

Stimulants are drugs that increase—or "stimulate"—activities and processes in the body. This increased activity can boost alertness, attention, and energy. It also can raise your blood pressure and make your heart beat faster. The most common stimulants are cocaine, methamphetamine and prescription stimulants (generally used to treat attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and narcolepsy).

Stimulant misuse, which includes using illicit stimulants, taking someone else's prescription drugs or taking them not as prescribed, can cause serious health effects, addiction and death.

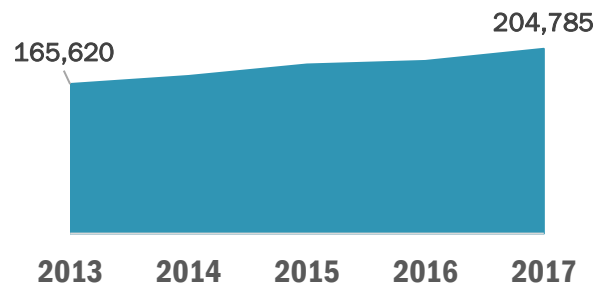
KEY POINTS

- Prescription stimulant dispensing in Vermont is increasing.
- Vermont young adult cocaine use is the highest in the country.
- Hospital visits and fatalities related to stimulant use have increased.
- More people are seeking treatment for stimulant misuse.

The Number of Prescription Stimulants Dispensed in Vermont is Increasing

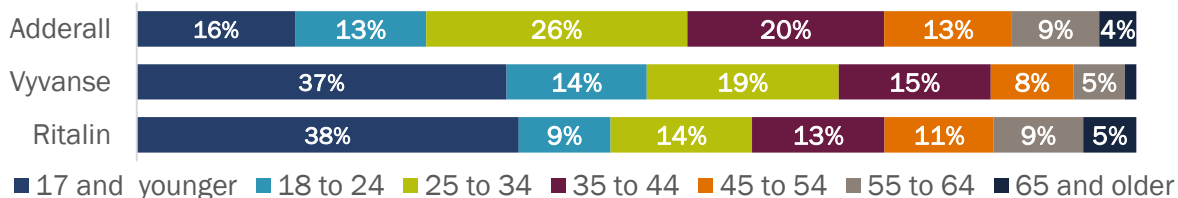
VPMS tracks prescriptions that are dispensed by Vermont-licensed pharmacies.¹ Since 2013, there has been an **increase in the number of stimulants dispensed**, and Vermont has consistently ranked within the top three states in the U.S. for methylphenidate (commonly sold under the name Ritalin) distribution, based on the number of grams per 100,000 people.^{1,2} In 2017, over 23,000 people were dispensed stimulants in Vermont, a 14% increase since 2013.¹ The percent of stimulant prescriptions dispensed by gender was nearly equal in 2017. In previous years, slightly more males received stimulant prescriptions.

The number of stimulant prescriptions dispensed in Vermont has increased.



People under 17 years of age receive the highest proportion of stimulant prescriptions.¹ However, there have been increases in the proportion of stimulant prescriptions in the 35-44 and 65 and older age groups since 2013. The type of stimulant prescription dispensed also varies by age. Individuals 17 and younger are dispensed the largest percentage of Ritalin and Vyvanse, whereas, Adderall is dispensed most often to individuals 25 to 34. Slightly more males are dispensed Ritalin and Vyvanse, while slightly more females are dispensed Adderall.

