

# Suicide Prevention in Vermont

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# You are not alone!

This presentation contains references to themes of death or dying, mental health, suicide, firearms and the prevention work we are doing in Vermont.

We encourage people to take steps needed for your emotional safety and health. This may include stepping away from this presentation.

Supports & resources are available.



Pathways Support Line

Call or Text 24/7 (833) 888-2557 / (833) VT-TALKS

# How We Talk about Suicide Matters

Say this	Instead of this
✓ Died by Suicide	✗ Committed/Completed Suicide
✓ Died by Suicide/Suicide death	✗ Successful attempt
✓ Suicide attempt	✗ Unsuccessful attempt
✓ Person living with thoughts of suicide	✗ Suicide ideator or attempter
✓ (Describe the behavior)	✗ Manipulative, cry for help, or suicidal gesture
✓ Working with someone in crisis	✗ Dealing with suicidal crisis

Source: <https://www.suicidepreventionalliance.org/about-suicide/suicide-language/>

# Public Health Approach to Suicide Prevention

## What is Public Health?

The science of protecting and improving the health of entire populations and their communities.

## Why a Public Health approach to Suicide Prevention matters?

- Population approach and primary prevention are critical to suicide prevention
- People at risk often do not seek help:
  - **Only 32% of Vermonters who died by suicide were engaged in mental health treatment at the time of their death**

Suicide Prevention + Public Health = expanding suicide prevention beyond the mental health treatment system into communities, healthcare, and the general public.

**“All Vermonters have a role in facing suicide”**

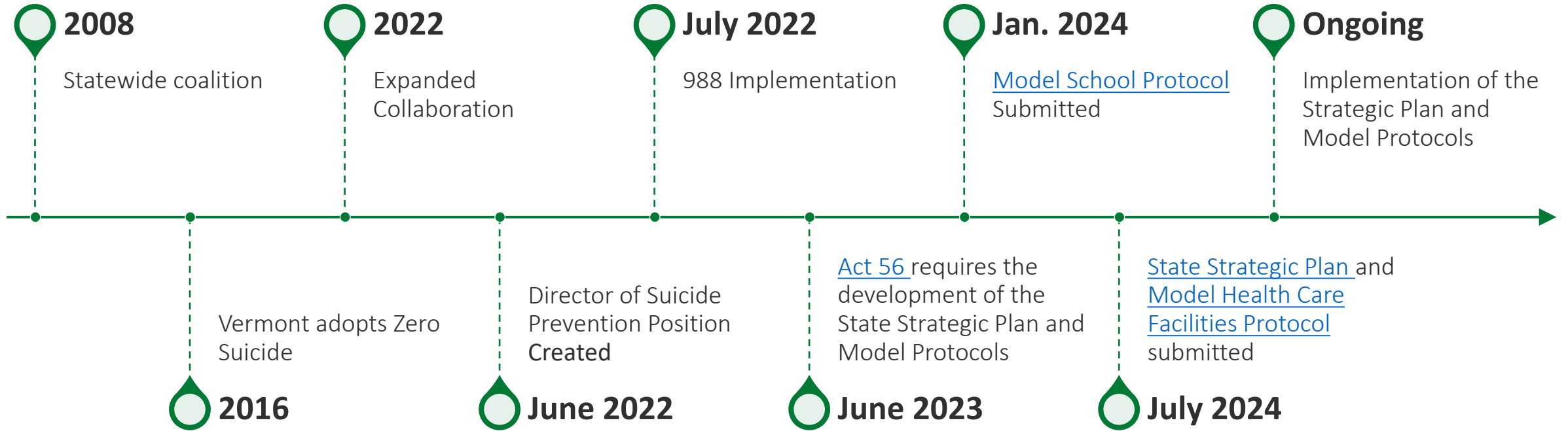
[FacingSuicideVT.org](https://FacingSuicideVT.org)

# Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention



Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <https://sprc.org/effective-prevention/comprehensive-approach>

# Timeline of Suicide Prevention efforts in Vermont



# Partners supporting this work



# Governor's Challenge

**Objective:** form an interagency military and civilian team of state leaders and policy makers to develop and implement a strategic action plan to prevent and reduce suicide among service members, veterans and their families.

