

# Public Health in Vermont

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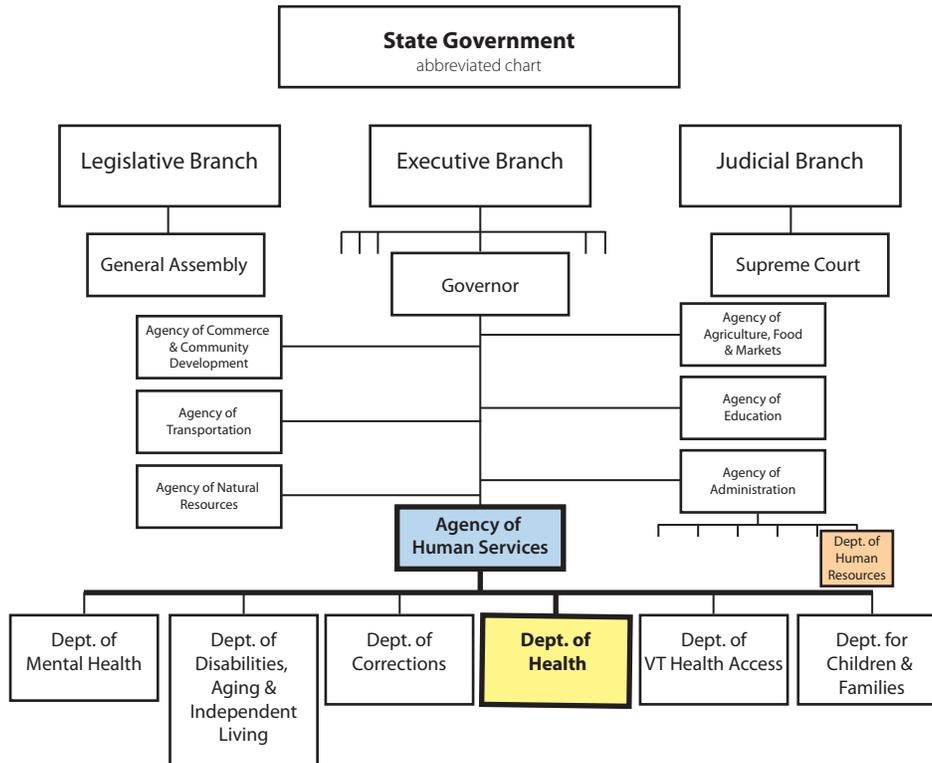
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6.2019

## Where does the Health Department fit in state government?



# What is Public Health?

The Health Department has been working to protect and promote the health of Vermonters for more than 125 years. We are proud to continue this long tradition of public health service—working every day for your health. We are the state’s lead agency for public health policy and advocacy. And it is our calling in public health to focus on avoidable inequalities, especially for those people who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage and social injustice.

Public Health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging healthy life, and promoting physical and mental health. Through our many programs and initiatives, we help Vermonters live fuller, healthier lives from birth through old age.

- We focus on prevention, one of the best investments that can be made in health.
- We promote healthy behaviors such as eating a healthy diet, having regular physical activity and not smoking or abusing alcohol or other drugs.
- We promote and improve access to health services such as immunizations, mammograms, HIV/AIDS testing and care, and prenatal care.
- We investigate disease outbreaks and take action to control the spread of illness.
- We license physicians, hospitals and emergency medical personnel and services, inspect food and lodging establishments, and enforce health regulations.
- We prepare for and respond to public health emergencies and threats, and provide Vermonters with current, correct and credible information to stay safe and healthy.
- We continually track and report on the health status of Vermonters, health risks and behaviors, and progress toward meeting Healthy Vermonters 2020 goals.

Essential public health services are available across the state through our 12 local offices. The local offices work in partnership with health care providers, volunteer agencies, schools, businesses, coalitions and organizations in their communities to improve health and extend public health initiatives across the state.

As part of the Agency of Human Services, we work with the departments of Mental Health (DMH), Children and Families (DCF), Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), and Vermont Health Access (DVHA) to improve the health and wellbeing of Vermonters.

## Public Health in Daily Life

Vermonters are able to live longer and healthier lives, thanks to more than 125 years of work by the Vermont Department of Health. On average, people in the U.S. are living 30 years longer than previous generations. Twenty-five of those years are credited to public health achievements such as childhood vaccinations, infection control measures, safer workplaces, services for mothers and babies, and recognizing tobacco as a leading public health threat.

The daily work of the Health Department may be invisible to most Vermonters, but it makes a difference to people's health every day.

