



**Age Strong Vermont: Our
Roadmap for an Age-friendly
State**

Age Strong Vermont: A multisector plan on healthy aging

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House Committee on Health Care
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Vermont's Commitment to Aging Strong for All Vermonters



Vermont's older population is our fastest growing age group. By 2030, one in three of us will be over the age of 60. Becoming an age-friendly state requires a holistic approach that brings us together to ensure older Vermonters are able to contribute their time, wisdom,

talents and skills to our communities and to address a wide range of changing needs—such as housing, healthcare, transportation, caregiving, access to healthy food, education and employment.

The Age Strong Vermont Plan

Age Strong VT is a new 10-year visionary plan with strategies for making Vermont a great place for all ages and stages of life.

What Do We Prioritize to Create Healthy Aging for All?

1







Focus on 8 Pillars of Aging Strong: self-determination, safety and protection, financial security, **optimal health and wellness**, social connection, housing/transportation and community design, family caregiver support, and coordinated system of services

2

Create an Age-Friendly State and Dementia-Friendly Communities

3

Reduce Chronic Diseases Across the Lifespan

Healthy Aging Indicators by Age Group		60-69	70-79	80+
	Live alone ¹	26%	33%	48%
	Rarely or never gets the social and emotional support they need ²	9%	12%	19%
	Fell during the past year ³	34%	31%	36%
	Had worsening memory and confusion in the past year ⁴	9%	8%	16%
	Did not see a healthcare provider in the past year ⁵	19%	11%	10%
	Consumes alcohol at a risk level ⁶	33%	22%	13%

Data source: VT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System: ¹ 2019-2021; ² 2016, 2018, 2020; ³ 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020; ⁴ 2013, 2016, 2020; ⁵ 2015-2021; ⁶ 2018-2021

Source: [Age Strong Vermont: Our Roadmap for an Age-friendly State](#) | Vermont Department of Health (healthvermont.gov)

Summary

- ✓ Vermont has the 4th oldest population in the nation.*
- ✓ The 60-69 age group is the largest-by-decade age group in the state.
- ✓ Each age group has different risk factors.
- ✓ The percent of older adults living alone and experiencing cognitive decline increases with age.

*Ranked by age of state populations in 2020, www.prb.org/resources/which-us-states-are-the-oldest/

These 5 objectives are our focus for aging strong, aging well.

Strategies include:

- Accessible physical activity (PA), nutrition and substance use prevention/treatment.
- Expansion of sidewalks & make existing sidewalks safer.
- Focus on dementia risk reduction (blood pressure & diabetes management, diabetes prevention, protect hearing & vision, address depression, educate on sleep, combat social isolation).
- Increase social engagement, oral health and firearm safety.

