



# Rural Health Services Task Force

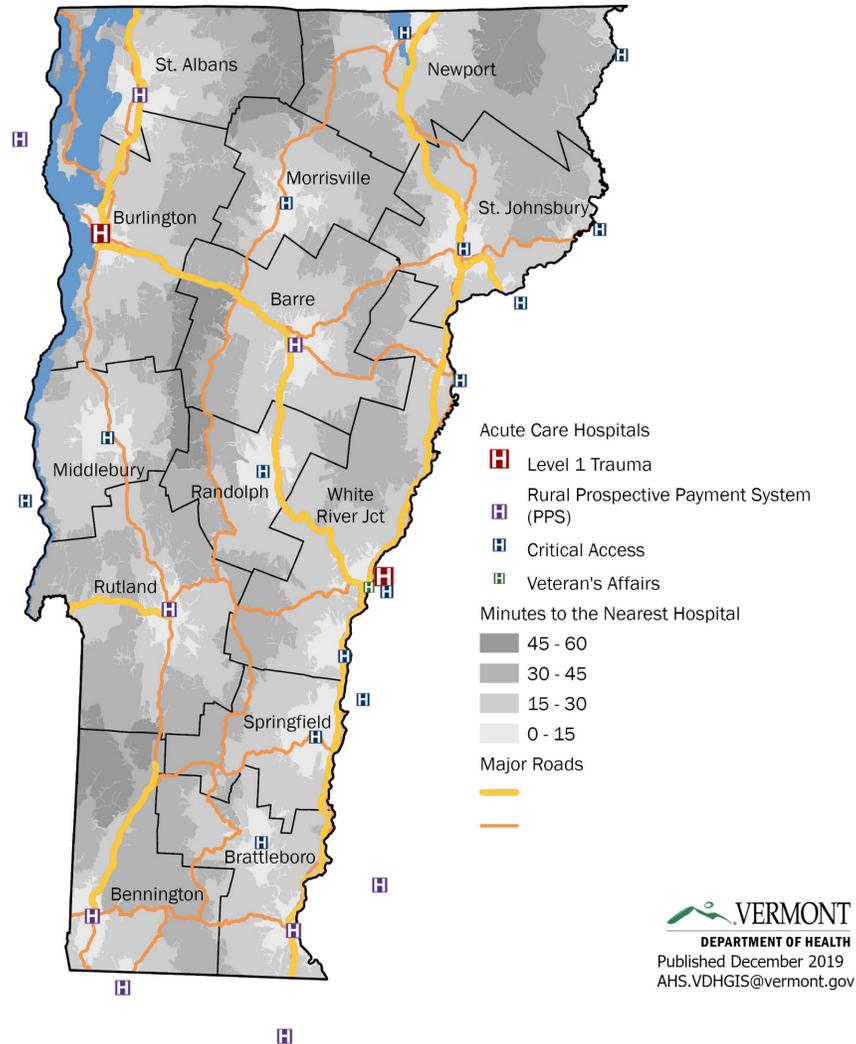
---

ACT 26 OF 2019

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAPS FOR HOUSE HEALTH CARE

## Hospitals in and near Vermont by Hospital Service Area

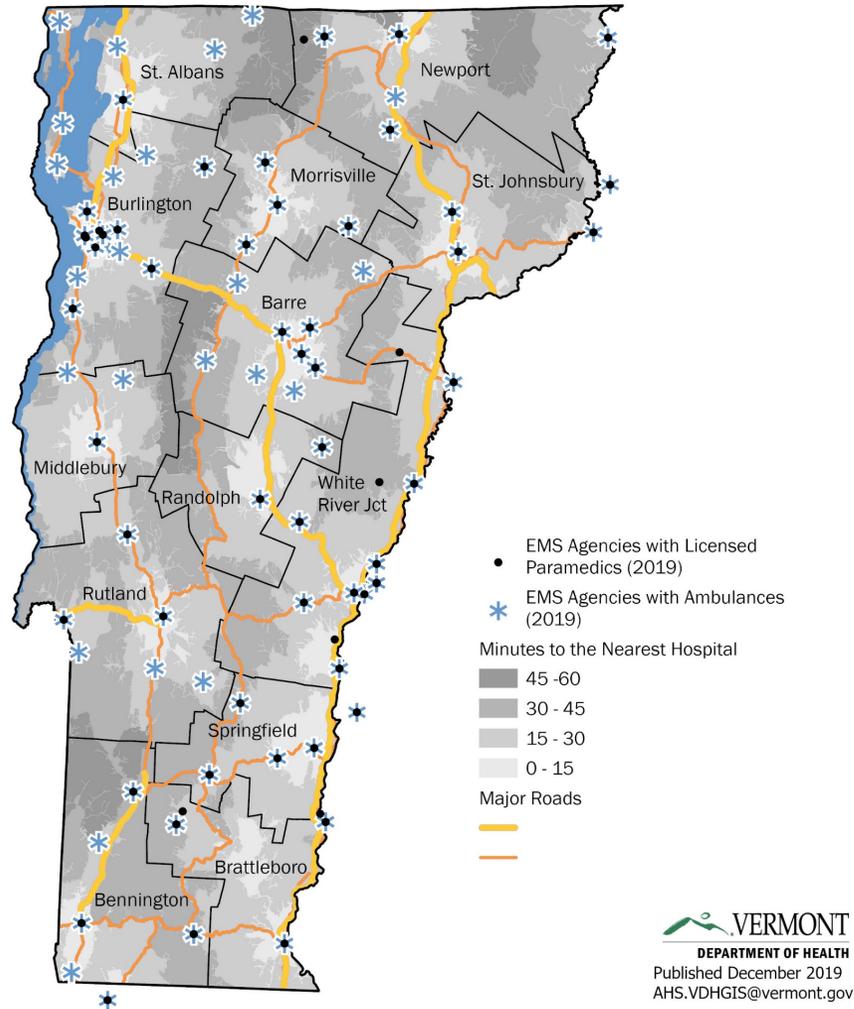


Source: Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living: Facility Directory (2018)

## Distances from nearest hospitals

- Nearly all locations in Vermont served by roads are within a 60-minute drive to a hospital either in Vermont or within 10 miles of Vermont borders.
