

---

---

**Report to  
The Vermont Legislature**

---

---

**Deaths and Hospice Care Report  
2023 Report to the Legislature**

**In Accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 5208.**

**Submitted to:       House Committee on Human Services and House Committee on  
Health Care  
Senate Committee on Health and Welfare**

**Submitted by:       Dr. Mark Levine, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Health**

**Prepared by:       Jessie Hammond, Health Statistics and Informatics Director,  
Vermont Department of Health**

**Report Date:       November 15, 2023**



108 Cherry Street, PO Box 70  
Burlington, VT 05402  
802.863.7280  
[healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)

## Table of Contents

Legislative Charge .....	3
Place of Death Statistics .....	3
Hospice Care within 30 Days of Death .....	5
Summary .....	7

## Deaths and Hospice Care Report 2023 Report to the Legislature

### Legislative Charge

Pursuant to 18 V.S.A. § 5208, the Vermont Department of Health prepared this report summarizing the following:

- The number of persons who died in Vermont during the preceding two calendar years in a hospital emergency room, other hospital setting, in their own home, in a nursing home, in a hospice facility, in an assisted living facility, in a residential care home, and in any other setting for which information is available; and
- The number of decedents that received hospice care within the last 30 days of life.

### Place of Death Statistics

This report utilizes information from Vermont death certificates. In the 10-year period of 2013-2022, an average of 5,934 deaths occurred annually in Vermont. During the current reporting period (2021-2022), 13,333 deaths occurred in Vermont; 6,648 deaths in 2021, and 6,685 deaths in 2022. 73% of deaths occurred outside of a hospital setting and 27% occurred in a hospital setting.

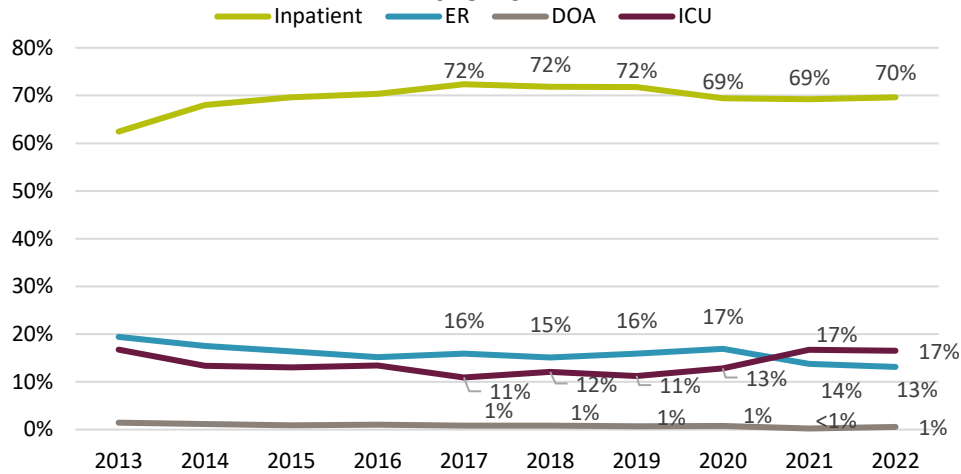
Approximately 1,800 Vermont deaths occur each year in a hospital. In both 2021 and 2022, about 70% of hospital deaths occurred in an inpatient setting. See Table 1.

The proportion of hospital deaths that occurred in the emergency room decreased between 2013-2022, while the proportion of deaths that occurred in the inpatient setting have increased since 2013, though have remained generally stable since 2014. The proportion of deaths in intensive care units have increased since 2013 and now make up 17% of in-hospital deaths (Figure 1).

**Table 1: Vermont Deaths Occurring in a Hospital Setting**

	Inpatient	Emergency Room	Dead on Arrival	Intensive Care	Other Setting	Total
2021	1,239	247	4	299	1	1,790
2022	1,304	246	11	310	2	1,873
Total	2,543	493	15	609	3	3,663

Figure 1: Vermont Deaths in a Hospital Setting  
by Location  
2013-2022



More than 4,500 Vermont deaths occur outside the hospital each year. About 85% of these deaths are in the decedent’s home, a nursing home, or long-term care facility (a long-term care facility encompasses assisted living facilities and residential care homes). About 2,600 deaths occurred in the decedent’s home in 2021 (2,625) and 2022 (2,697). In both years, an additional 1,400 deaths occurred in nursing homes or long-term care facilities. See Table 2.

From 2013-2022, the proportion of deaths that occurred in the decedent’s home increased. The percentage of home deaths increased from 51% in 2020, to 54% in 2021, and then to 56% in 2022. See Figure 2.

While deaths in nursing homes have decreased from 2013-2022, there was no change between 2021 and 2022. The proportion decreased from 34% in 2020, to 29% in 2021 and 2022. Deaths in a hospice facility remain relatively few in number, with 335 in 2022, comprising 7% of out-of-hospital deaths. See Figure 2.

