

# Repeat Visitors to the Emergency Department for Suicide-Related Reasons

## April 2025

Between 2022 and 2024, 10,185 people visited Vermont emergency departments (EDs) for a suicide-related reason accounting for 17,735 visits. On average, **14% of people who visited the ED for a suicide-related reason returned within 30 days of their initial visit.** Twenty-seven percent ever returned between 2022 and 2024. A suicide-related ED visit can include suicidal ideation, self-harm, or suicide attempts. Frequent visitors are important to monitor because they help characterize unmet needs in populations experiencing suicidality. This data brief looks at Vermont residents who returned to the same ED for a suicide-related reason.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [ahs.vdhsuicidedata@vermont.gov](mailto:ahs.vdhsuicidedata@vermont.gov).

### Key Points

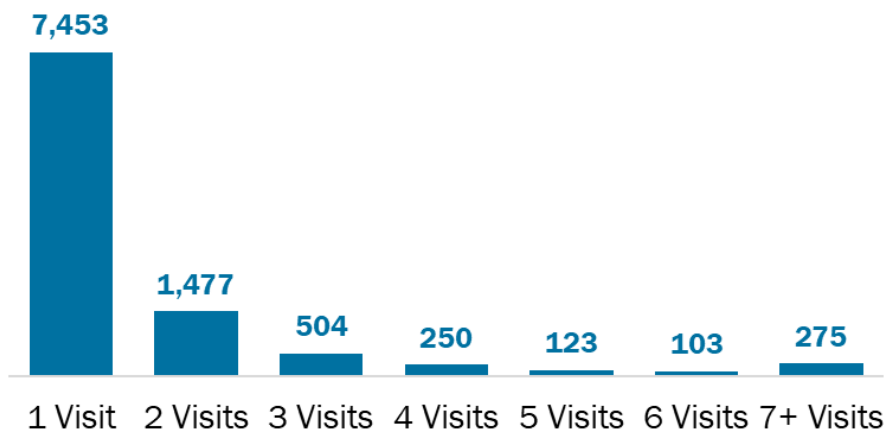
- **More than 1 in 4 people returned to the ED for a suicide-related reason between 2022 and 2024.**
- **14% of people who visit the ED for a suicide-related reason returned within 30 days of their initial visit.**

### Distribution of the Number of Suicide-Related Visits

This chart shows how many people visited the ED for a suicide-related reason between 2022 – 2024. Most people only visited once, but some returned multiple times. The number of times a patient visited the same ED for a suicide-related reason ranged from 0 to 92 times. Less than 3% of people visited the same ED over six times in three years.

**7,453 patients visited the ED for a suicide-related reason just one time.**

Number of patients and number of suicide-related ED visits from 2022 – 2024.



Source: ESSENCE, 2022 – 2024



**HealthVermont.gov**  
**802-863-7200**

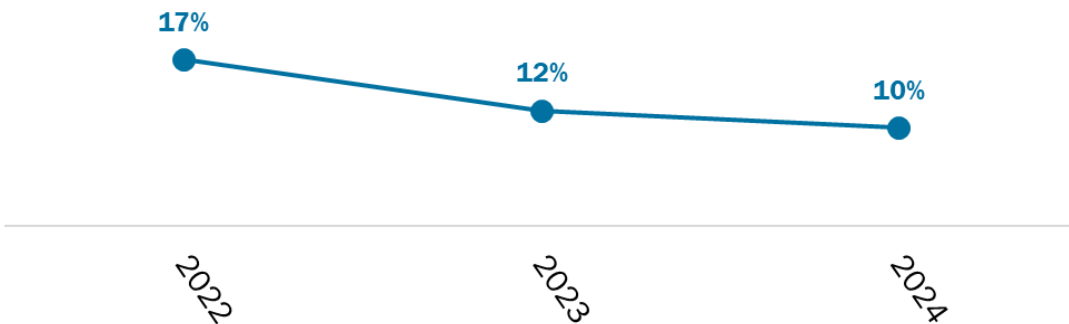


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## The Rate of Returning to the ED within 30 Days over time

In 2024, 10% of people who visited the ED for a suicide-related reason returned to the ED within 30 days. This is significantly lower than the 17% of people who returned to the ED for a suicide-related reason within 30 days in 2022.

**The percent of patients who returned to the ED for a suicide-related reason within 30 days has decreased since 2022.**

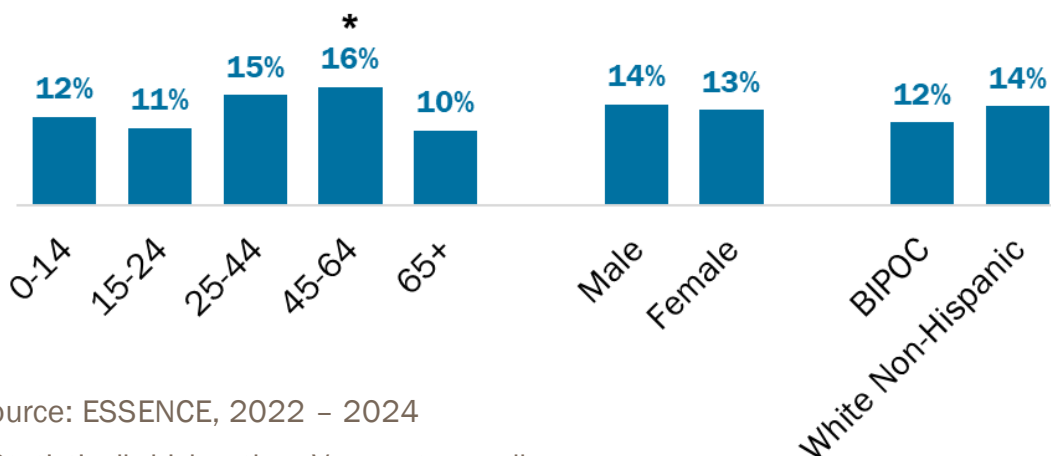


Source: ESSENCE, 2022 – 2024

## Demographics of Patients Returning to the ED within 30 Days

- While people aged 15 – 44 visit the ED for a suicide-related reason at the highest rates, people aged 45 – 64 **return** to the ED at higher rates than other age groups.
- The rate of return to the ED does not significantly vary by sex or race/ethnicity.

