



For Immediate Release: April 21, 2017

Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

Vermont is Number One in the Nation for Health Security Preparedness

BURLINGTON – For the second year running, Vermont scored highest among the 50 states and District of Columbia in public health protection readiness, according to the new National Health Security Preparedness Index. The Index measures the nation’s ability to keep people safe and healthy in the event of epidemics, foodborne disease outbreaks, terrorism and other large-scale public health emergencies.

Overall, Vermont scored 7.7 out of 10 points, compared to the national average of 6.8. States were rated on 139 measures from multiple data sources. Vermont was rated higher than the national average in five of six index domains and matched the national average in the other. The index results are not intended for ranking states, according to the report, because states face varying threats and should apply common preparedness principles in locally relevant ways.

The Index is issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in cooperation with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). The report shows strengths and challenges over time in health surveillance, incident and information management, countermeasure management, community planning and engagement, surge management, and Emergency Medical Services.

“The Health Department is working every day to protect and promote the health of Vermonters. Our strength as a state has been our ongoing planning and readiness to respond to public health threats in coordination with communities and key partners,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD.

Vermont’s strengths include health surveillance and epidemiological investigations, incident management and multi-agency coordination, and its focus on health promotion for children and other at-risk populations. Vermont also scored well in medical management, distribution and dispensing of medications, which was a key element of last year’s statewide emergency response exercise, Operation Vigilant Guard.

Vermont has been actively working on making gains in the area of volunteer management, where the state scored 3.3 compared to a national average of 3.9, the state's [OnCall for Vermont](#) is reaching more Vermonters than ever in an effort to recruit people with medical and non-medical backgrounds to join a Medical Reserve Corps unit (MRC) or to become an EMS provider. One such MRC volunteer has just received national recognition for her service. Deborah Carlson of St. Albans, a volunteer with the Northwest Vermont MRC, is one of two individuals out of 200,000 to be selected as National Outstanding MRC Public Health Volunteer.

To view the report, visit nhspi.org.

Learn more about public health preparedness in Vermont at healthvermont.gov/emergency

For health news, alerts and information, visit healthvermont.gov

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

###