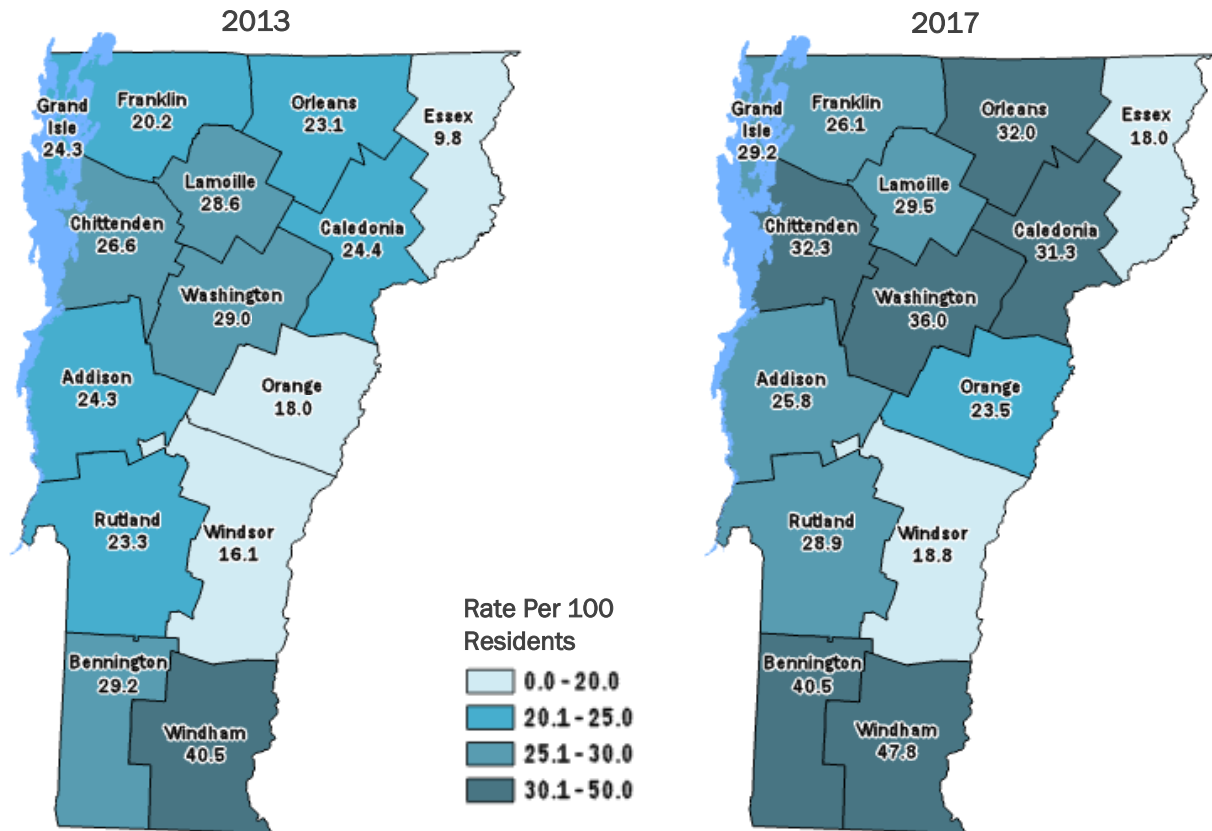
Percent of Prescription Stimulant Type Dispensed by Age



Stimulant Trends

The rate of stimulant prescriptions per 100 Vermont residents increased in every county between 2013 and 2017.¹ The same four counties (Windham, Bennington, Washington, Chittenden) had the highest rates of stimulant prescriptions in both years.¹ Windham had the highest rate.¹

Stimulant prescriptions per 100 Vermont residents have increased in every county



Nearly One-Third of Adults Who Use Prescription Stimulants Misuse Them

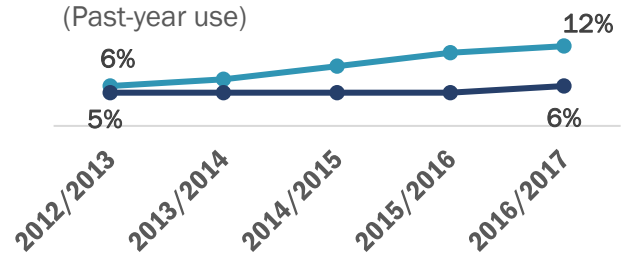
Most people who misuse prescription stimulants do so to increase alertness or concentration, and they most often get them from friends or relatives.³ An analysis of the 2015 and 2016 National Survey on Drug Use & Health (NSDUH) found nearly 6.6% or 16 million of US adults used prescription stimulants in the past year. Of the adults who used prescription stimulants (11 million) a small proportion (0.4 million) had prescription stimulant use disorders. Nearly one-third (5 million) misused them at least once.⁴

Vermonters Aged 18-25 Misuse Stimulants More than Other Age Groups

In 2016/2017 Vermont ranked #1 in the U.S. for past-year cocaine use among 18-25 year olds and use is on the rise.⁵ This age group also does not perceive casual use (once per month) of cocaine to be a great health risk.⁵

Methamphetamine use in Vermont remains low, similar to the U.S. overall.⁵

Cocaine use among Vermonters aged 18-25 is higher than the U.S. and is increasing.

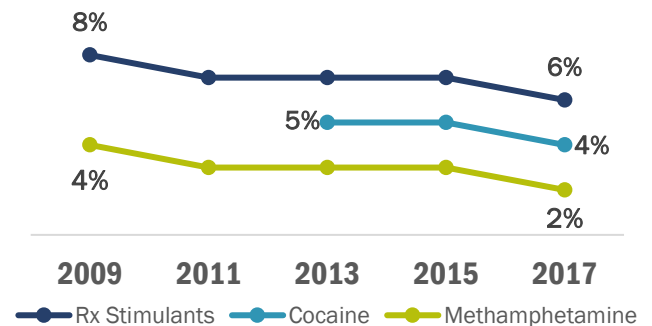


Stimulant Use Among Vermont High Schoolers Has Decreased

Since 2009, misuse of prescription stimulants, cocaine and methamphetamine has decreased among Vermont high schoolers.