### A Day in Your Life

**6 a.m.** – Up out of bed, you head for the shower and then brush your teeth. You have confidence that your water is safe and clean because you've had it tested by the Health Department Laboratory. You also know that routine dental exams, combined with fluoride in the public water system, will assure your teeth will last a lifetime. In the kitchen, you set out milk, fruit, cereal and whole grain bread. You know that a nutritious breakfast is the best start for kids and adults alike. On the radio, you hear that flu season is coming to a close. Your family is up to date on their vaccinations, and no one's been sick this year.

**7 a.m.** – You head off to the car. Fastening seat belts is a habit – and your policy is “hands off” mobile devices, for safety's sake. It's snowing and you drive at a safe speed. You know from public health messages that most crashes and injuries are avoidable.

**8 a.m.** – At work you enjoy a smoke-free environment, just like almost everywhere else. Vermont was the first state to ban smoking in public places, thanks to the efforts of public health. You smile because your best friend has succeeded in quitting, with help from 802 Quits. Your kids have never smoked, thanks to your example and the public health messages all around them.

**9 a.m.** – Your sister calls. She and her new baby are just back from the pediatrician. The six-week checkup was great! The Health Department promotes early prenatal care, and every baby gets a newborn screening to test for conditions that, if untreated, can cause development and learning delays and severe health problems. If a child has a special health need, the Health Department coordinates specialty care. She's also thrilled with her visits to her Health Department local office, free Text-4-Baby health tips, breastfeeding support, healthy WIC foods and nutrition services, plus a debit-like card to buy fresh fruit and vegetables at local markets.



**12 noon** – It’s still snowing, but you change into treaded boots and head out the door to join your lunchtime walking partners. Public health studies have shown that people who exercise regularly live longer and healthier, with less chronic disease. You have learned to fit regular physical activity into your busy day.

**12:30 p.m.** – For lunch you stop for take-out soup and salad. You assume that the food is safe to eat because the Health Department oversees inspection and licensing of restaurants, publishes scores, and investigates food-borne illness outbreaks.

**1 p.m.** – Back at work, you hear the sound of sirens as an ambulance passes your building. Thanks to the Health Department, it is fully equipped and inspected, with EMTs trained and certified. They are part of a system to make sure critically ill or injured people have the best possible chance of survival.

**4 p.m.** – Another day ends. You start your car and the radio comes on. You hear a public service announcement advising parents to make sure their young children have all their vaccines. Public health promotes early childhood immunizations to protect against serious, sometimes life-threatening diseases.

**5 p.m.** – Your children are home, after a day of school. You limit sitting time in front of TV in favor of outdoor activity. You are all on track to keep the extra pounds off and the energy on to live, work, learn and play for a long time to come!

**6 p.m.** – Your family comes together for dinner, and you tell them to wash their hands before eating. “To keep germs from spreading, we know” they say. “And cover your cough, wash your hands, stay home and away from others when you’re sick.”



**7 p.m.** – The evening news tells of a mysterious illness among visitors at a local event. Thankfully, the outbreak is under control. The Health Department’s planning, practice and close coordination with other local and federal agencies has made for a faster and more effective response to any public health emergency.

**8 p.m.** – It’s time to talk with your pre-teen about drinking and drugs. You’ve prepared for this, with help from the Health Department’s and your community’s Parent Up campaign. You say a silent thank-you and make a mental note to join the local health coalition.

