



Vermont Prescription Monitoring System

Quarterly Report
3rd Quarter 2021

November 2021

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 07/01/2021 and 09/30/2021.

The drug types included in this report are:

- **Opioid Analgesic** – opioids used to treat pain
- **Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Opioids** – 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.

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.

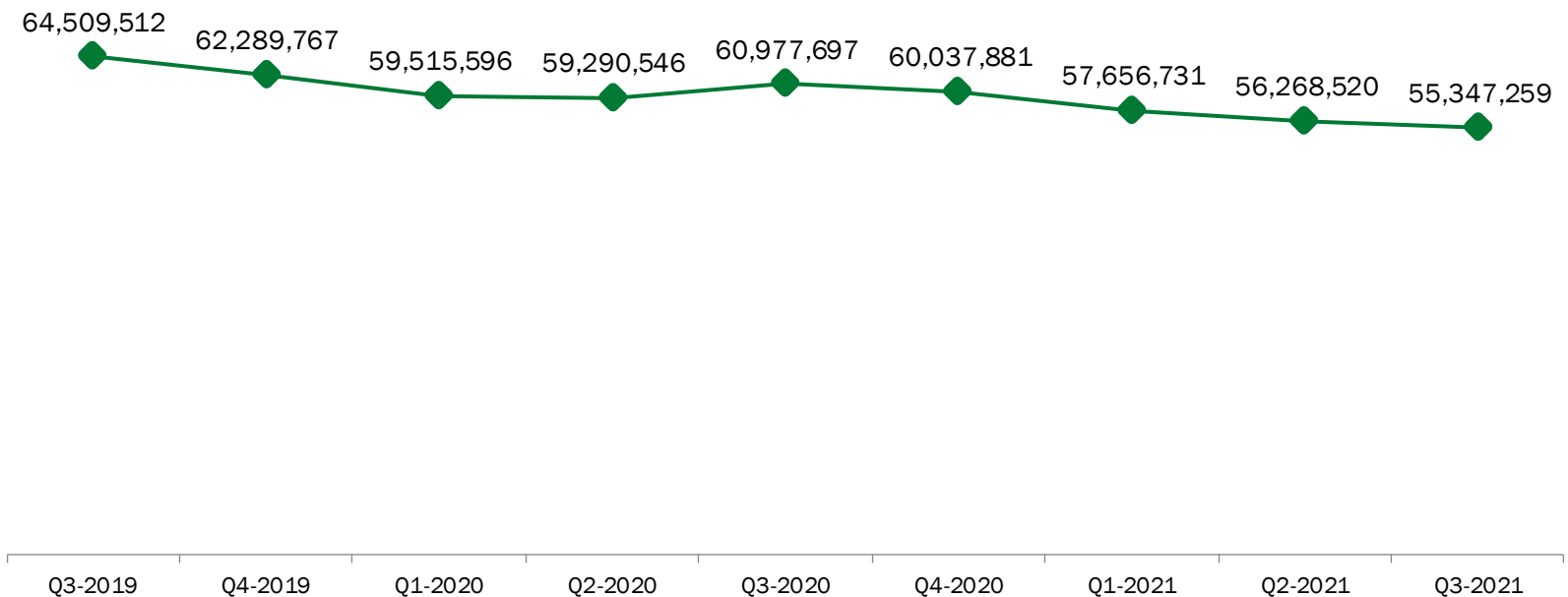
MME is a way to express the strength of an opioid analgesic prescription as though the prescription were converted to morphine.