Franklin and Chittenden Counties reported significantly lower misuse of prescription stimulants and cocaine, respectively, in 2017 than the state overall.⁶ However, Washington County reported a higher rate of prescription stimulant misuse than Vermont overall.⁶

Stimulant use among Vermont high schoolers has decreased.

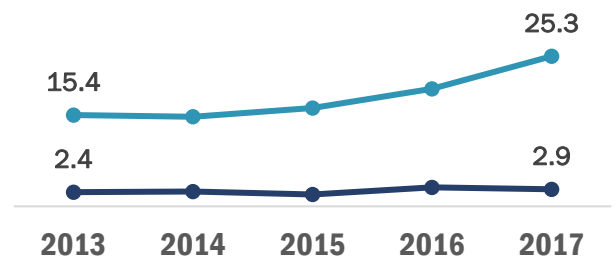


Hospital Visits Related to Stimulant Use Have Increased

In the U.S., there has been a recent increase in hospitalizations and emergency department visits involving stimulants.⁷ Specifically, visits involving non-fatal cocaine and methamphetamine poisonings increased between 2014 and 2015.⁷ In Vermont, the rate per 10,000 hospital visits due to non-fatal stimulant overdoses remained the same over time, but diagnoses related to misuse and stimulant use disorder have increased.⁸

In Vermont, stimulant-related diagnoses increased, while non-fatal overdoses remained the same.

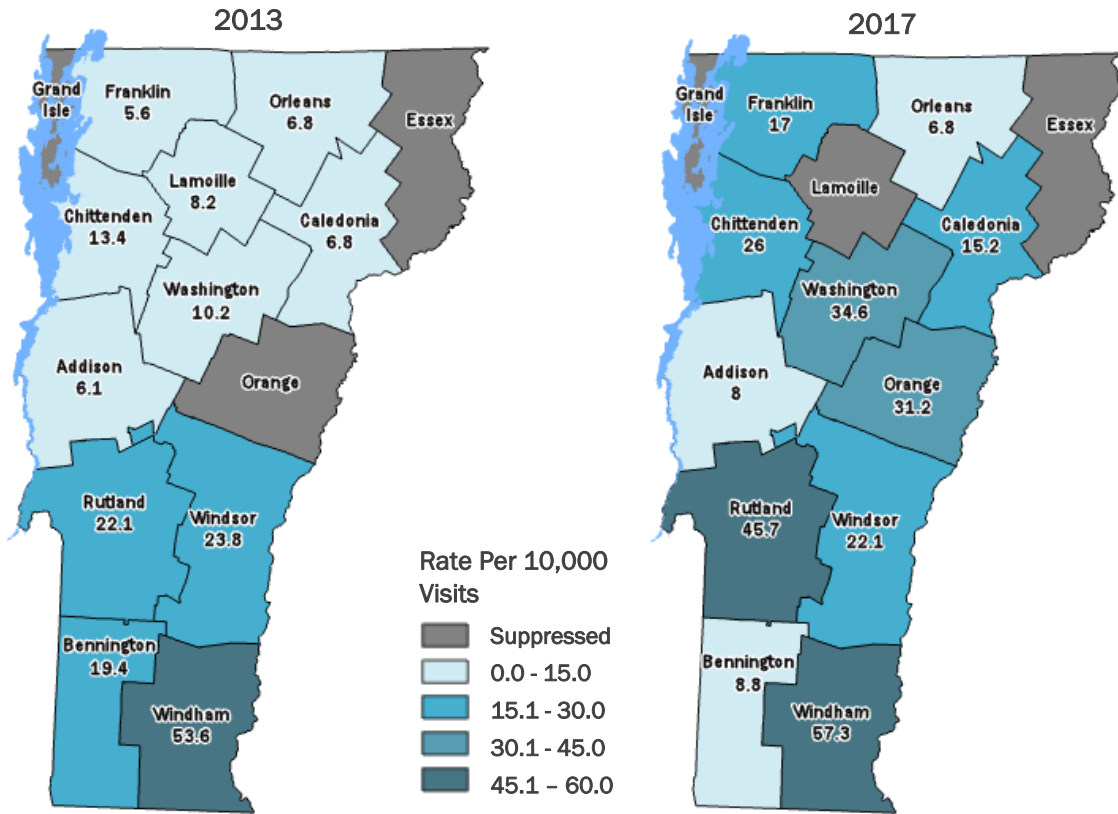
(Per 10,000 hospital visits)



Stimulant Trends

Caledonia, Chittenden, Franklin, Rutland and Washington Counties showed the greatest increase in the rate of hospital visits associated with stimulant misuse between 2013 and 2017, with Washington County having the highest rates both years. Only Bennington County had a decrease.