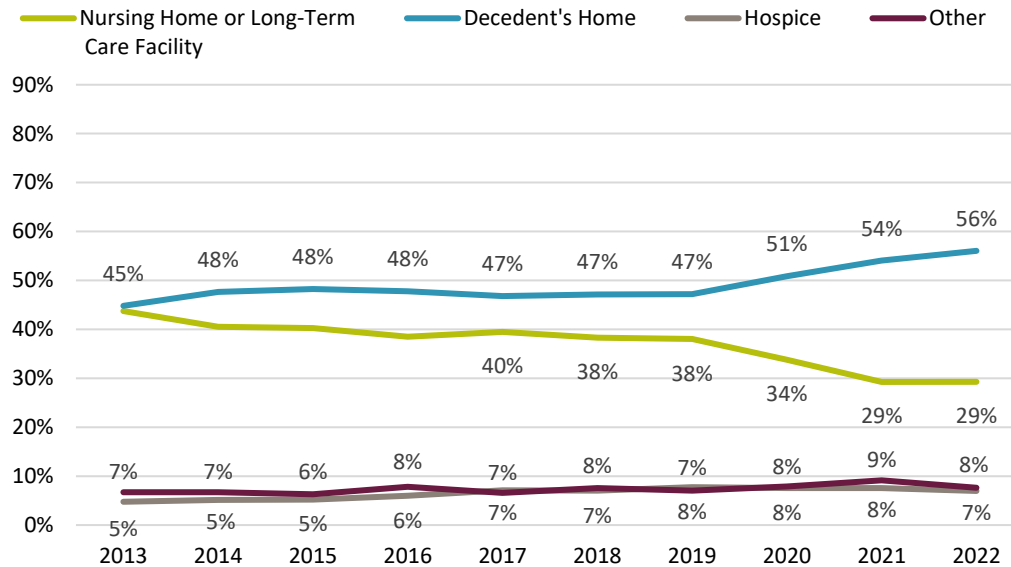
**Table 2: Vermont Deaths Occurring Outside of a Hospital**

	Decedent’s Home	Nursing home or Long-Term Care Facility <sup>1</sup>	Hospice Facility	Other <sup>2</sup>	Unknown	Total
2021	2,625	1,421	367	444	1	4,858
2022	2,697	1,409	335	368	3	4,812
Total	5,322	2,830	702	812	4	9,670

<sup>1</sup> Long-term care facilities include assisted living facilities and residential care homes licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

<sup>2</sup> May include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

Figure 2: Out of Hospital Deaths  
by Location  
Vermont Deaths, 2013-2022



More deaths occur in nursing homes than in long-term care facilities (i.e., assisted living facilities and residential care homes). (Table 3).

**Table 3: Deaths Occurring in a Nursing Home or Long-Term Care Facility<sup>3</sup>**

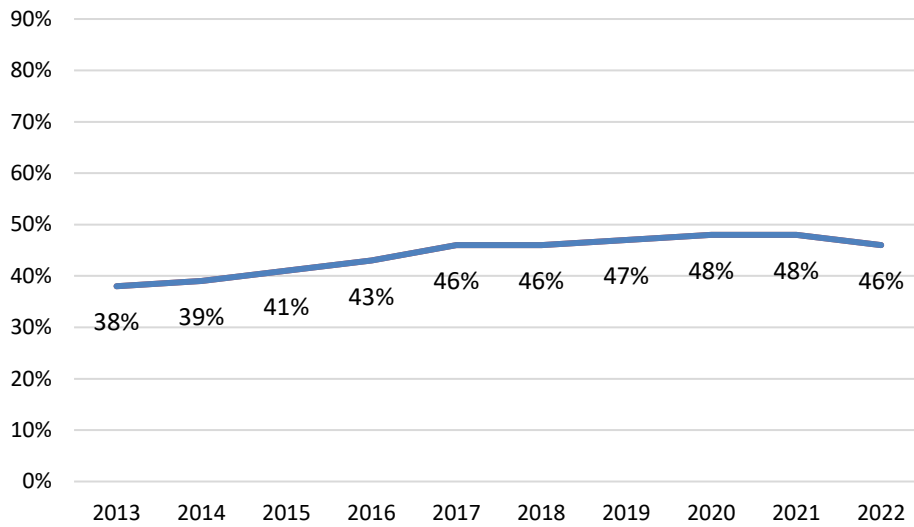
	Nursing Home	Assisted Living Facility	Residential Care Home	Total
2021	1,014	151	256	1,421
2022	996	150	263	1,409
Total	2,010	301	519	2,830

<sup>3</sup>As licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

### Hospice Care within 30 Days of Death

In 2021, 3,213 people received hospice care in Vermont within 30 days prior to death. In 2022, 3,092 received hospice care within 30 days of death. The proportion of people in Vermont receiving hospice care within 30 days of death increased steadily from 2013 to 2019, then plateaued until 2022. In 2022, this figure declined (modestly) for the first time in more than 10 years. See Figure 3.