- There are many areas that are more than 45 minutes away from the nearest hospital emergency room.
  - While these distant areas typically have low populations, they are important recreation areas.

## Emergency Medical Services by Hospital service Area



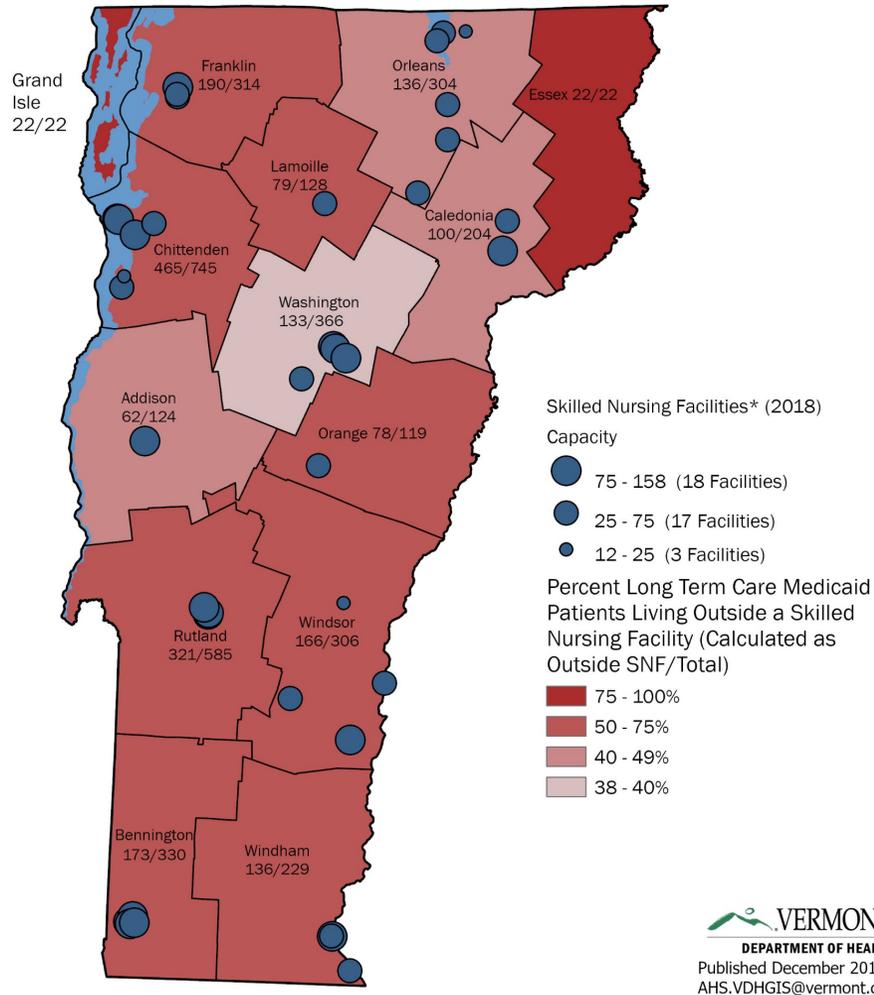
## Emergency Medical Services

- There are 169 mostly independent and volunteer Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies
  - 80 transporting agencies
  - 89 first responding agencies
- Vermont, like many rural states, is struggling to replace retiring EMS personnel.