Reduce Chronic Diseases & Co-Morbidities

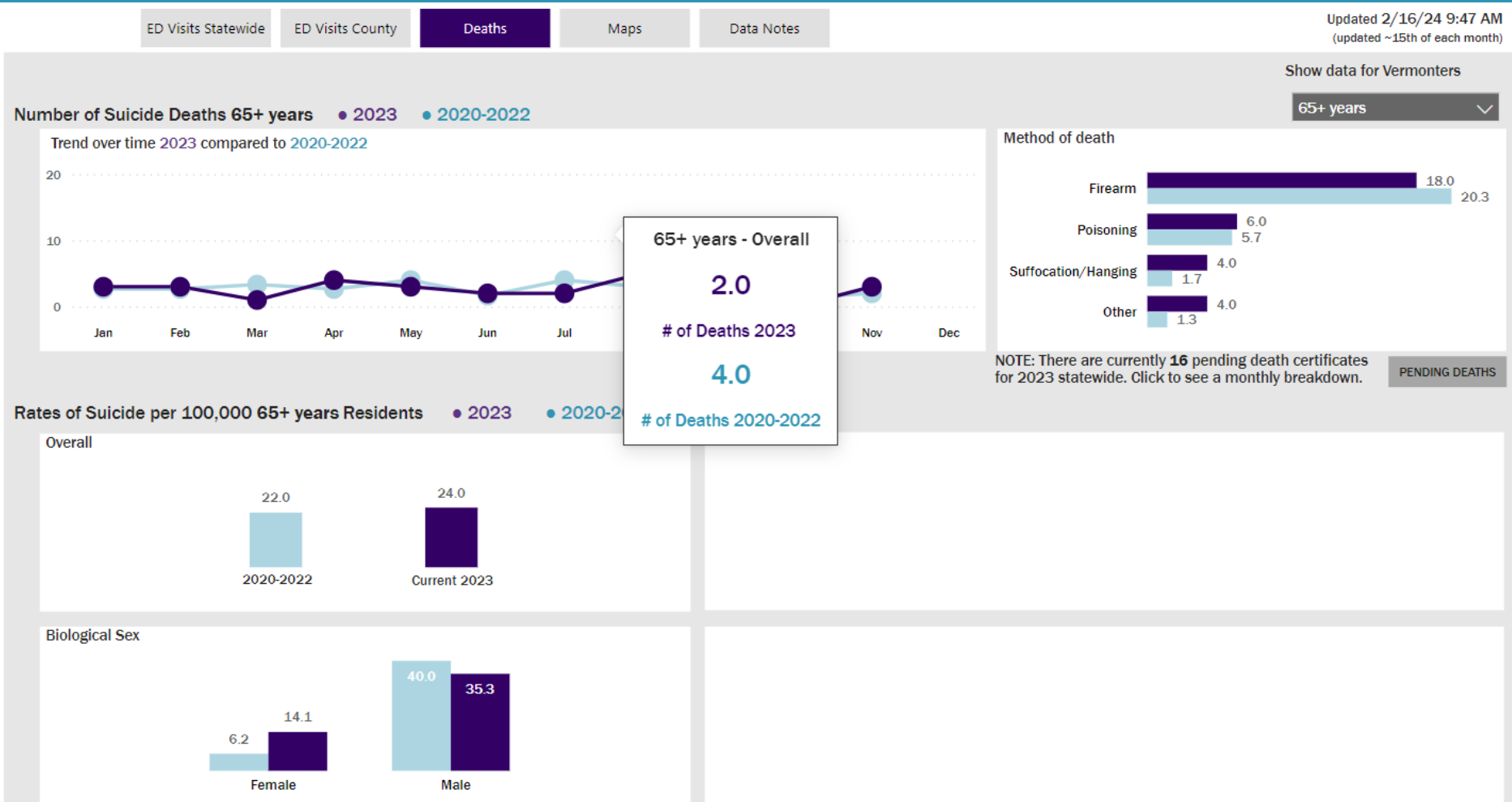
Increase Physical Activity

Reduce Food Insecurity

Reduce Falls and Falls-Related Deaths

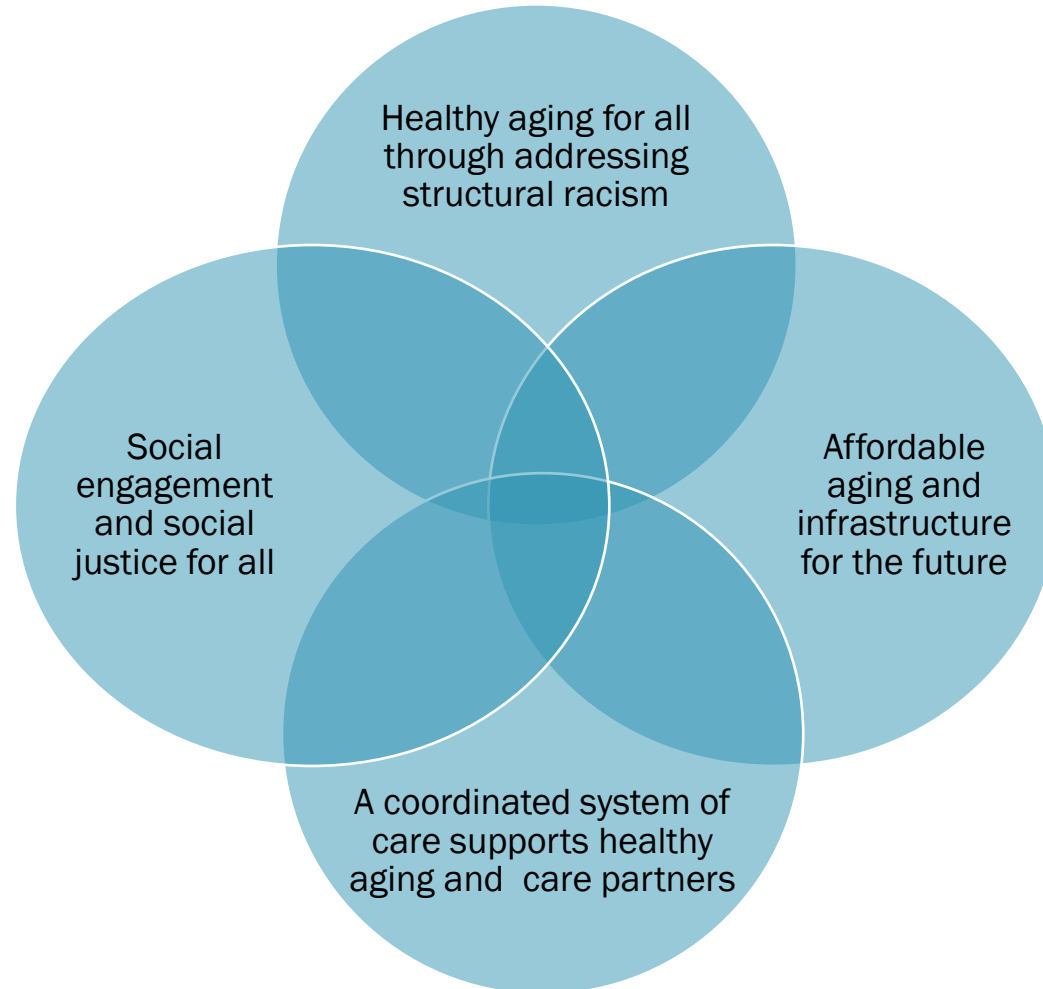
Prevent Suicide

Number of Suicide Deaths 65+ years and Impact on Men



Source: Vermont Vital Statistics, 2020-2023.
Death data is reported with an 8 week lag to minimize changes in numbers. 2023 data is through November and is preliminary.

Healthy Aging is Based on Working Together and Across Sectors



Ongoing and New Strategies for Aging Strong

Ongoing

- Combat ageism and ageist policies by [reframing aging](#)
- Support 3 physical activity programs ([Walk with Ease](#), [PEARLS](#) and aquatics) at several AAAs through the new Arthritis Grant
- Create more accessible [gym](#) and [community space](#) use
- Integrate [brain health](#) into chronic disease messaging (heart health is brain health)
- Implement the new [Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035](#)
- Treat hunger as a social determinant of health [Vital Sign](#)
- Increase access to [in-home and congregate meals](#)
- Conduct coordinated [malnutrition screening](#)
- [Screen for Social Drivers of Health](#) by using Z Codes during doctor/clinical visits
- Use the [Z Codes](#) to monitor how we are addressing the social drivers of health
- Expand community and clinical falls prevention efforts including use of the intervention, [Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths and Injuries](#) (STEADI)
- Increase [What Matters for Aging](#) assessments

New

- Create a new [Physical Activity Plan for VT](#)
- Promote [aging well across the lifespan](#)
- [Reduce suicide risk](#) of older men by addressing risk factors (employment, social isolation, engagement, access to firearms)
- Include older Vermonters in [Zero to Suicide](#) promotions and interventions
- [Reduce social isolation](#) through increasing engagement opportunities across sectors, programming and interventions
- Deliver education on [evidence-based brain health lifestyle modifications](#) among midlife + in community settings and through channels that reach lower income and those at higher risk for dementia;. Community materials [here](#).
- Add Physical Activity and Strength Training Classes to [My Healthy VT](#)
- Use Food (as part of [Food as Medicine](#)) and [Exercise](#) prescriptions
- Allow [SNAP benefits](#) at local restaurants
- Provide health insurance coverage of [oral health services](#)
- Provide [dentures](#) for adults to aid eating and adequate nutrition
- Access to [electronic health alerts](#)

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Lynne Cardozo, Family Caregiver	Dan Groberg, Department of Housing and Community Development
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Kim Fitzgerald, Cathedral Square Corporation	Joe Nusbaum, Division of Licensing & Protection
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How Can We Measure Progress on Achieving Aging Strong for All?