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

The total amount of opioids dispensed has decreased over time

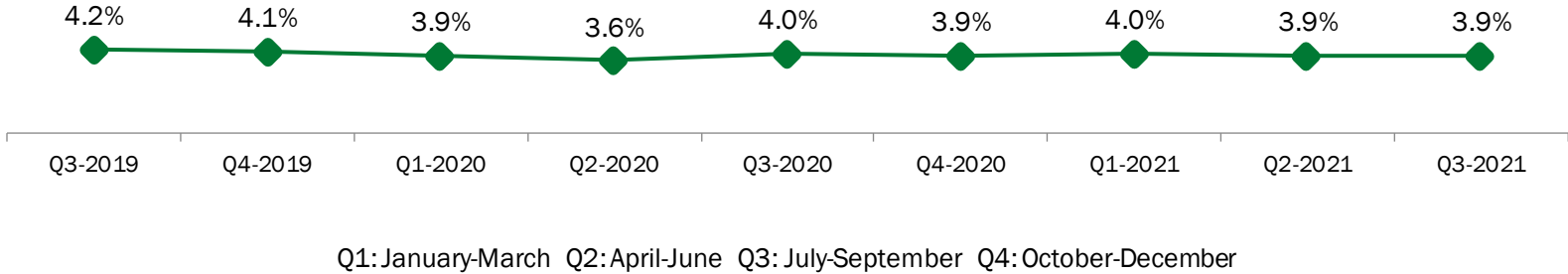
Vermont Total MME Dispensed by Quarter



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

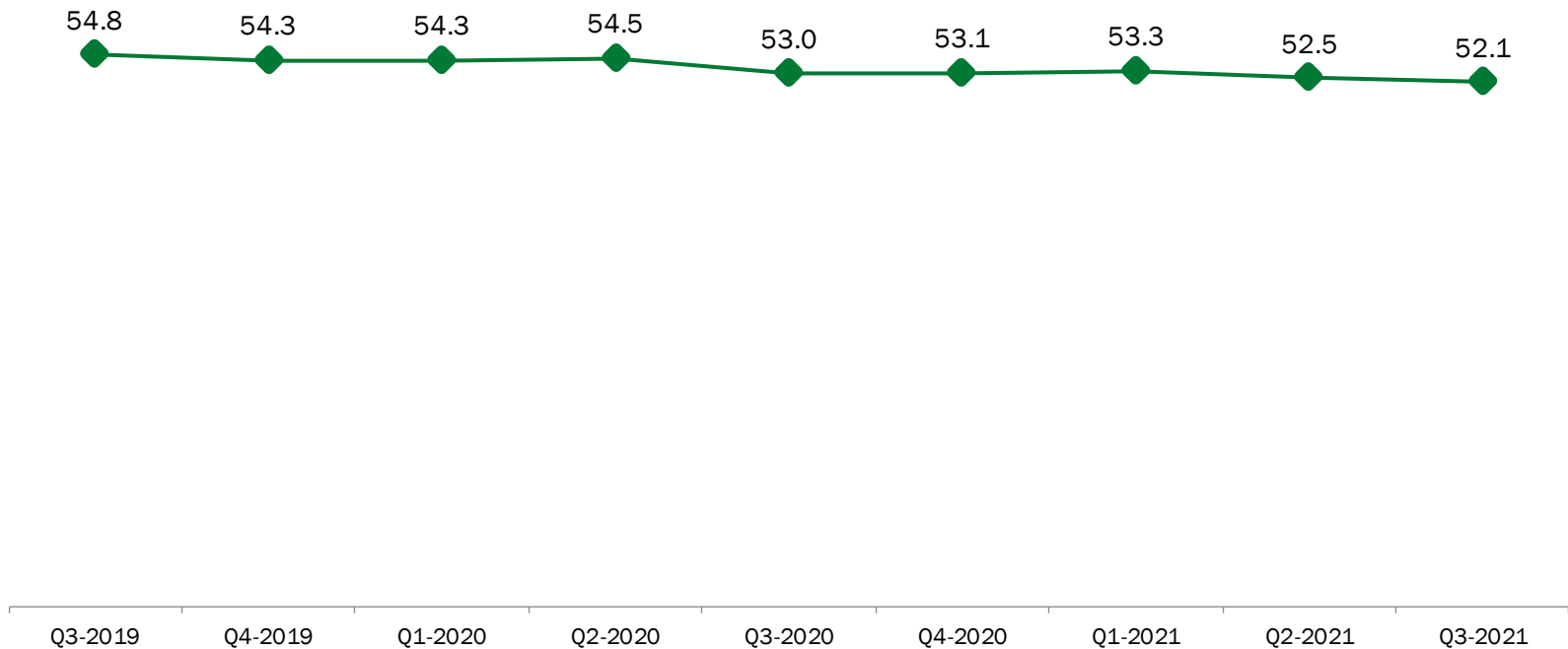
The percent of Vermonters receiving at least one opioid prescription has stopped its decreasing trend