Source: Vermont Department of Health; Emergency Medical Services (2019)

\*Paramedics are the highest level of medical first responders

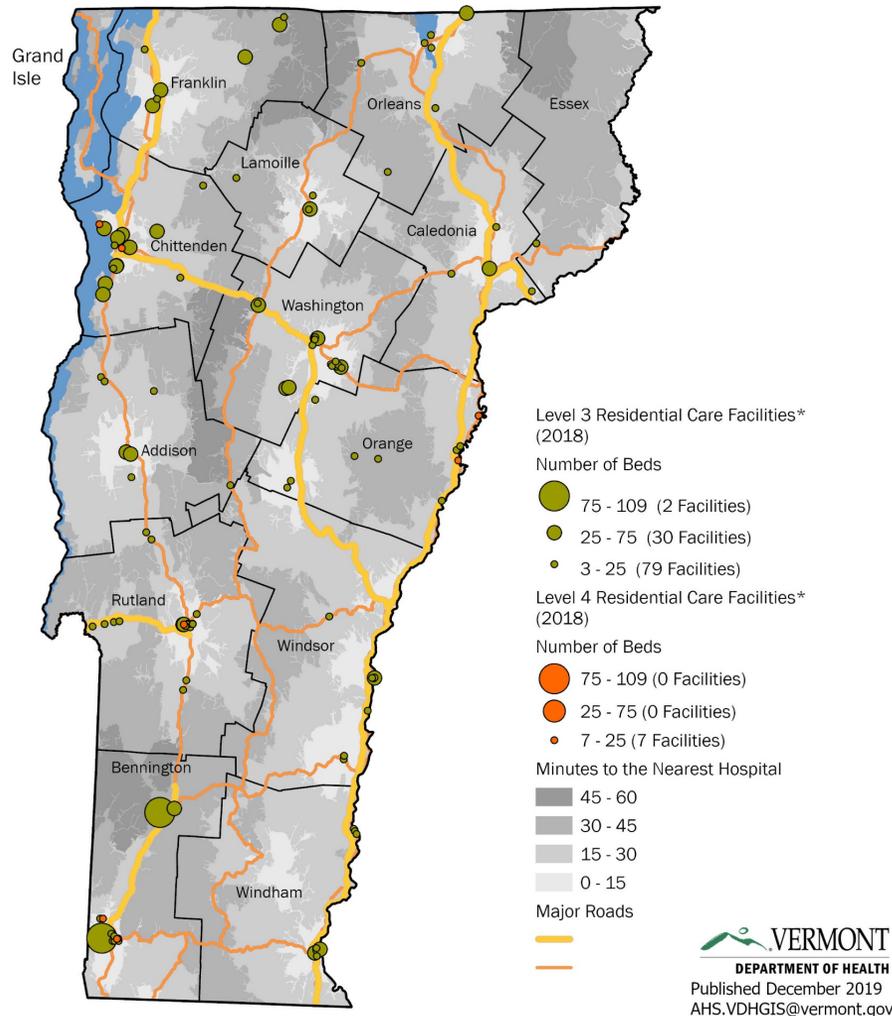
Medicaid Long Term Care (Choices for Care)  
by County



## Medicaid Long term care (Choices for Care)

- Vermont has a goal of 50% of Medicaid beneficiaries needing skilled nursing care receiving that care in their homes.
- There are no skilled nursing facilities in either Essex or Grand Isle Counties
  - 100% of Medicaid beneficiaries there are receiving skilled nursing care at home or have moved to a facility in another county.
- Vermont skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) range in size from 12 to 158 beds. However, most SNFs and home health agencies suffer nursing shortages.

