

INSIGHTS FROM THE VERMONT IMMUNIZATION REGISTRY

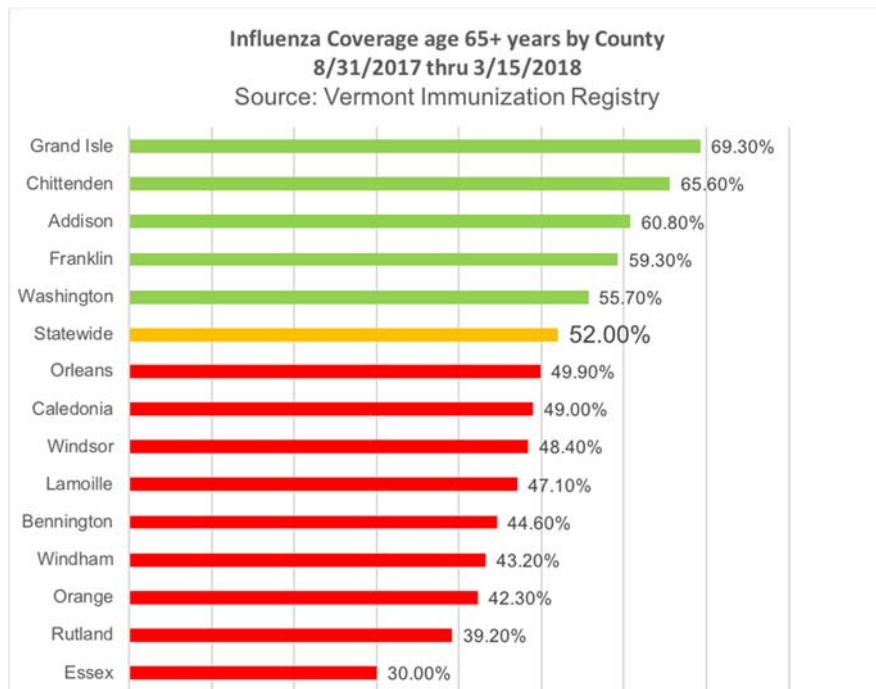
LOOKING AT FLU SHOTS

Now that Registry reporting is at such a high rate in Vermont, it is being used to look at many different aspects of immunization. It is one thing to consider whether an individual is up to date for immunizations – important, of course. The Registry can now be used to look at the state of Vermont, by county, and identify specific areas of immunization need. What's clear is that some parts of Vermont have much better coverage than others.

216,008 flu shots were added to the Registry between August 1, 2017 and March 15, 2018. This includes immunizations to Vermonters in all age groups: children, teens, and adults. The information comes from many sources. Most primary care providers are reporting directly to us through their electronic health record, as are all hospitals except the Veteran's Administration. 72% of Vermont pharmacies send their data to the Registry, as do the five largest health insurers, although they generally send a monthly file – so their records are a bit slower to arrive in the system.

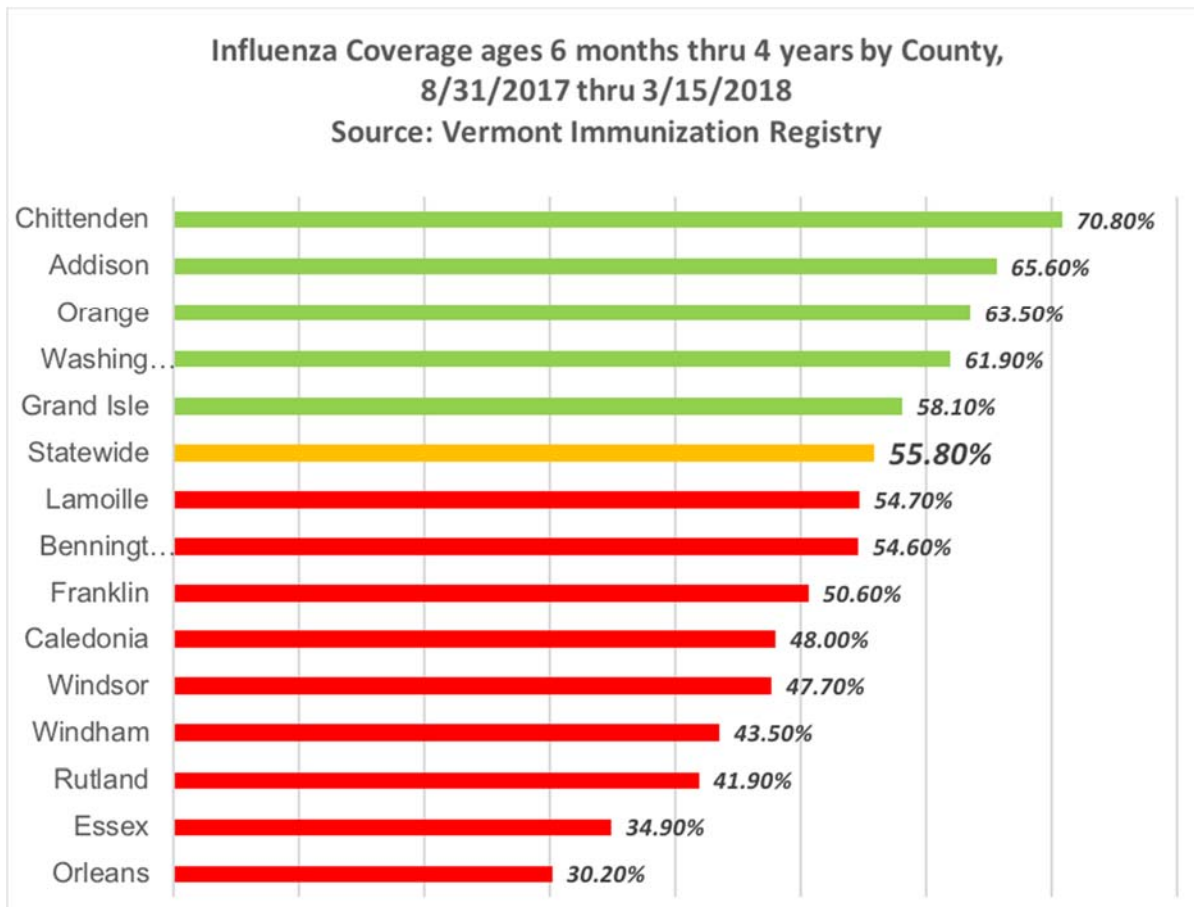
52% of Vermonters over the age of 65 years have received a flu shot this season according to the Registry. However, in Essex county, only 30% of people in this age range were immunized. Grand Isle, Chittenden, and Addison counties all have immunization rates of over 60% for this age group. There is a range of almost 40 percentage points between the counties with the highest and lowest rates of immunization. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



The Registry shows a similar, although not identical pattern in coverage in children younger than school age. *Figure 2* shows the percent of children 6 months of age through 4 years who received a flu shot this season, broken down by county. The state rate is 55.8% for this age group, but again there are 40 percentage points between the highest performing county (Chittenden) and the lowest (Essex). Clearly, the more rural parts of the state have lower influenza coverage - and the Immunization Program will focus on outreach to these areas to improve protection.

Figure 2



While Registry data regarding influenza is informative and clearly demonstrates areas of need, we recognize two areas where we can improve our reporting. Many Vermonters receive flu shots at employee health clinics, and these are not always reported to the Immunization Registry. Also, we have yet to connect the Veteran's Administration Hospital to the Registry, and we recognize they are also an important source of immunizations. We are focusing on getting data from both these sources for next flu season.