

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 people with disabilities in Vermont. It includes information from publicly available data and focus groups and interviews with community partners and individuals with lived expertise.

Key Findings

- 25% of Vermonters **have some type of disability**.
- About half of Vermont residents with a disability have **multiple disabilities**.
- People with disabilities are:
 - Less likely to use **preventative healthcare** services.
 - More likely to **struggle finding jobs** and attending school.
 - Faced with more **difficulties getting around** in their community.
- Vermont has an increase in **unhoused residents** with disabilities in recent years.
- **High school students of color** are more likely than White, Non-Hispanic students to have a disability or long-term health problem.
- **LGBTQ+ high school students** are more likely than heterosexual, cisgendered students to have a disability or long-term health problem.
- Healthcare providers are often unable to offer **accessible offices and services**.

“The doctors don't speak in plain language. You don't understand how to sign up for the appointment...Do you think somebody with an IQ of 70 is managing that effectively? Not so much. There's still a lack of disability etiquette. You're an adult. You come in with your mom...and the doctor talks to your mom”.

- Treatment for disabilities accounts for 36% of Vermont's **health care costs**.
- In 2021, the **median earnings** for people with a disability was \$24,088 compared to \$41,073 for people without a disability.

“A lot of people can't afford healthcare or have a ton of medical debt, so they're avoiding going to the doctor because they literally can't afford it. I have Medicare and Medicaid, and on disability income. I'm not making ends meet.”

- **Long wait times and long travel times** to meet with healthcare specialists cause many Vermonters with disabilities to not get timely, high-quality care.
- 33% of Vermonters with disabilities report **poor mental health**, twice that of non-disabled Vermonters.

“Our community mental health system is like, ‘That's the other side of the house. You have an intellectual disability. I don't want to hear about your depression’ ...there is a real difficulty in accessing good mental healthcare for people who also happen to have developmental disabilities and are very stressed and lonely people because they're not getting any services right now.”

- Vermonters with disabilities are more likely to experience **physical violence** from an intimate partner (24% to 15%) and to be made to engage in **non-consensual sex** (23% to 16%).
- The **lack of affordable housing** that affects most Vermonters is a particular concern for people with disabilities due to income challenges and unique accessibility needs.
- People with disabilities are **twice as likely to smoke** as all U.S. residents.

Health status	Fair or poor health	Health care access delays due to cost	Arthritis	Obesity	Depressive disorder
All US	16%	10%	25%	34%	19%
All VT	12%	6%	29%	30%	24%
VT: with disabilities	34%	12%	48%	41%	43%

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)
 - Department of Transportation
 - Federal Bureau of Investigation
- [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BRFSS 2021\)](#)
- [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)
- [Climate and Health, Infectious diseases](#), VT Department of Health
- [VT Cancer Data Pages](#), VT Department of Health, February 2023
- [The Health of Vermonters Living with Disabilities](#), VT Department of Health, August 2018
- [3>4>50 Vermont](#), VT Department of Health
- [Healthy People 2030](#), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- [Vermont: Why Arthritis Matters](#), Arthritis Foundation