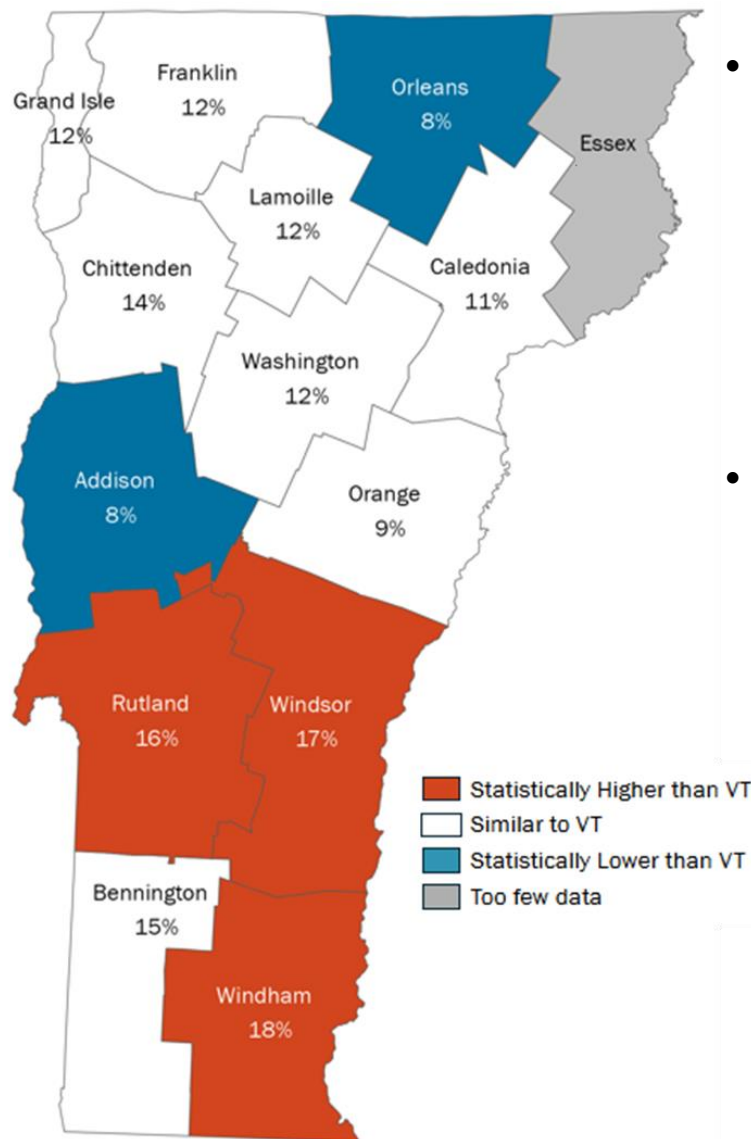
**Percent of patients returning to the ED for a suicide-related reason within 30 days.**



Source: ESSENCE, 2022 – 2024

\*Statistically higher than Vermont overall.

## Rate of Patients Returning to the ED by County



- Residents of Rutland, Windham, and Windsor counties are more likely to return to the ED within 30 days for a suicide-related reason compared to Vermont.
  - In 2024, Rutland and Windham counties also had significantly higher rates of suicide-related ED visits overall.
- Residents of Addison and Orleans counties are less likely to return to the ED within 30 days for a suicide-related reason compared to Vermont.

Source: ESSENCE, 2022 – 2024  
 Grey counties are suppressed for confidentiality.

## Key Takeaways

- Over a quarter of people who visit the ED for a suicide-related reason will return at some point, and 14% of people will return within 30 days of their initial visit.
- The percentage of people returning to the ED for a suicide-related reason has decreased since 2022

## Resources

Vermont is currently working to improve care in emergency departments for individuals at risk of suicide. For more information, go to [Emergency Department Suicide Prevention Quality Improvement Initiative – Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.](#)

**If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, there is help 24/7**

- **Call, text or chat the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#)**
- **For more information about getting support, helping others who may be at risk for suicide, and getting more involved in suicide prevention in Vermont, go to [FacingSuicideVT.com](#)**

## Methods and Limitations

### Methods

This analysis uses ED data that is reported through the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE), a [syndromic surveillance](#) system that tracks real-time healthcare visit data. ESSENCE captures every ED visit from all medical hospitals in Vermont but does not include psychiatric hospitals, the Veteran Affairs hospital, or hospitals outside of Vermont, even if they are part of the UVM Health Network. All analyses were done in R Studio 4.3.2.

### Limitations

1. This analysis uses electronic medical record (EMR), specifically a patient's chief complaint and discharge diagnosis fields. These fields are not always accurate and are sometimes missing.
2. This analysis only captures people who visited the same Vermont hospital more than once and cannot capture repeat visits to multiple different hospitals.
3. Emergency department visits occurring before January 1st, 2022 or after December 31st, 2024 are not included in this analysis. Thus, if someone visited the ED outside of the time frame, those visits will not be captured or identified as initial or repeat visits.
4. Some fields (i.e. town of residence) can change from one visit to another. This analysis uses the fields provided in the initial ED visit record.