**Focus areas:** identify the population and screen for suicide risk, promote connectedness and improve care transitions, increase lethal means safety and safety planning.

For more information visit, <https://www.vahhs.org/governors-challenge>

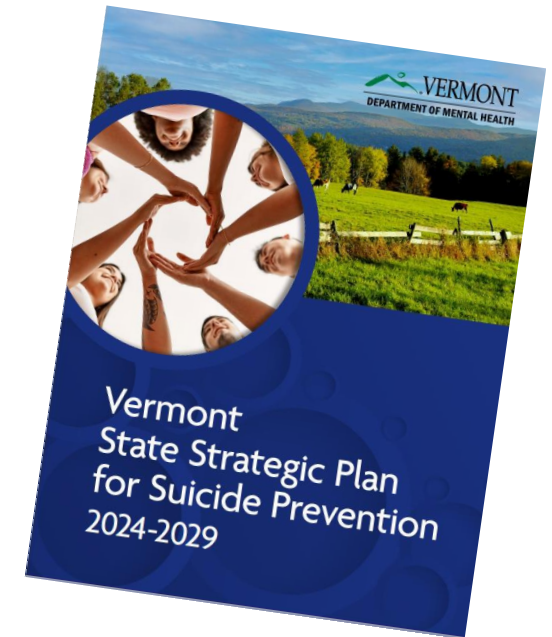




# Strategic Plan

The Vermont Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention aligns with the strategic directions outlined in the 2024 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:

- #1: Community-Based Suicide Prevention
- #2: Treatment and Crisis Services
- #3: Data, Quality Improvement, and Research
- #4: Health Equity



Click [here](#) to access the Vermont Strategic Plan. Click [here](#) to access the 2024 National Strategy.

# Turning Our Plans into Action

## Recent Achievements in Suicide Prevention Work in Vermont

### Increased Awareness in the Community

- Expanded public education and outreach initiatives

### Established Leadership & Collaboration

- Created an Executive Committee to oversee strategic direction
- Launched Implementation Teams to drive targeted initiatives

### Investing in Innovation

- Released Grant Applications to develop a Center of Excellence

### Improving Communication & Resources

- Launched a Suicide Prevention Newsletter to share updates and best practices

### Postvention Support Pilot

- Implementing a community-based Postvention model to support those affected by suicide

### Suicide Prevention Symposium

- Convened key stakeholders to drive policy, research, and community action

# Health Department Suicide Prevention Efforts Overview

## Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant

5-year public health approach grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- **Project Period:** September 2020 – August 2025
- **Goal:** 10% decrease in death and injury, Vermonters Ages 15 – 64

## Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide Prevention

5-year Grant from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

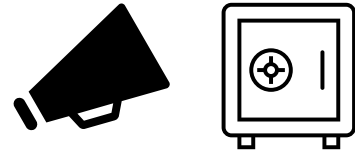
- **Project Period:** September 2022 – August 2027
- **Goal:** Reduce suicide deaths and attempts, Vermont youth in focused populations



[FacingSuicideVT Website](https://FacingSuicideVT.com)



[Facing Suicide VT](#) campaign  
[Man Therapy](#) campaign  
Safe Storage- [GunSafeVT](#)  
[Training Calendar](#)

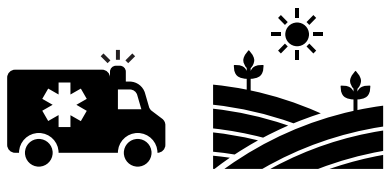


Healthcare/ MH Provider Training  
EMS Protocols  
ED Project  
[Schools Training/ Resources](#)  
Youth Serving Organizations

**Awareness & Communications**

Partner Collaboration  
Peer Support Networks  
At-Risk Populations Focus  
Supporting Community Strategies