## Residential Care Facilities by County

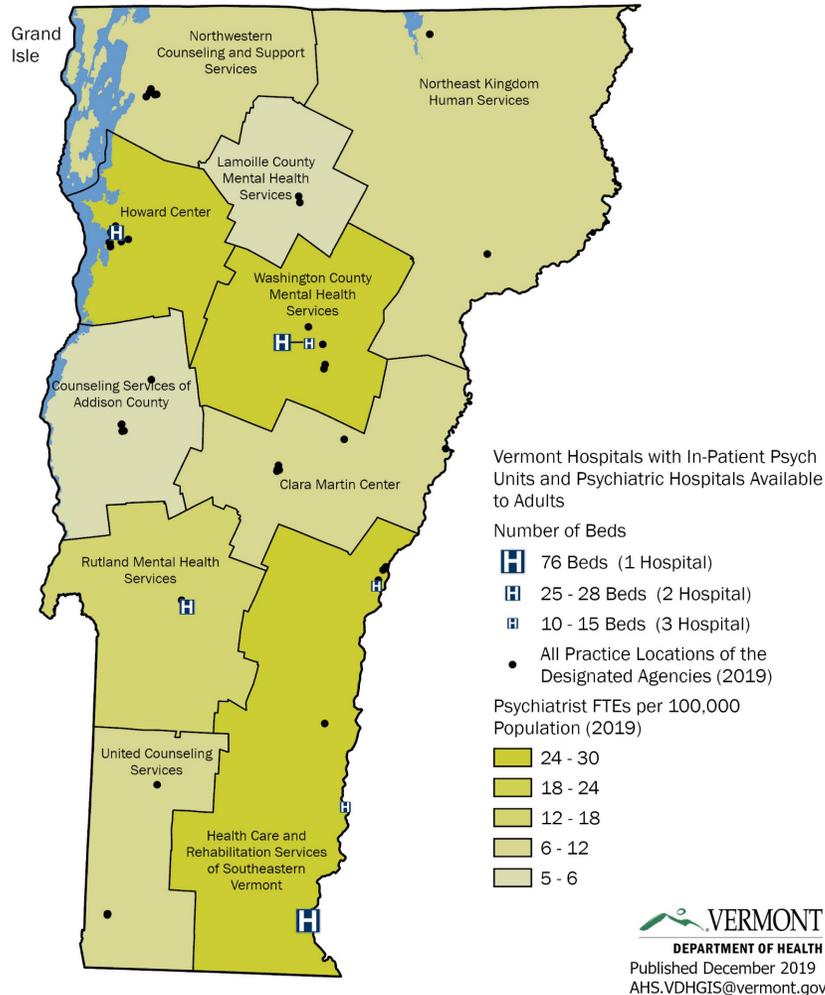


Source: Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living; Facility Directory (2018)

## Long-term care – Residential Care Homes (RCH) - Level 3 & Level 4

- There are 111 Level 3 Residential Care Homes in Vermont and only 7 Level 4 Residential Care Homes.
  - **Level 3** residential care homes provide nursing overview, but not full-time nursing care. There are 2,518 level 3 beds in Vermont.
  - **Level 4** homes do not provide nursing overview or nursing care. There are 62 level 4 beds in Vermont.
- Most homes are within 30 minutes to a nearby hospital, but several are more than 45 minutes.

## Intensive Mental Health Services by Mental Health Catchment Area



Source: Vermont Department of Health; Health Care Provider Census (2016), Vermont Department of Mental Health; Psychiatric Hospitalization (2019), Vermont Department of Mental Health; Designated Agencies (2019)

Mental health RSAs (MCHAs) reflect the established catchment areas of the 10 designated mental health agencies in Vermont.

FTE ratios only includes providers in locations open to the public. Facilities that do not offer outpatient services are excluded.

## Intensive Mental Health Services by MH Catchment Area

- The Department of Mental Health currently designates six hospitals to provide psychiatric inpatient care in Vermont.
  - UVM Medical Center, Burlington (28 beds)
  - Vermont Psychiatric Hospital, Berlin (25 beds)
  - Central Vermont Medical Center, Berlin (14 beds)
  - Rutland Regional Medical Center, Rutland (21 beds)
  - Windham Center at Springfield Hospital (10 beds)
  - Brattleboro Retreat, (89 adult beds, 30 youth beds)
  - VA Medical Center, White River Junction (12 beds) (serving veterans only)

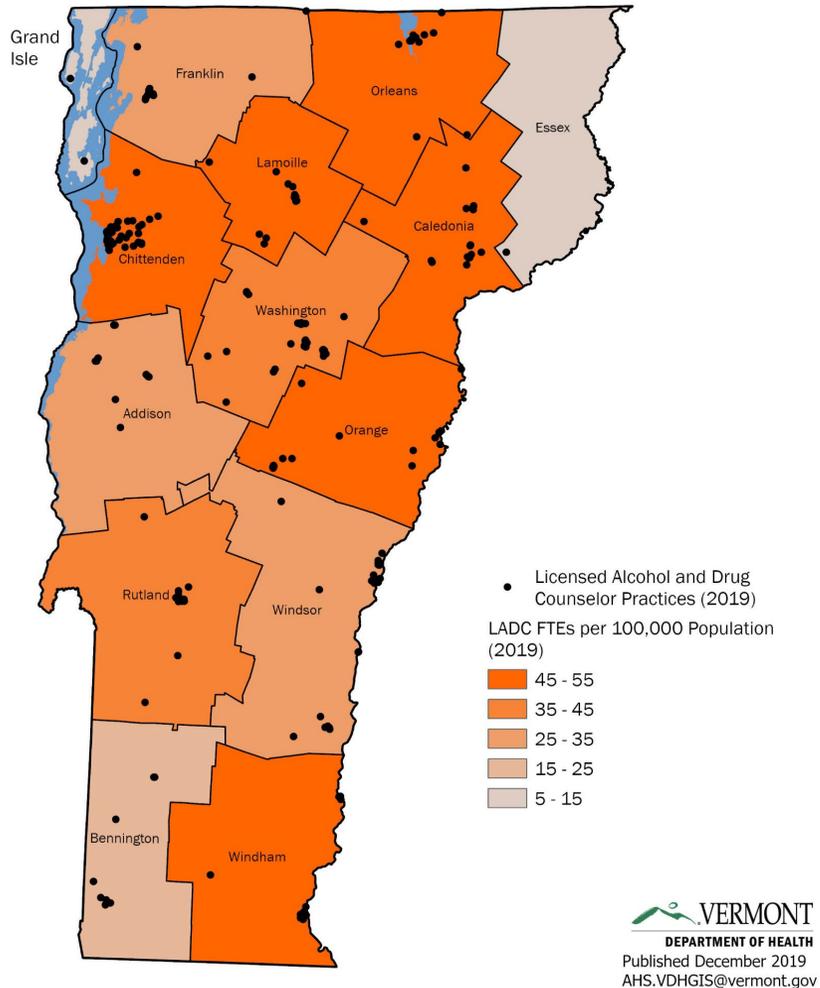
## Community Mental Health Services

- The Department of Mental Health designates one Designated Agency (DA) in each geographic region of the state to provide the Department's mental health programs for adults and children.

