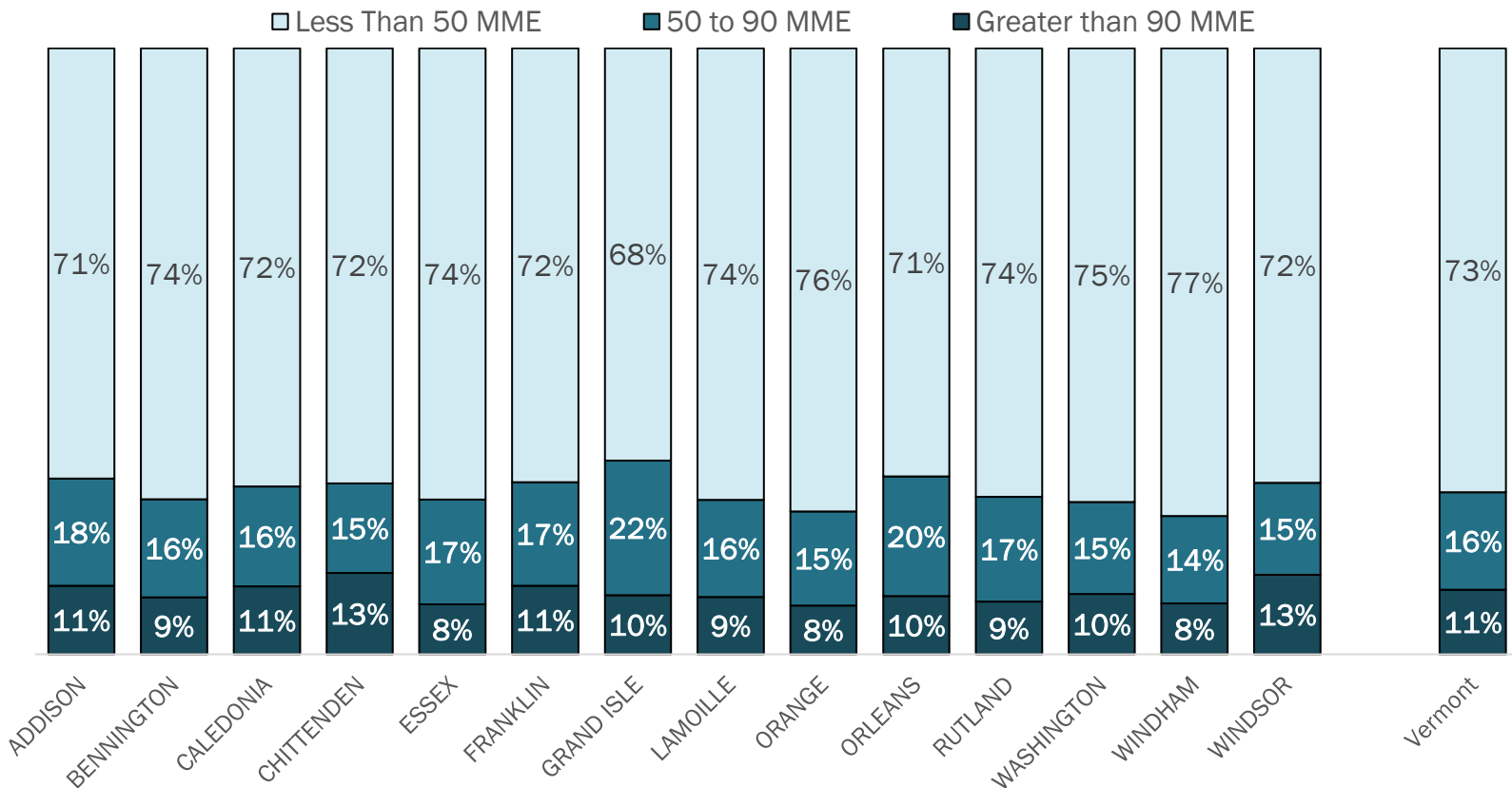# The average daily MME varies more widely by county than the days supply

Average Days' Supply and Daily Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) for Opioid Analgesics, January - March 2023