- [Agency of Human Services Scorecard](#)
- [Healthy Vermonters 2030 Scorecards](#)
- [Healthy Vermonters 2030: Older Adults](#)
- [2024 State Health Assessment](#)
- [Chronic Diseases: Cardiovascular Disease Data](#)
- [3-4-50 Performance Dashboard](#)
- [Annual BRFSS Reports](#)
- [Bi-Annual YRBS Reports](#)
- [Hospital Community Health Needs Assessment Reports](#)

Act186 VERMONTERS ARE HEALTHY

- + VDH Obesity % of adults age 20 and older who are obese
- + VDH % of adults who smoke cigarettes
- + VDH AHS % of adults binge drinking in the past 30 days (NSDUH)
- + VAHS Act 186 Number of persons who are homeless (adults and children)
- + VDMH Rate of suicide deaths per 100,000 Vermonters
- + VDH Fall-related death rate per 100,000 adults age 65 and older
- + VDMH Percentage of Vermont adults with any mental health conditions receiving treatment
- + VDH Number of accidental (non-suicide) drug deaths involving opioids
- + VDH Number of opioid analgesic morphine milligram equivalents (MMEs) dispensed per 100 residents

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend
2021	30%	↑ 1
2021	16%	↑ 1
2012	24%	↓ 2
2023	3,295	↑ 4
2020	17.6	↑ 1
2022	137.0	↑ 1
2019	59%	↑ 3
2022	243	↑ 3
2022	34,327	↓ 7

Source: AHS Scorecard, [2018 OUTCOMES REPORT \("Act 186"\)](#) (clearimpact.com)

VDH Performance Measures: Older Adults Maintain Health & Wellbeing

2030 Increase protective factors and supports for older adults

- + I 2030 % of adults age 45 and older with subjective cognitive decline who discussed their symptoms with a provider
- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older with diagnosed diabetes who have ever received formal diabetes self-management education (DSME)
- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older who did not engage in leisure time physical activity in the past month
- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older living below the poverty level in the past 12 months
















Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2020	50%	55%	→ 0
2022	46%	53%	↗ 1
2022	28%	22%	↗ 1
2022	8%	5%	↘ 1





2030 Increase preventive care and reduce acute care among older adults

- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older who delayed dental care due to cost
- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older who were vaccinated against seasonal influenza for the most recent flu season
- + I 2030 Rate of heat-related emergency department visits per 100,000 adults age 65 and older
- + I 2030 % of adults age 65 and older with any mental health condition receiving treatment

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2021	7%	5%	→ 0
2023	66%	65%	↗ 1
2021	13	13	→ 0
—	—	—	—

VDH Performance Measures: Older Adults Maintain Health & Wellbeing Continued

-    **Reduce preventable deaths among older adults**
-    Rate of deaths related to falls per 100,000 adults age 65 and older
-    Rate of deaths related to firearms per 100,000 adults age 65 and older
-    Rate of deaths related to motor vehicle traffic per 100,000 adults age 65 and older
-    Rate of suicide deaths per 100,000 adults age 65 and older

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2022	137	117	 1
2022	19	9	 2
2022	17	7	 1
2022	24	14	 1

Prevent Premature Death

– O 2030 Prevent deaths related to chronic disease

- + I 2030 Rate of deaths for any cause among adults 18 and older with diabetes
- + I 2030 Rate of deaths from cancer per 100,000 people
- + I 2030 Rate of deaths with a primary cause of coronary heart disease

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2022	185	137	↗ 2
2020	152	140	→ 0
2022	145	144	↘ 1

– O 2030 Increase use of supportive healthcare resources

- + I 2030 % of adults age 45 and older with subjective cognitive decline who discussed their symptoms with a provider
- + I 2030 % of adults age 18 and older with diagnosed diabetes who have ever received formal diabetes self-management education (DSME)