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



The average daily MME has decreased over the past two years

Vermont Average Daily MME Per Prescription by Quarter



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

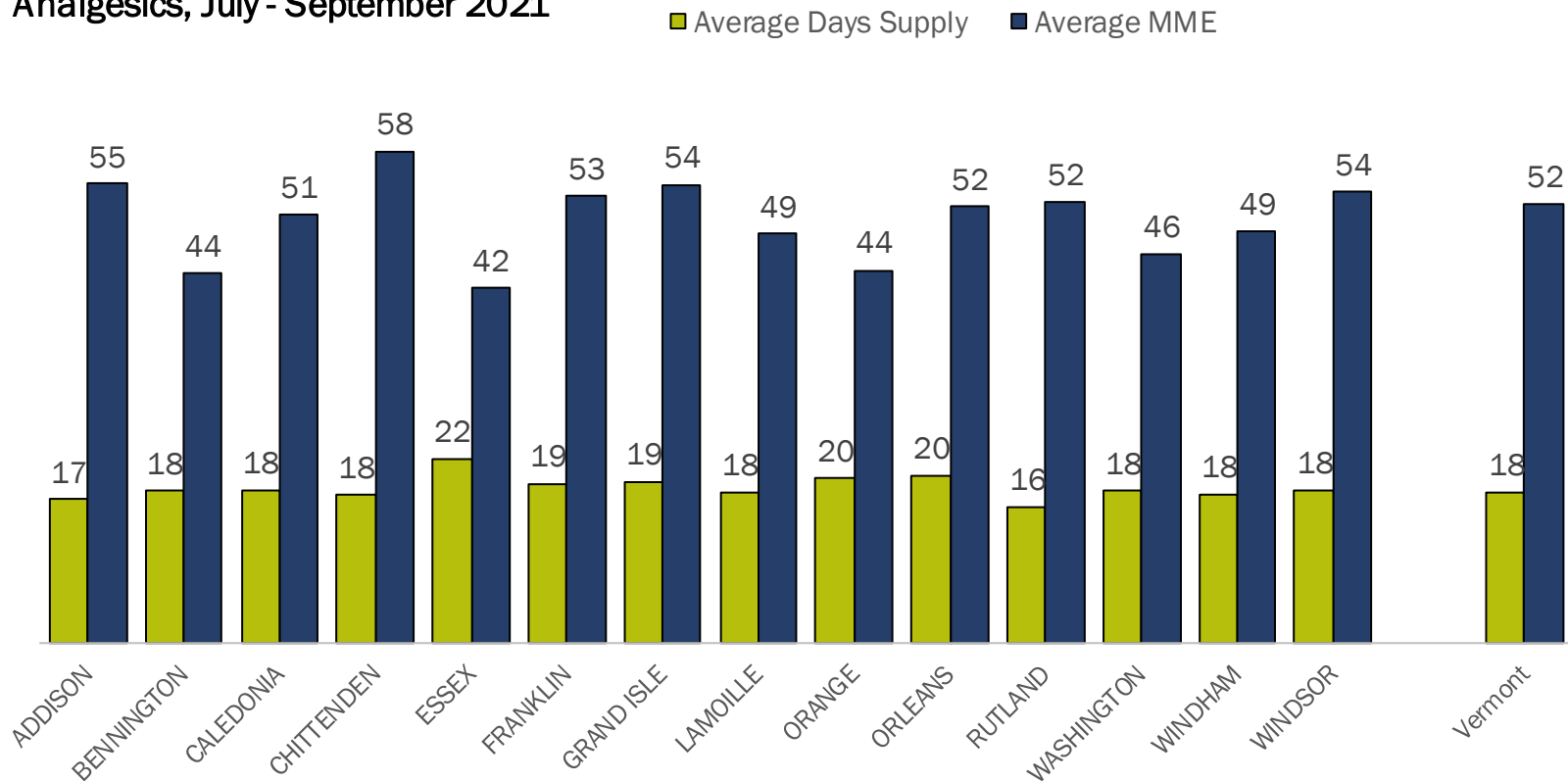
The percent of the population receiving at least one prescription varies by county