■ Average Days Supply   ■ Average MME
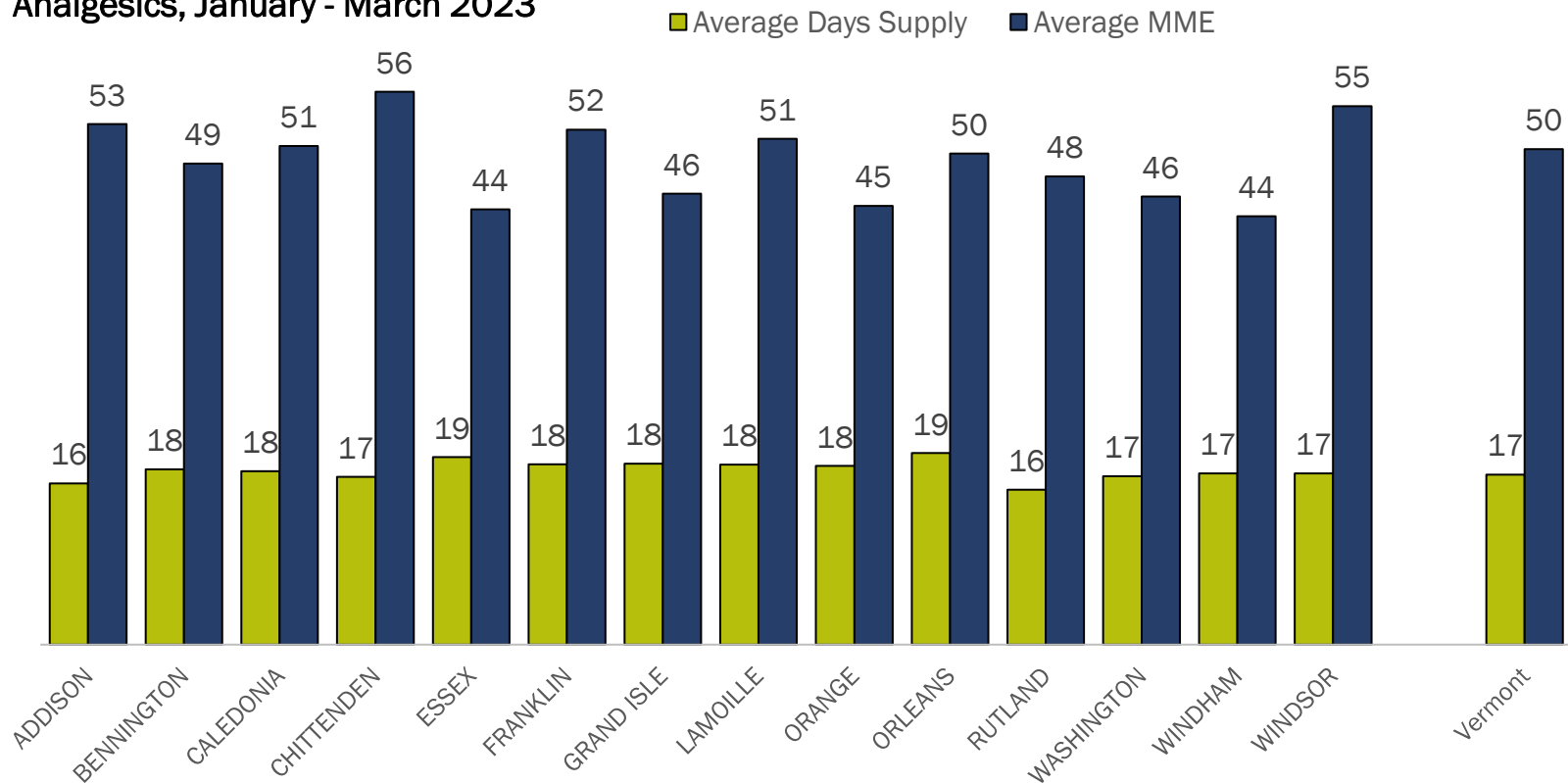
Days Supply – the estimated number of days that the medication will last*