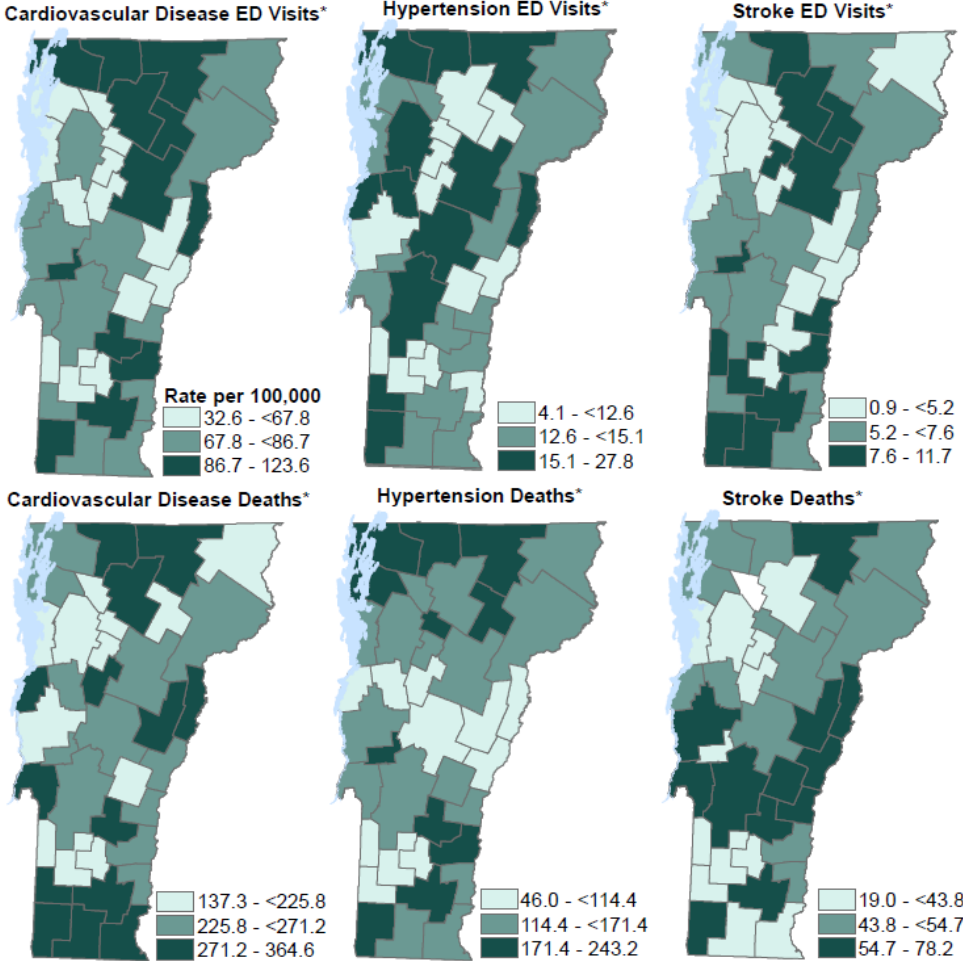
Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2020	50%	55%	→ 0
2022	50%	57%	↗ 1

– O 2030 Prevent worsening of chronic and acute disease

- + I 2030 % of newly reported and confirmed Hepatitis C cases that are classified as acute
- + I 2030 % of adults age 18 and older with chronic kidney disease who have ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure
- + I 2030 % of people age 13 and older living with diagnosed HIV infection who were virally suppressed in the past 12 months

Time Period	Current Actual Value	Current Target Value	Current Trend
2022	6%	25%	→ 0
2022	72%	59%	↘ 2
2022	93%	100%	↘ 1

Tackling Health Risks and Chronic Disease are Instrumental for Aging Strong



Data Sources (2014-2016):
 Vermont Vital Statistics
 Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set
 Vermont Health Care Uniform Reporting and Evaluation System

Data Notes:
 *All data are rates per 100,000 residents and age-adjusted to the 2010 Vermont population
 Emergency Department (ED) visits use ICD 9 & 10 codes; primary diagnosis for cardiovasc
 Death rates were calculated using ICD 10 codes; underlying cause for cardiovascular disea
 VHCURES adherence data include all claims for Medicaid and commercial insurers.

State Health Assessment: Health Drivers for Older Vermonters

- Low earnings and income
- High rent
- Social isolation
- Housing challenges
- Risk of falling
- Feel unheard

Health drivers

- ✔ **A growing group:** The number of Vermonters aged 65 and older nearly doubled between 2010 and 2021, from 10.5% to 19.5% of the population.

"I usually ask for money for birthdays and holidays and use that to help offset medical costs."

- ✔ Facing many **financial challenges**:
 - ✔ Only 22% are in the workforce earning additional income
 - ✔ An average annual income around \$7,500 less than the state average
 - ✔ 9.1% live below the poverty line
 - ✔ More than half of renters spend greater than 30% of income on rent
- ✔ Around 26% **live alone**, making support harder to reach when needed.
- ✔ Two-thirds report **challenges accessing** needed community health services.

Older Vermonters identify their challenges to aging well:

- Assistance with tasks of **daily living**
- Social isolation**
- Barriers to **physical activity**
- Access** to healthcare services
- Availability of **healthy foods** in adequate amounts
- Housing** that fits their needs
- Financial limitations**
- Not feeling heard**

- ✔ Only 78% of older Vermonters have a **reliable internet connection**.
- ✔ Two-thirds have tried to reduce their **risk of falling**, a common cause of injury.