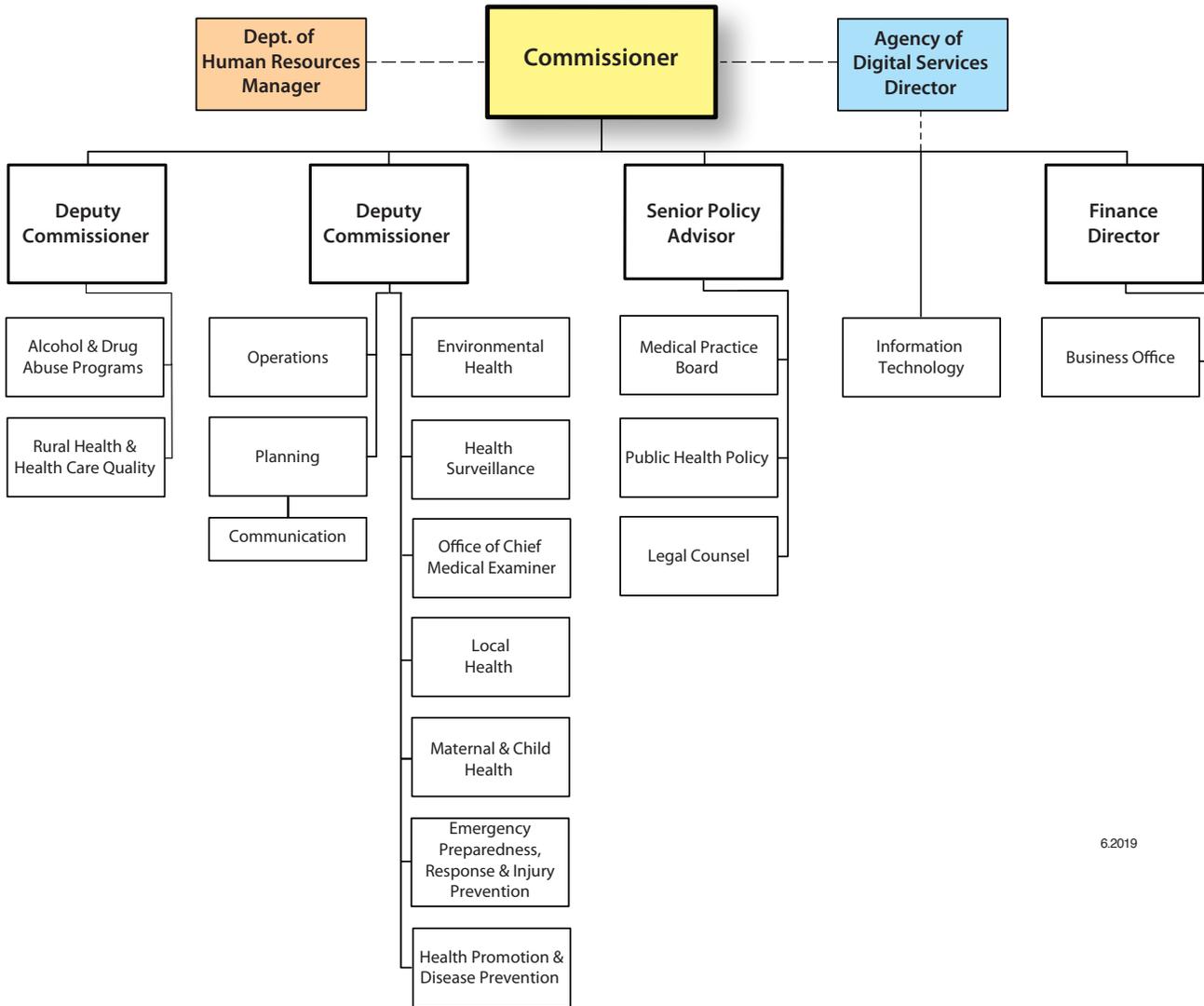
**10 p.m.** – It’s time for bed and you drift off to sleep. Public health has touched your lives in countless ways today, working behind the scenes—nearly invisibly—to keep you your family and your community safe and sound.

*The Vermont Department of Health began as the Vermont State Board of Health in 1886. It was one of the first statewide public health organization in the country. Read more about our history at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)*



# VERMONT

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



6.2019

# ● Organization of the Department of Health

The Health Department is part of the Agency of Human Services, and is led by the Health Commissioner. The department's work is guided by our strategic plan, located on our website.

[www.healthvermont.gov/about-us/reports/strategic-plan](http://www.healthvermont.gov/about-us/reports/strategic-plan)

## ● Administration

### Commissioner's Office

Deputy Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner

Senior Policy & Legal Advisor

Assistant Attorneys General

Chief of Operations

Public Health Communication & Policy Advisor

Financial Director

Human Resources Manager

Information Technology Director

Planning Director

### Business Office

Provides business management services to the Department of Health in accordance with Vermont Agency of Administration policies and procedures.

- Budget preparation and financial monitoring
- Payroll/accounts payable and receivable
- Audit/cost allocation and federal programs financial services
- Subgrant and contract processing

### Information Technology

Provides reliable quality software that supports the diverse programs of the Department of Health.

Utilizes standards and best practices that will result in appropriate software solutions, whether developed in-house or purchased.

- Requirements gathering and quality assurance
- Application development and support
- Data services
- Health Information Exchange
- IT expertise and project management skills for RFPs and contracts

### Rural Health & Health Care Quality

Collaborates with clinical and health system partners to: improve quality and performance of critical access and rural hospitals; expand access to primary, dental and mental health services regardless of insurance coverage; and support recruitment and retention of primary care, oral health and mental health workforce.

- Rural health and primary care programs
- Access to health care
- Quality improvement in the health care system

## Operations

Provides, develops, coordinates, manages and facilitates the operational and business practices for the Health Department that include central office, 12 local offices, laboratory and Medical Examiner's Office.