## Mental Health Workforce

- Statewide, 89.2% of psychiatrists report accepting new patients in 2016, and 12.9% plan to reduce their hours within the next 12 months and 5.9% reported plans to retire.

## Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors By County



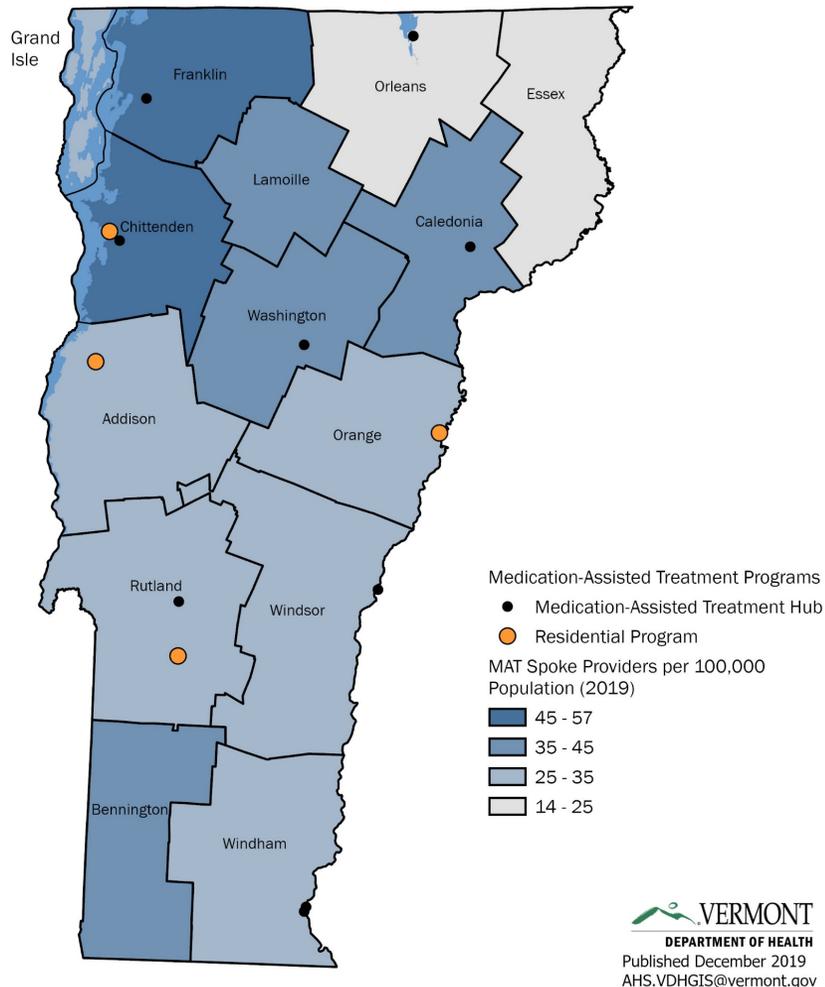
Source: Vermont Department of Health, Health Care Provider Census (2019), Vermont Department of Health - Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse; Vermont Substance Abuse Treatment & Recovery Directory (2017)

FTE ratios only includes providers in locations open to the public.

## Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADCs) by County

- 493 Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (LADCs) renewed their licenses during the census period during 2019.
- Many LADCs maintained more than one mental health care license or roster position.
  - 168 were mental health counselors
  - 85 were clinical social workers
  - 16 were psychologists
  - 7 were non-licensed non-certified rostered psychotherapists
  - 4 were marriage and family therapists
  - 2 were nurse practitioners
- The most common setting for LADCs was private practice [36.8%], followed by substance use disorder clinics [11.6%] and community health centers [10.6%].

## Medication-Assisted Treatment: Hub and Spoke by County



Source: Vermont Department of Health - Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse; Vermont Substance Abuse Treatment & Recovery Directory(2017).  
Department of Vermont Health Access - Blueprint for Health; MAT Spoke Provider List(2019)

## Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Services

Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) or “hubs” provide high intensity treatment with methadone, buprenorphine or naltrexone.