"I started using a food shelf and cut back on presents to my grandchildren."

State Health Assessment: Health Conditions for Older Vermonters

- ❑ Access to healthcare is a challenge
- ❑ Family caregiving for dementia is common
- ❑ High rates of hypertension, disability, arthritis & cholesterol

Health conditions

- ✔ **Access to healthcare** is one of the most commonly cited challenge for older Vermonters.
- ✔ Social and environmental stressors, like climate change and COVID, have a greater impact on already vulnerable groups.
- ✔ Of those providing care to family members or partners:
 - ✔ 41% said they are **supporting someone** with a form of dementia
 - ✔ Over half provide support more than **20 hours a week**, many do so 24/7
 - ✔ Problems accessing and **affording respite care** is a common concern
 - ✔ Spouses as caregivers report **more problems** with their own health

Access to care barriers:

- Transportation
- Getting and keeping insurance
- Co-payments
- Limited dental coverage

"I put off my hernia operation until I had paid off my visit to [the] emergency [room] with fractured hip"

	Have a disability	Have arthritis	Ever had cancer	Have cardiovascular disease	Have hypertension	Have high cholesterol
All US	29%	25%	7%	8%	30%	30%
All VT	25%	29%	7%	8%	25%	25%
65+ Vermonters	38%	54%	18%	18%	52%	52%

- ✔ Higher rates of chronic disease, disability, and cancer have profound impacts on the **emotional health, the need to access healthcare, and the budgets** of older residents.

- Key themes:**
- Increased, unique healthcare needs
 - Major financial strains
 - Gaps in social supports
 - Gaps in service supports

New and Ongoing Efforts to Create Age Strong VT



strong families
VERMONT start at home

HOME VISITING FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
A PART OF CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES



What is Choices for Care? Am I eligible?

Choices for Care is a Medicaid-funded, long-term care program that pays for care and support for older Vermonters and people with physical disabilities. This program helps people with everyday activities at home, in an enhanced residential care setting, or in a nursing facility.

To be eligible, you must:

Welcome back, let us know if you have any questions.

Write a message...



What a Dementia-Friendly Community Looks Like

Click the clouds to learn about implementing dementia-friendly practices in a given location or business sector.



Find the free workshop that's right for you

Want to be healthier and feel better? We can help. Our local coordinators can connect you with workshops right in your community. These are led by trained facilitators who understand your needs because many have faced similar health challenges. From building healthy behaviors to quitting smoking to managing pain and other long-term health problems, Vermonters who complete our workshops see big improvements in their health—and their overall well-being.



HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MANAGEMENT



DIABETES MANAGEMENT



CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention

3-4-50: Prevent Chronic Disease

Worksite Wellness is Good for Business

School Wellness Improves Performance

Asthma & Lung Disease

Asthma Basics

Asthma Self-Management Education

Brain Health & Dementia

Age Strong Vermont: Our Roadmap for an Age-friendly State

Healthy Body, Healthy Brain

Age Strong VT Promotes State Priorities and Aging Well



Childcare, Pre-K
& Adult Learning



Healthy,
Affordable & Age
Friendly Housing



Employment &
Economic
Opportunity



Prevention is Key Across Lifespan

- Prenatal and lifelong healthy nutrition
- Seatbelt and helmet use while biking/skiing/skateboarding
- Safe social engagement in person and online
- Immunizations are promoted and easy to keep up
- Clean air, water, housing and workplaces to minimize exposure
- Reduce access and youth initiation of harmful products (tobacco)
- Community and state-level efforts on substance use prevention
- Mental health supports
- Accessible physical activity and education opportunities for all ages
- Healthy and affordable housing for all Vermonters at all ages
- Substance use prevention including flavored tobacco restrictions

Evidence-based Wellness Workshops: My Healthy VT is available to all Vermonters

- Chronic Disease Management
- Chronic Pain Management
- Diabetes Management
- Diabetes Prevention
- High Blood Pressure
- Quit Smoking

Goal: Add physical activity to My Healthy VT for statewide (online) access especially in areas with limited or no sidewalks.