- Business Resource Center: mail, facilities, conference room scheduling and oversight, space management and renovations, work station design, printing, telecommunications
- Continuity of Operations (COOP): plan for and manage business continuity to ensure essential functions
- Audio/visual equipment: manage, troubleshoot and provide education for state-of-the-art equipment
- Intranet: facilitate internal communication and consistent business systems
- Records management program: ensure that all records of the department are managed
- Public records: respond to all public requests for records of the department
- Respiratory protection program: ensure fit-testing of employees, policies, record keeping
- HIPPA: ensure that all employees are trained in managing confidential health information
- Business systems and process improvement: ensure that business systems are efficient and customer responsive

## Planning

Works with staff throughout the department to facilitate planning and integration of activities to improve population health outcomes and internal systems. Collaborates with clinical and cross-sector partners to improve health.

- Develop state health improvement plan and department's strategic plan
- Maintain status as an accredited health department
- Performance management
- Workforce development
- Health in All Policies
- Health equity
- Refugee health
- Health system transformation

## Communication Office

Works with department leadership and staff to provide useful, accurate, credible and timely public health information and messages to Vermonters. Leads or coordinates local, state and national public health communication efforts.

- Crisis, emergency and risk communication
- Media relations
- Social marketing
- Social media
- Graphic design, branding
- Website
- Public Information Officer (PIO) function for emergency events
- Publications

## ● Offices & Divisions

### Alcohol & Drug Abuse Programs/Division

Oversees a network of health promotion, prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services to prevent, reduce, and eliminate the problems caused by alcohol and drug misuse. Works with national, state and community-based organizations to make programs and services available to Vermonters.

- Adolescent treatment system
- Alcohol and drug information and resources
- Opioid treatment programs
- Recovery support services
- School-based substance abuse services
- Substance abuse intervention
- Substance abuse prevention
- Substance abuse treatment

### Emergency Preparedness, Response & Injury Prevention/Division

Coordinates, develops and manages preparedness and response capabilities within the department. Works with external partners to manage emergency health/medical preparedness and response.

- Emergency Medical Services
- Health Alert Network
- Health Operations Center/Incident Command
- Health care and hospital preparedness
- Strategic National Stockpile/Cities Readiness Initiative
- Volunteer registration (OnCall for Vermont)
- Child passenger safety

### Environmental Health/Division

Works to assess or minimize human exposure to health and safety hazards at home, school and in the environment.

- Environmental public health tracking
- Asbestos and lead regulation
- Food and lodging
- Private drinking water
- Radiological health
- Radon
- Recreational water
- School environmental health (Envision)
- Toxicology and risk assessment

## Health Promotion and Disease Prevention/Division

Promotes healthy behaviors, reduction of risky behaviors, and improvement of chronic disease self-management. Program elements include individual, family, organizational, community and policy strategies to promote population health.

- Asthma
- Chronic disease prevention
- Comprehensive cancer control
- Diabetes prevention and control
- Nutrition and physical activity
- Oral health
- Tobacco cessation, education and control
- Women's health: Ladies First—a breast and cervical cancer and heart health screening program

## Health Surveillance/Division

Provides information regarding the health status of Vermonters. Conducts surveillance, prevention, and control for infectious diseases. Provides quality laboratory services.

- Public Health Statistics
  - Research, epidemiology and evaluation
  - Research and statistics
  - Immunization registry
  - Cancer registry
  - Vital records
- Infectious Diseases
  - HIV/AIDS/STDs and Hepatitis C
  - Tuberculosis
  - Zoonotic diseases
  - Immunization program
  - Epidemiology program
  - Food-borne disease
  - Vector-borne disease
  - Health care-associated infections
- Public Health Laboratory
  - Customer service
  - Microbiology
  - Organic chemistry
  - Inorganic chemistry/radiochemistry

## Local Health/Office

Provides public health leadership and direct services to Vermonters in their communities. Local health offices in 12 locations around the state work closely with other Agency of Human Services local office staff to provide public health leadership, community health assessments, coalition building and planning. Provides health promotion, disease prevention, outreach, education, emergency preparedness and follow-up necessary to support an effective public health system. It is through the local offices that most Health Department programs reach Vermonters.

## Maternal and Child Health/Division

Assures delivery of core public health services (infrastructure building, population-based, enabling and direct health care) to improve maternal and child health.