- There are 8 hubs in Vermont, and 1 just over the border in West Lebanon, NH

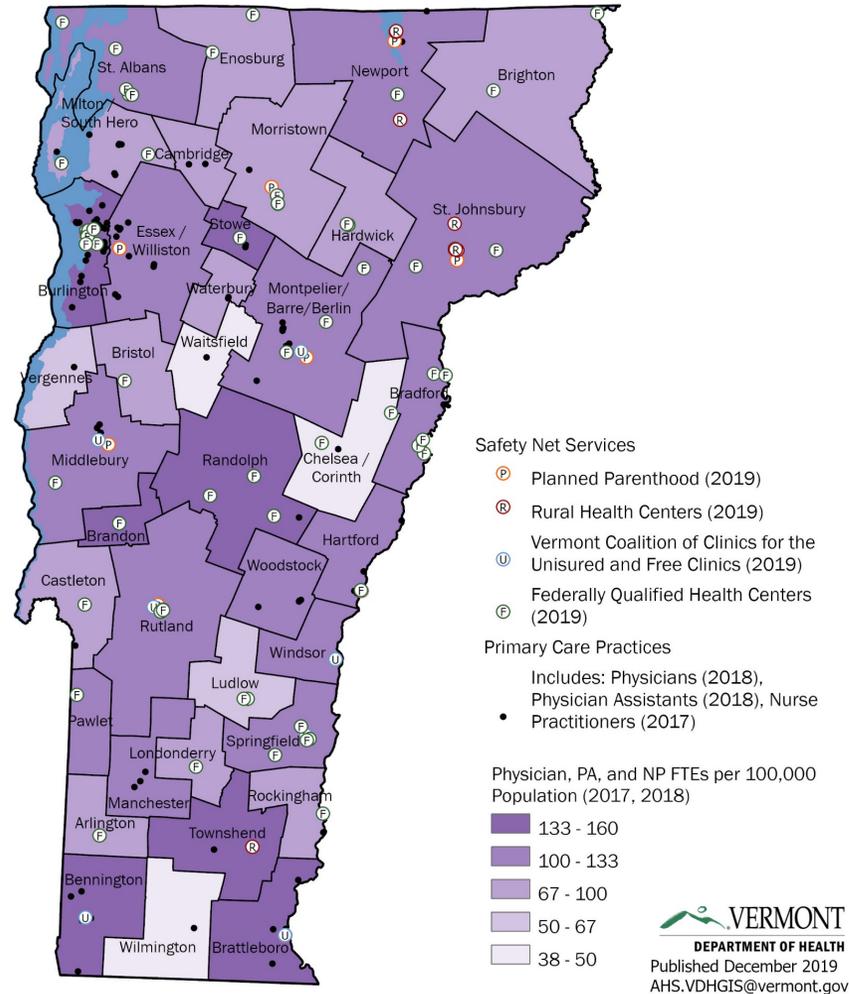
“Spokes” are medical practices, such as primary care practices, which provide treatment with buprenorphine or naltrexone.

- There are 249 spoke practices statewide

Residential Programs offer counseling and group services while living on site from several days to a few weeks.

- There are 4 residential treatment facilities in Vermont, including 1 short-term stabilization facility in Chittenden County.

**Primary Care Practices  
by Rational Service Area**



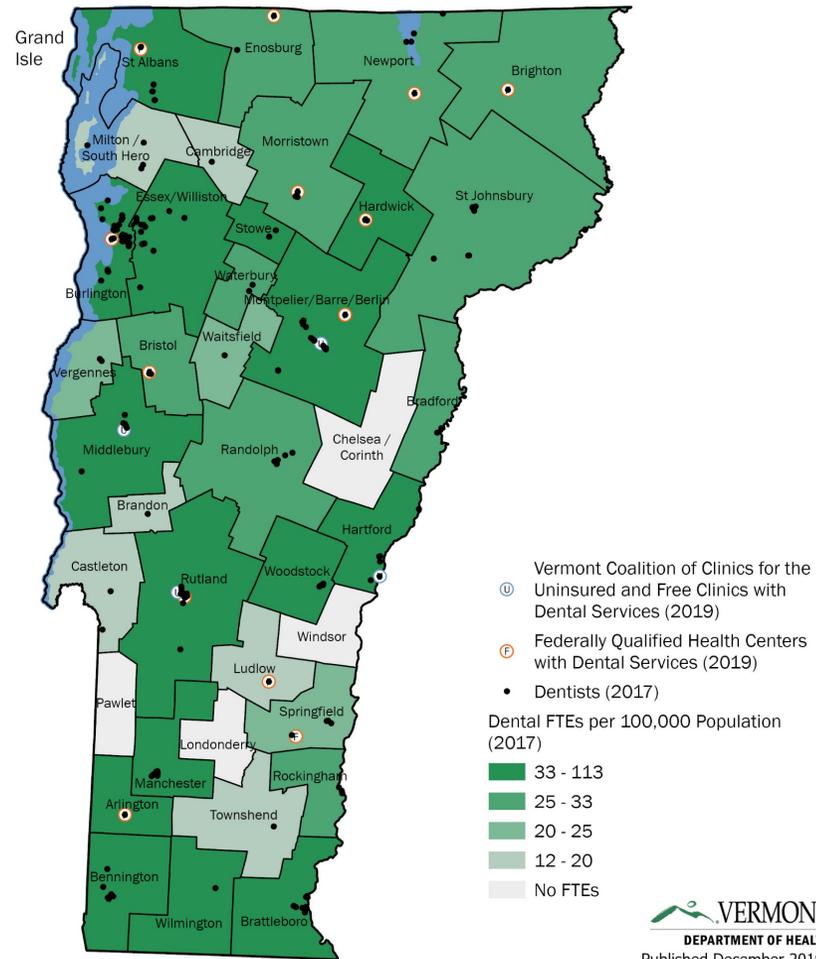
Source: Vermont Department of Health; Health Care Provider Census (2017, 2018), BiState Association; Safety Net Provider List (2019)