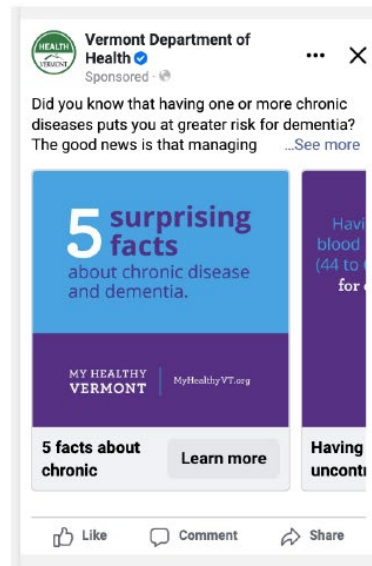
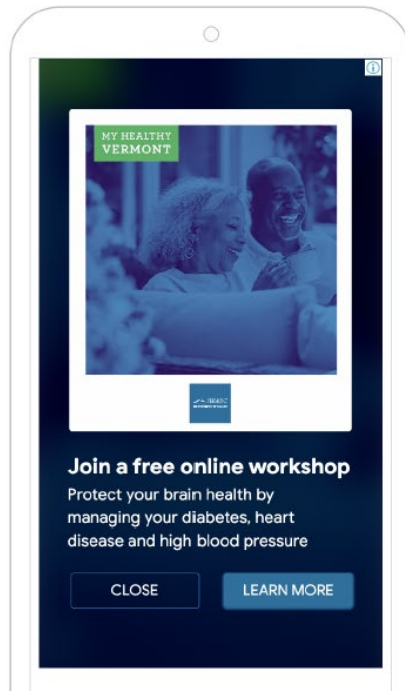
See a Vermont Diabetes Prevention Workshop in action and hear from actual participants on their experiences.



Watch brief testimonials at [Providers - MyHealthyVT](#)

Diabetes, Hypertension, Smoking All Pose a Risk to Brain Health: Campaigns

Ad Examples



Campaign ads like these for quitting smoking through My Healthy VT are well-received. We're also promoting hypertension and diabetes management classes.

People are interested in improving their physical and brain health. Interest is growing in how preventing and managing chronic diseases reduces risk of Alzheimer's and other dementias.

Upcoming Workshops this Spring!

APR
12

DIABETES MANAGEMENT

Online Diabetes Management @ Hosted by North Country Hospital in Partnership with Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Available Statewide

Apr. 12, 2024 to May. 31, 2024 on Fridays 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

GET STARTED

APR
16

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

In-person High Blood Pressure @ Hosted by Northwestern Medical Center in partnership with the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi Tribal Office, 100 Grand Avenue, Swanton

Apr. 16, 2024 to Jun. 18, 2024 on Tuesdays 10:00 am - 11:30 am

GET STARTED

MAY
7

QUIT SMOKING

Online Quit Smoking @ Hosted by North Star Health in partnership with Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Center and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Available Statewide

One More Wellness Program: 802Quits



English

REASONS TO QUIT

READY TO QUIT

SUPPORT FOR ME

STAYING QUIT

ENROLL

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Get Help Quitting

Free Nicotine Replacement

How to Manage Your Cravings

Handling Slips

Quit Tobacco. Get Rewards.

Pregnant or a New Parent?

Earn gift cards while you try to quit.

Get Up to \$250

Mental Health Condition?

Receive gift cards for quitting.

Get Up to \$200

Medicaid Member or Uninsured?

Quit tobacco and get rewards.

Get Up to \$150

Use Menthol Tobacco Products?

Earn rewards by enrolling in 802Quits.

Get Up to \$150

802Quits offers a quit plan, trained health coaches, free patch/gum/lozenges, text support and incentives.

Easy to sign up:

- Online at <https://802quits.org>
- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW

Over 3,000 Vermonters are served a year by 802Quits.

By phone, text or online.

If use multiple products or relapse, can come back any number of times for help.

Quitting smoking helps to relieve depression.

Quitting vaping helps to reduce anxiety.

Age Strong VT Next Steps

1

Monitor the work of the legislature and current initiatives in the state that support Age Strong VT Plan objectives and strategies.

2

Measures are in place but not in one location; create Age Strong VT dashboard to tie together.

3

Form a new Age Strong VT Implementation Advisory Committee which will start later this summer.



What you can do

- Share with us what matters to you in aging strong in Vermont. What would you like to see more of? Or a new initiative or project? We would like your input. Complete the form below or email us at agestrongvt@vermont.gov.
- Contact agestrongvt@vermont.gov to join a brief monthly update and to be invited to upcoming meetings and public comment periods on the plan.

Join us to make Vermont a state in which we can all thrive!

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