Percent of Population Receiving At Least One Prescription in Drug Class, July - September 2021

| | OPIOID ANALGESIC | MAT | BENZODIAZEPINE | STIMULANT |
|------------|------------------|------|----------------|-----------|
| ADDISON | 3.7% | 1.0% | 3.5% | 2.5% |
| BENNINGTON | 4.7% | 1.8% | 4.8% | 3.7% |
| CALEDONIA | 3.9% | 0.7% | 3.5% | 3.3% |
| CHITTENDEN | 3.4% | 0.9% | 4.1% | 3.3% |
| ESSEX | 2.4% | 0.6% | 2.3% | 1.8% |
| FRANKLIN | 4.6% | 2.0% | 3.6% | 2.2% |
| GRAND ISLE | 4.7% | 1.5% | 3.7% | 2.6% |
| LAMOILLE | 4.1% | 1.3% | 4.0% | 2.9% |
| ORANGE | 3.0% | 1.2% | 3.5% | 2.2% |
| ORLEANS | 5.2% | 1.0% | 5.0% | 4.0% |
| RUTLAND | 5.0% | 1.7% | 4.6% | 3.0% |
| WASHINGTON | 4.0% | 0.8% | 4.7% | 3.3% |
| WINDHAM | 4.3% | 1.0% | 4.9% | 4.5% |
| WINDSOR | 2.7% | 1.0% | 2.9% | 1.9% |
| | | | | |
| Vermont | 3.9% | 1.1% | 4.0% | 3.0% |