Rational Service Areas (RSAs) are designed based on where people receive primary care and where they live, as determined from data from Medicare, Medicaid and the Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. FTE ratios only includes providers in locations open to the public. Facilities that do not offer outpatient services, do not offer on-site services, or are urgent care clinics are excluded. Locum tenens providers are excluded. Locations include independent practices, hospital owned practices, and group practices.

**Primary Care Practices (including FQHCs, RHCs, PPNNEs, Free clinics)**

- 225 primary care practices were identified by health care providers in our biennial workforce census.
- There are 1,054 primary care practitioners, representing a total of 758.5 full-time equivalents (FTEs).
  - 615 Physicians (435.9 FTEs) in 2018
  - 328 Advance Practice Registered Nurses (235.5 FTEs) in 2017
  - 111 Physician Assistants (87.1 FTEs) in 2018
- In 7 of 14 counties, at least 41% of the primary care physicians were over 60.
  - Physicians are highly concentrated in Chittenden County (142.5 FTEs); Essex County has 1.3 FTEs, Grand Isle County had 1.9 FTEs.
  - Counties with fewer PC physicians accepting new patients are Essex, Chittenden, Bennington & Caledonia (59-79%).
- Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners (APRNs) include Nurse Practitioners and Certified Nurse Midwives and make up an increasingly important part of the primary care workforce.
  - Since 2015, APRNs in primary care increased from 276 to 328, and APRNs younger than 40 increased from 110 in 2015 to 170 in 2017, and the percent of APRNs over age 60 decreased from 31% to 27%.
- In 2018, 111 Physician Assistants (PAs) worked in primary care representing (87.1 FTEs). Most PAs work in Health Clinics/Centers, Single Specialty Group and Hospital Outpatient settings.

## General Dental Care by Rational Service Area



Source: Vermont Department of Health, Health Care Provider Census (2017)

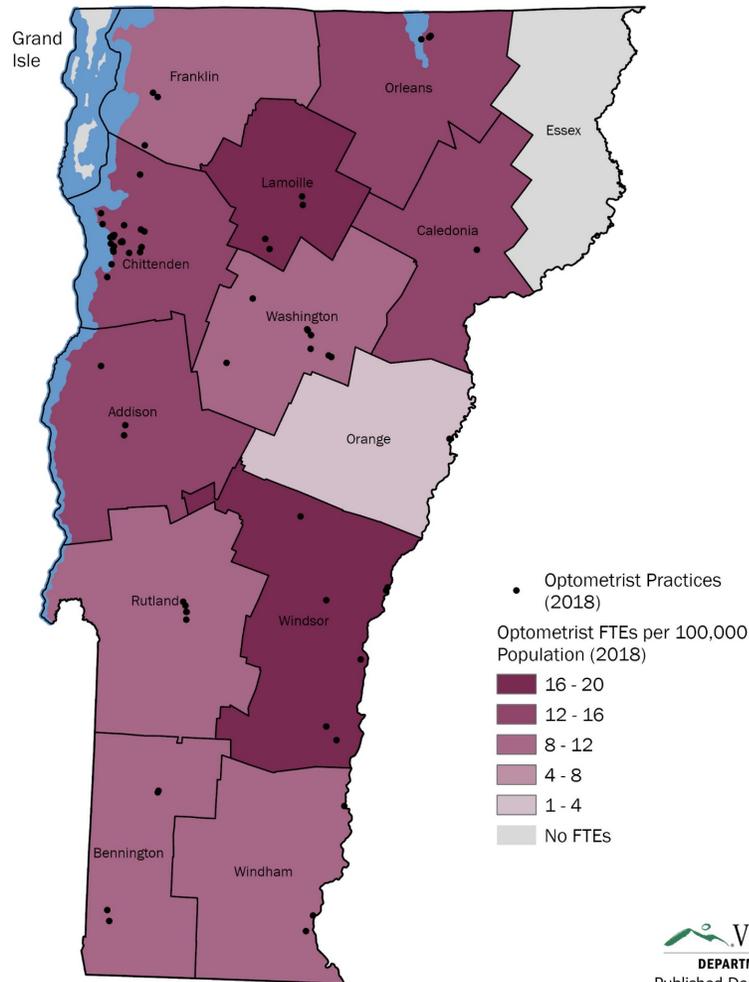
In Vermont, rational service areas (RSAs) for dental care are the same as those for primary care, which were delineated (in 2011) based on where people receive primary care and where they live, as determined from data from Medicare, Medicaid and the Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

FTE ratios only includes providers in locations open to the public. Facilities that do not offer outpatient services or do not offer on-site services are excluded.