- Preventive reproductive services, including family planning and preconception health
- WIC: Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
- Breastfeeding promotion and support
- Help Me Grow Vermont: connecting children and families to developmental resources
- Early childhood home visiting
- Health, wellness and safety in child care
- Children's preventive health services and screening guidelines; Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Services (EPSDT)
- School and adolescent health
- Children with special health needs clinical and care coordination
- Child injury prevention and domestic and sexual violence prevention

## Board of Medical Practice

Provides administrative support to the Board of Medical Practice, which regulates MDs, PAs, podiatrists, and anesthesiology assistants.

- Licenses MDs, PAs, podiatrists and certifies anesthesiology assistants and radiologist assistants
- Investigates complaints and charges of unprofessional conduct against any health care profession it licenses or certifies, and determines if charges are substantiated
- Executive Director administers hospital licensing issues

## Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

The Medical Examiner's Office determines the causes of non-natural deaths in Vermont.

- Death investigations
- Assistant medical examiner program

## Statewide Locations



### Central Office

Vermont Department of Health  
108 Cherry Street  
Burlington, Vermont 05401  
Phone: 800-464-4343 • 802-863-7200

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HealthVermont](http://www.facebook.com/HealthVermont)  
[www.facebook.com/VermontTracking](http://www.facebook.com/VermontTracking)  
[www.facebook.com/Vermont-Emergency-Medical-Services](http://www.facebook.com/Vermont-Emergency-Medical-Services)



### Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

University of Vermont Medical Center  
111 Colchester Avenue  
Baird-1, JME Facility  
Burlington, Vermont 05401  
Phone: 802-863-7320



### Public Health Laboratory

359 South Park Drive  
Colchester, VT 05446  
Phone: 800-660-9997 • 802-338-4724



### Barre Office

McFarland Office Building  
5 Perry Street, Suite 250  
Barre, VT 05641-4272  
Phone: 888-253-8786 • 802-479-4200  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhbarre](http://www.facebook.com/vdhbarre)



### Bennington Office

324 Main Street, Suite 2  
Bennington, VT 05201  
Phone: 800-637-7347 • 802-447-3531  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhbennington](http://www.facebook.com/vdhbennington)



### **Brattleboro Office**

232 Main Street, Suite 3  
Brattleboro, VT 05301-2881  
Phone: 888-253-8805 • 802-257-2880  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhbrattleboro](http://www.facebook.com/vdhbrattleboro)



### **Burlington Office**

108 Cherry Street  
Burlington, VT 05401-9962  
Phone: 888-253-8803 • 802-863-7323  
Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/VTDeptHealthChittendenCo](http://www.facebook.com/VTDeptHealthChittendenCo)  
[www.facebook.com/VTBreastfeeding](http://www.facebook.com/VTBreastfeeding)



### **Middlebury Office**

156 South Village Green, Suite 102  
Middlebury, VT 05753  
Phone: 888-253-8804 • 802-388-4644  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhmiddlebury](http://www.facebook.com/vdhmiddlebury)



### **Morrisville Office**

63 Professional Drive, Suite 1  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
Phone: 888-253-8798 • 802-888-7447  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhmorrisville](http://www.facebook.com/vdhmorrisville)



### **Newport Office**

100 Main Street, Suite 220  
Newport, VT 05855  
Phone: 800-952-2945 • 802-334-6707  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhnewport](http://www.facebook.com/vdhnewport)



### **Rutland Office**

300 Asa Bloomer State Office Building  
88 Merchants Row  
Rutland, VT 05701  
Phone: 888-253-8802 • 802-786-5811  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhrutland](http://www.facebook.com/vdhrutland)



### **St. Albans Office**

27 Federal Street, Suite 201  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
Phone: 888-253-8801 • 802-524-7970  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhstalbans](http://www.facebook.com/vdhstalbans)



### **St. Johnsbury Office**

107 Eastern Avenue, Suite 9  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819-2638  
Phone: 800-952-2936 • 802-748-5151  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhstjohnsbury](http://www.facebook.com/vdhstjohnsbury)



### **Springfield Office**

100 Mineral Street, Suite 104  
Springfield, VT 05156  
Phone: 888-296-8151 • 802-885-5778  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhspringfield](http://www.facebook.com/vdhspringfield)



### **White River Junction Office**

118 Prospect St., Suite 300  
White River Junction, VT 05001  
Phone: 888-253-8799 • 802-295-8820  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/vdhwrij](http://www.facebook.com/vdhwrij)



public  
prevention **Healthy** support  
**Vermonters**  
promote equity **valued** Living  
**communities** workforce

## Vision

Healthy Vermonters living in healthy communities

## Mission

Protect and promote the best health for all Vermonters