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

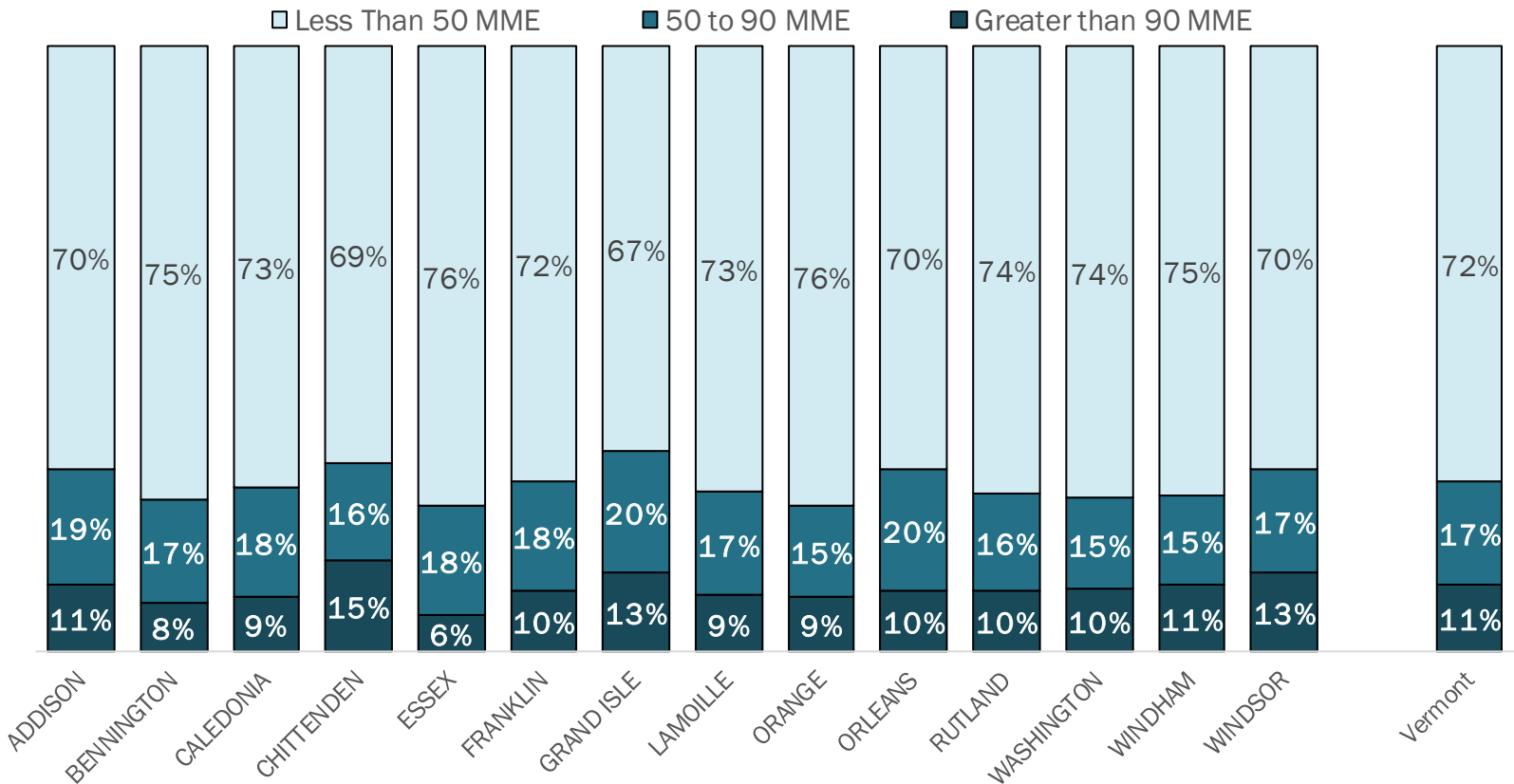
Average Days' Supply and Daily Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) for Opioid Analgesics, July - September 2021