## General Dental Practices (2017)

- Of the 381 dentists working in Vermont, 82% are primary care dentists, including 299 general dentists and 14 pediatric dentists.
  - Most dentists (67%) practiced at single site privately owned clinics, 20% practiced at multi-site privately owned clinics, 8% practiced at FQHCs and 1% at hospital-owned clinics.
- 35% of dentists are 60 or older, 2.9% of dentists plan to retire or leave Vermont practice in the next year, and 3.7% plan to decrease their hours.
  - In Rutland County, 58% of the primary care dentists are 60 or older; 100% in Grand Isle County.
- While average wait time to primary care dental appointments has decreased from 2.6 to 2.0 weeks, statewide, 31% of primary care FTEs and 46% of specialist FTEs are in Chittenden County.
- The percentage of dentists accepting new Medicaid patients has declined since 2015. In 2017 only 60% reported accepting new Medicaid patients, and only 33% accept 5+ new Medicaid patients/month.

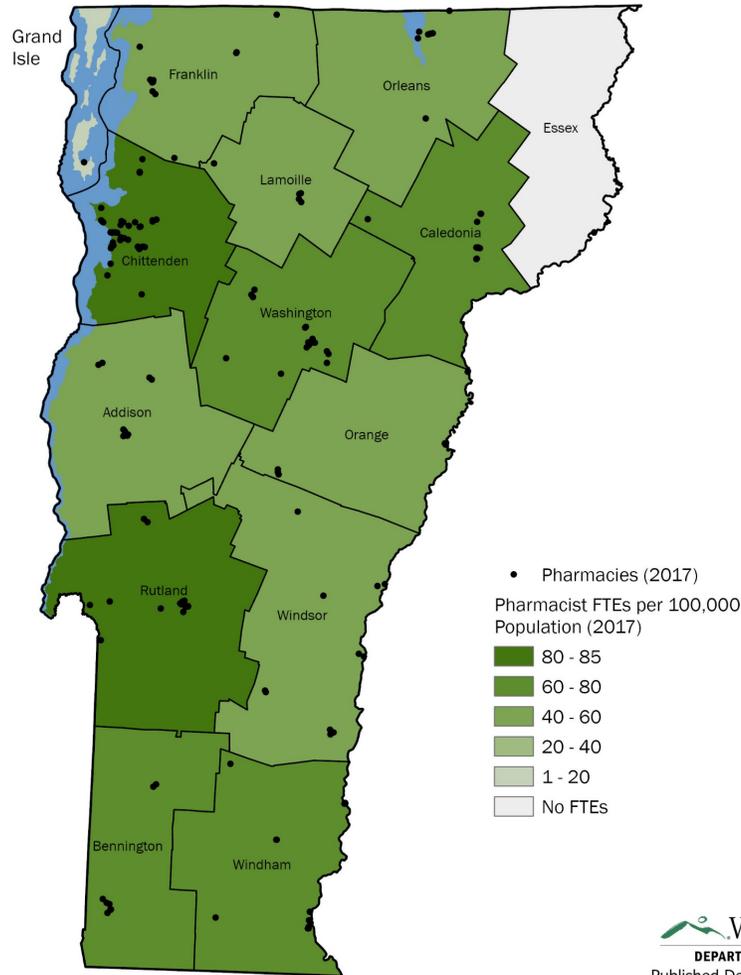
## Optometric Care by County



## Optometric Care

- In 2018, 107 optometrists renewed their Vermont license, 32 optometrists (34% of total FTEs) were age 60 and older.
  - Main practice location, the most common settings were private group practice (44%) and private solo practice (42%).
- 84% accepted Medicaid patients, 91% accepted Medicare patients.
- Optometrists are unevenly spread around the state but are not over-concentrated in Chittenden County. Lamoille County and Windsor Counties have the highest ratio of FTE: population.

## Pharmacies by County



## Pharmacies by County

- In 2017, 1,055 pharmacists renewed their licenses and 609 (57.9%) indicated that they were active practicing pharmacists in Vermont.
  - 63.1% (384) of pharmacists worked in a retail setting
  - 25.6% (156) worked in a hospital
- Since 2015, there was an increase in number of pharmacists and FTEs
  - 609 pharmacists compared to 552, and 475.7 FTEs increased from 457.1 FTEs.
  - There was also an increase in the percentage of pharmacists under 35: 32.7% up from 30.1% in 2015 and the median age decreased from 43 to 42.
- Half of pharmacists 50.9% (310) worked 40 or more hours per week at their main site, and only 120 pharmacists (16.1% of total FTEs), were age 60 and older.
- The highest ratio of pharmacist FTEs to 100,000 population was in the Burlington Health Care Area
  - Randolph and Upper Valley had the lowest FTE ratios, and there are no pharmacies in Essex County or Grand Isle County.