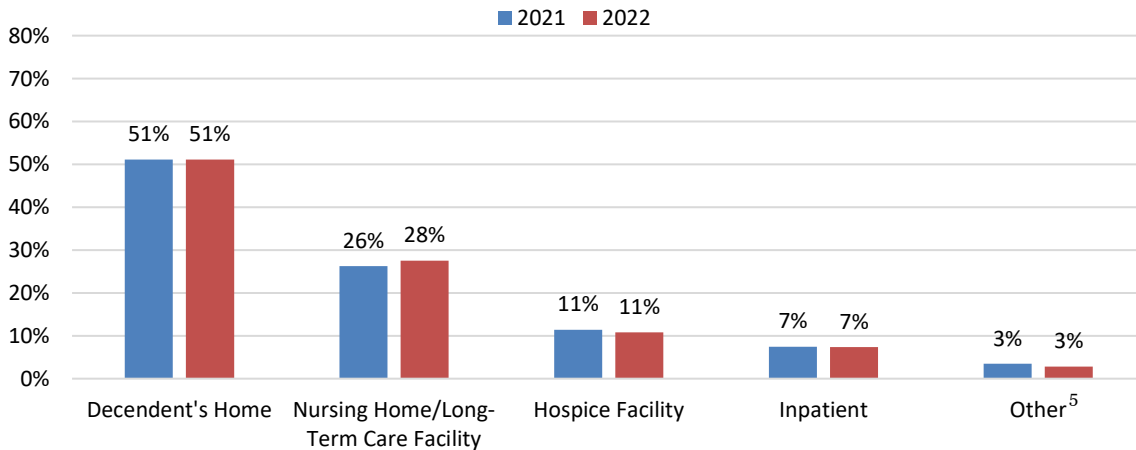
Figure 3: Received Hospice<sup>4</sup> in 30 Days Prior to Death  
Vermont Deaths, 2013-2022



<sup>4</sup> Reported as unknown for approximately two percent of Vermont deaths each year.

Nearly 80% of those in Vermont who received hospice care in the last 30 days of life died in their home, a nursing home, or long-term care facility. An additional 11% died in a hospice facility, and 7% died as inpatients in the hospital. The remaining deaths occurred in an intensive care unit (<1%), an emergency room (<1%), or other locations (3%).<sup>5</sup> See Figure 4.

Figure 4: Place of Death  
Vermont Deaths Who Received Hospice Care in Past 30 Days



<sup>5</sup> May include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

## Annual Death Rate

Deaths that occurred in Vermont, deaths of Vermont residents, the crude death rate, and the age-adjusted death rate all increased from 2020 through 2022 when compared to levels observed from 2015 through 2019. Additionally, Vermont's total population estimate increased from 2020 through 2022 when compared with estimates from 2015 through 2019. The age distribution of Vermont's population has also changed over time, with increasing numbers of estimated residents aged 65 or older. The population changes do not fully account for the increase in deaths observed from 2020 through 2022, and the underlying causes of death with the greatest increase from 2015 through 2019 levels were COVID-19, diseases of the heart, and accidents.

The increase in deaths in 2020 through 2022 compared to the relatively stable number of annual deaths from 2015-2019 can be attributed to multiple, interconnected factors. The primary reasons include the emergence of Covid-19 as an infectious disease, increases in other specific conditions (e.g., heart disease, accidental poisoning), as well as population increases, both generally and among those 65 and older; the latter having a higher age-specific death rather than younger Vermont residents. The overall population increased from 2019 - 2020 by about 18,500 individuals, while the largest increase in the 65 and older population occurred from 2021 to 2022 (~6,000 individuals).

## Summary

The percentage of Vermont deaths occurring outside the hospital has increased over time but stabilized in more recent years. In 2021 and 2022, 73% and 72% of deaths, respectively, occurred outside the hospital. Deaths occurring in the decedent's home continue to increase, now comprising 56% of all out-of-hospital deaths in Vermont.

The number of Vermont deaths occurring in a hospice facility has generally plateaued, with 344 in 2020, 367 in 2021, and 333 in 2022. Similarly, those receiving hospice care within 30 days prior to death increased in the past 10 years but leveled off in recent years. The percentage of those receiving hospice care within 30 days prior to death was 38% in 2013, 48% 2021, and 46% in 2022. In 2022, while most (51%) of those receiving hospice care in the past 30 days died at their home, 28% died in a nursing home or long-term care facility, and 11% died in a hospice facility.