Days Supply - the estimated number of days that the medication will last*

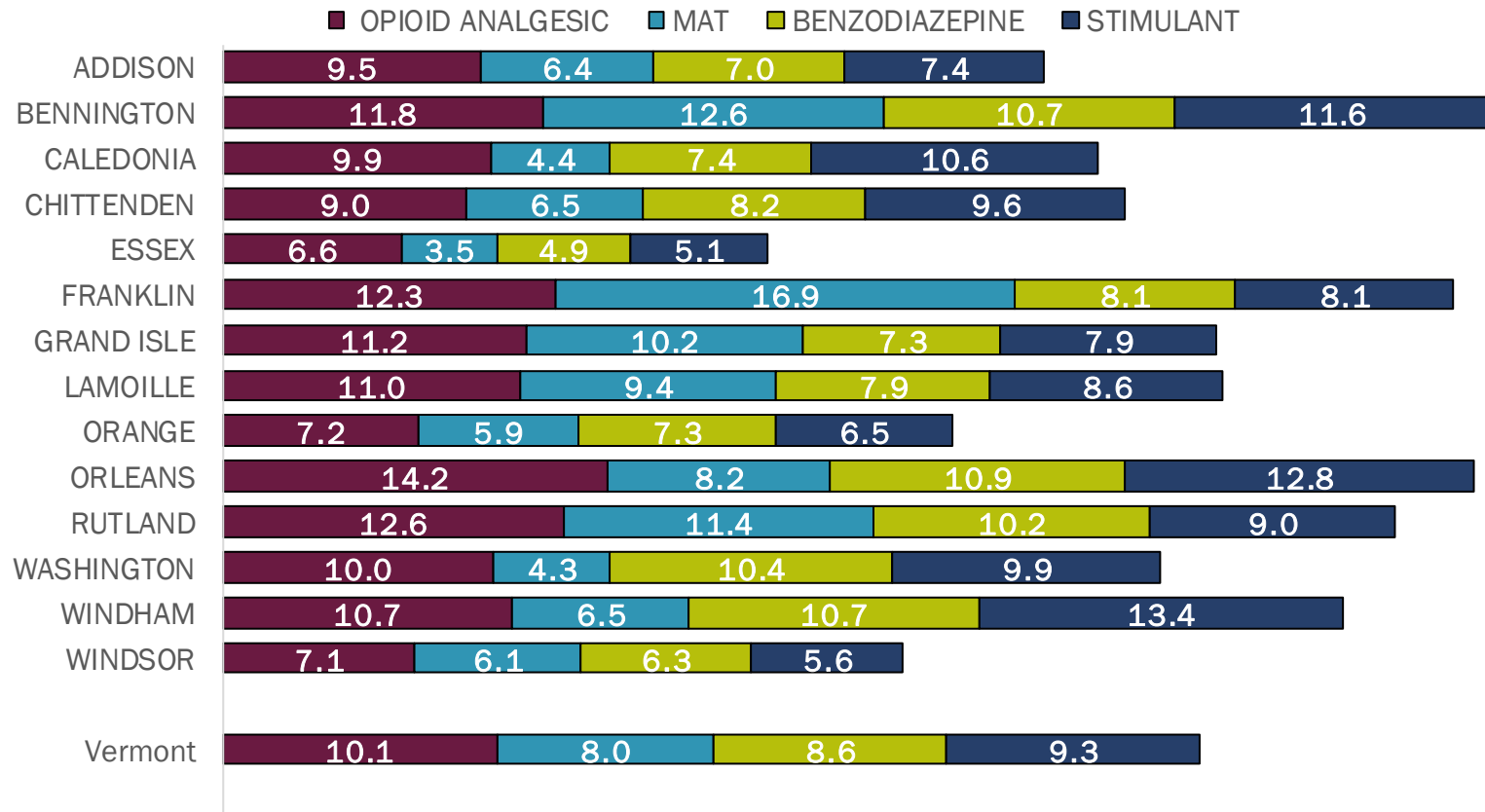
Most prescriptions in all counties are fewer than 50 MME, but there is variability among counties

Proportion of Opioid Analgesic Prescriptions in Daily Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) Categories, July - September 2021



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

Rate of Prescriptions Per 100 Residents by Drug Class, July - September 2021



The number of prescriptions in each drug class varies widely

Number of Prescriptions in Each Drug Class, July – September 2021

| | OPIOID ANALGESIC | MAT | BENZODIAZEPINE | STIMULANT |
|------------|------------------|--------|----------------|-----------|
| ADDISON | 3,491 | 2,349 | 2,564 | 2,720 |
| BENNINGTON | 4,171 | 4,485 | 3,792 | 4,118 |
| CALEDONIA | 2,958 | 1,323 | 2,232 | 3,182 |
| CHITTENDEN | 14,781 | 10,610 | 13,429 | 15,766 |
| ESSEX | 405 | 218 | 302 | 313 |
| FRANKLIN | 6,071 | 8,342 | 4,022 | 3,996 |
| GRAND ISLE | 812 | 738 | 531 | 568 |
| LAMOILLE | 2,783 | 2,380 | 2,007 | 2,188 |
| ORANGE | 2,067 | 1,704 | 2,107 | 1,868 |
| ORLEANS | 3,834 | 2,216 | 2,944 | 3,457 |
| RUTLAND | 7,313 | 6,612 | 5,920 | 5,214 |
| WASHINGTON | 5,853 | 2,538 | 6,068 | 5,770 |
| WINDHAM | 4,520 | 2,750 | 4,520 | 5,662 |
| WINDSOR | 3,895 | 3,338 | 3,474 | 3,085 |
| | | | | |
| Vermont | 62,963 | 49,613 | 53,920 | 57,915 |

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

Feedback on Quarter 3

Please complete the survey on the usefulness of the **Quarter 3** 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:

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or

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

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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>