Most prescriptions in all counties are fewer than 50 MME, but there is variability among counties

Proportion of Opioid Analgesic Prescriptions in Daily Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) Categories, January - March 2023

Legend: ☐ Less Than 50 MME ■ 50 to 90 MME ■ Greater than 90 MME

County	Less Than 50 MME	50 to 90 MME	Greater than 90 MME
ADDISON	71%	18%	11%
BENNINGTON	74%	16%	9%
CALEDONIA	72%	16%	11%
CHITTENDEN	72%	15%	13%
ESSEX	74%	17%	8%
FRANKLIN	72%	17%	11%
GRAND ISLE	68%	22%	10%
LAMOILLE	74%	16%	9%
ORANGE	76%	15%	8%
ORLEANS	71%	20%	10%
RUTLAND	74%	17%	9%
WASHINGTON	75%	15%	10%
WINDHAM	77%	14%	8%
WINDSOR	72%	15%	13%
Vermont	73%	16%	11%

The rate of prescriptions per 100 residents varies widely by drug class and by county

Rate of Prescriptions Per 100 Residents by Drug Class, January - March 2023

Legend: ■ OPIOID ANALGESIC ■ MOUD ■ BENZODIAZEPINE ■ STIMULANT

County	Opioid Analgesic	MOUD	Benzodiazepine	Stimulant
ADDISON	8.8	5.7	6.8	9.1
BENNINGTON	9.9	10.3	8.8	11.2
CALEDONIA	8.2	4.6	6.7	10.9
CHITTENDEN	7.8	5.2	7.4	10.8
ESSEX	6.4	3.1	4.5	4.8
FRANKLIN	11.4	14.3	7.5	8.4
GRAND ISLE	9.1	8.9	6.2	8.7
LAMOILLE	9.7	7.9	7.1	9.4
ORANGE	7.1	4.8	6.7	8.1
ORLEANS	12.2	8.0	10.1	12.4
RUTLAND	9.9	7.6	8.2	9.1
WASHINGTON	8.6	5.0	9.3	10.8
WINDHAM	8.9	4.9	8.7	12.2
WINDSOR	6.1	4.5	5.5	6.3
Vermont	9.3	6.7	8.0	10.7

The number of prescriptions in each drug class varies widely

Number of Prescriptions in Each Drug Class, January - March 2023

	OPIOID ANALGESIC	MOUD	BENZODIAZEPINE	STIMULANT
ADDISON	3,265	2,128	2,549	3,397
BENNINGTON	3,703	3,839	3,286	4,163
CALEDONIA	2,503	1,413	2,037	3,314
CHITTENDEN	13,183	8,708	12,521	18,193
ESSEX	382	181	268	284
FRANKLIN	5,740	7,208	3,758	4,229
GRAND ISLE	676	659	463	646
LAMOILLE	2,534	2,068	1,865	2,466
ORANGE	2,104	1,420	1,990	2,399
ORLEANS	3,353	2,207	2,772	3,406
RUTLAND	6,011	4,596	4,967	5,514
WASHINGTON	5,182	2,986	5,555	6,486
WINDHAM	4,115	2,245	3,995	5,621
WINDSOR	3,572	2,632	3,217	3,671
Vermont	59,744	43,534	51,720	69,030

*County totals may not add up to the Vermont total; in some instances, county information is not available.

Feedback on Quarter 1

Please complete the survey on the usefulness of the **Quarter 1** VPMS Report. Feedback is encouraged and will inform future quarterly reports.

http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/3950004/VPMS-Quarterly-Reporting-Usefulness-Survey

Contact VPMS

❑ Data-related questions can be directed to the program analyst, Lela Kretzer at:

<div align="center">Lela.Kretzer@vermont.gov</div>

❑ Programmatic questions can be directed to the program manager, Hannah Hauser at:

<div align="center">Hannah.Hauser@vermont.gov</div>

Additional information on VPMS, as well as Quarterly, Annual, and special reports are available at:
https://www.healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drugs/reports/data-and-reports