Stimulant-related diagnoses per 10,000 visits has increased in most counties



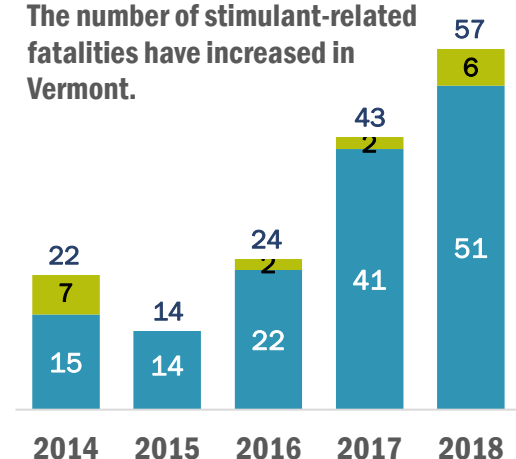
Drug-Related Fatalities Involving Stimulants Have Increased Among Vermonters

From 2014 to 2018, there were 152 fatalities involving stimulants and nearly all (91%) involved cocaine.⁸ Deaths involving prescription stimulants have slightly increased but remain low.⁹

Many (81%) stimulant-related fatalities also involve an opioid.⁹ The combination of cocaine and fentanyl accounted for over one-third of opioid-related fatalities in 2018.⁹

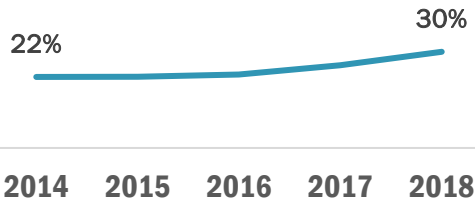
Windham County had the highest rate of stimulant-related fatalities as well as the highest rate of opioid-related fatalities in 2018.⁹

The number of stimulant-related fatalities have increased in Vermont.



More Vermonters Seeking Treatment Say They Misuse Stimulants

The percent of people entering treatment in Vermont saying they misuse stimulants has increased.



More people seeking care for substance use disorders in the state treatment system are reporting that they are **misusing stimulants** in addition to other substances, primarily opioids.

In 2018, almost half of people seeking treatment for stimulant misuse were 25-34 years old and were slightly more likely to be male than female.¹⁰

Vermont's Response

While Vermont is focused on the harms of opioid use disorder, it is critical to not lose sight of trends in other substance use. Vermont data are showing increased use of stimulants and stimulant prescriptions.

The Vermont Department of Health is employing a comprehensive public health response to address stimulant misuse in Vermont that includes needs assessment, surveillance, education, intervention, treatment and recovery supports.

For more information on stimulants: healthvermont.gov/stimulants

For data questions: Amanda Jones, Amanda.jones@vermont.gov

References and Data Sources:

1. Vermont Prescription Monitoring System (VPMS): healthvermont.gov/vpms
2. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders Systems (ARCOS): deadiversion.usdoj.gov/arcos/index.html
3. Compton WM, Han B, Blanco C, Johnson K, Jones CM. Prevalence and Correlates of Prescription Stimulant Use, Misuse, Use Disorders, and Motivations for Misuse Among Adults in the United States. *Am J Psychiatry*. 2018 Aug 1;175(8):741-755. doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.17091048. Epub 2018 Apr 16. PubMed PMID: 29656665; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC6070393.
4. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) report summarizing National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) analysis: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/news-events/news-releases/2018/04/five-million-american-adults-misusing-prescription-stimulants>
5. National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): <https://pdas.samhsa.gov/saes/state>
6. Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS): healthvermont.gov/yrebs
7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Annual Surveillance Report of Drug-Related Risks and Outcomes: 2018: cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2018-cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf
2017: cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/pubs/2017-cdc-drug-surveillance-report.pdf
8. Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data System: healthvermont.gov/HospitalDischargeData
9. Vital Statistics: healthvermont.gov/stats/vital-records
10. Substance Abuse Treatment Information System (SATIS)

Stimulant availability, use, morbidity and mortality are increasing.