**Connectedness**



**Place-based Programming**

Health Department Efforts

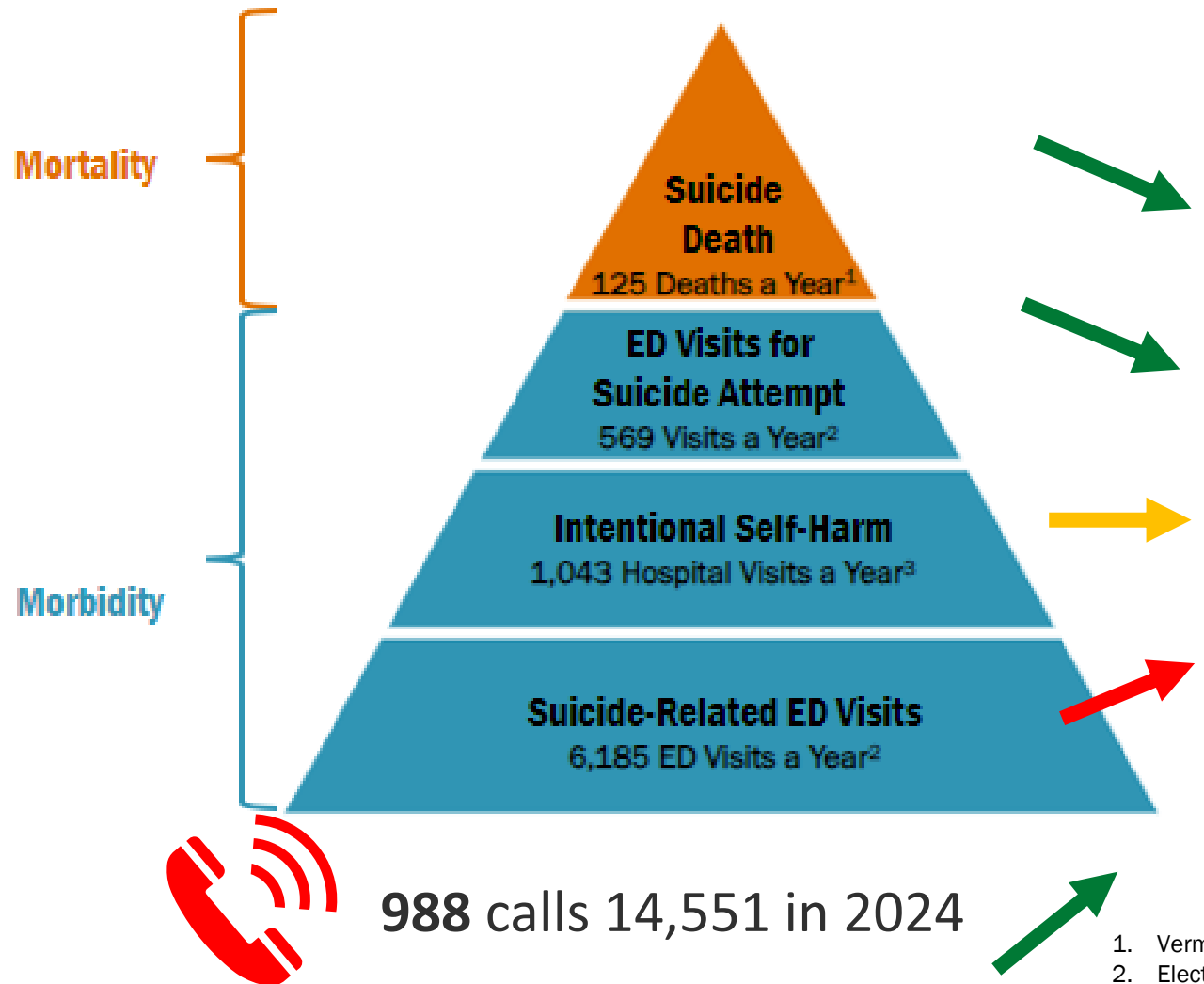
**Data-informed**

Data Dashboard  
Data Linkage Report



### Successes of Health Department Efforts

# Mortality and Morbidity Trends

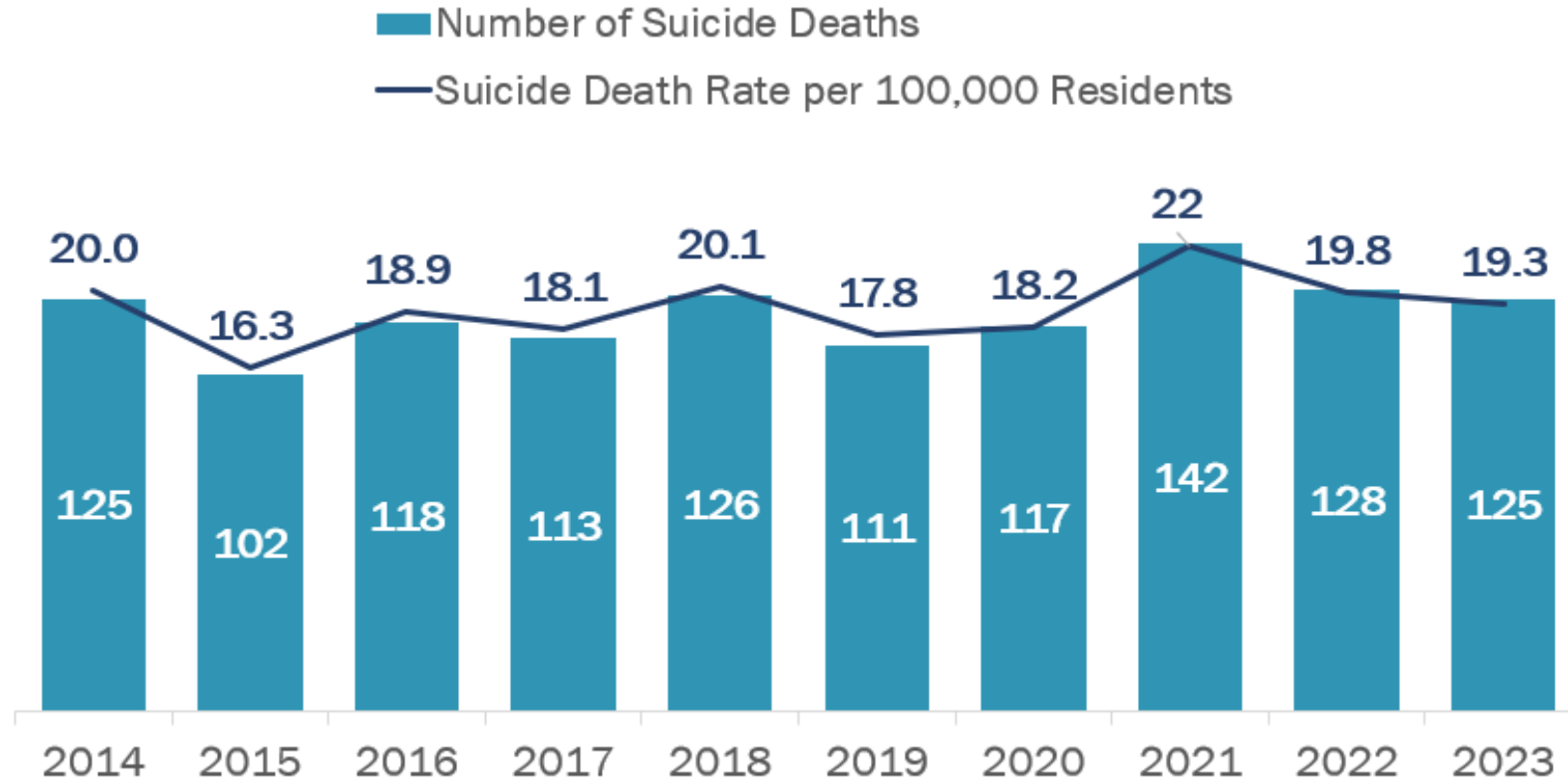


- The State and partners are working to face suicide by working together to make a positive impact on the numbers.
- We are starting to see some shifts.

[Suicide Data Webpage](#) | [Vermont Department of Health](#)

1. Vermont Vital Statistics, 2023. 2023 data is preliminary
2. Electronic Notification for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE), 2023
3. Vermont Uniform Hospital Discharge Data Set (VUHDDS), 2021

# Suicide Deaths Rates



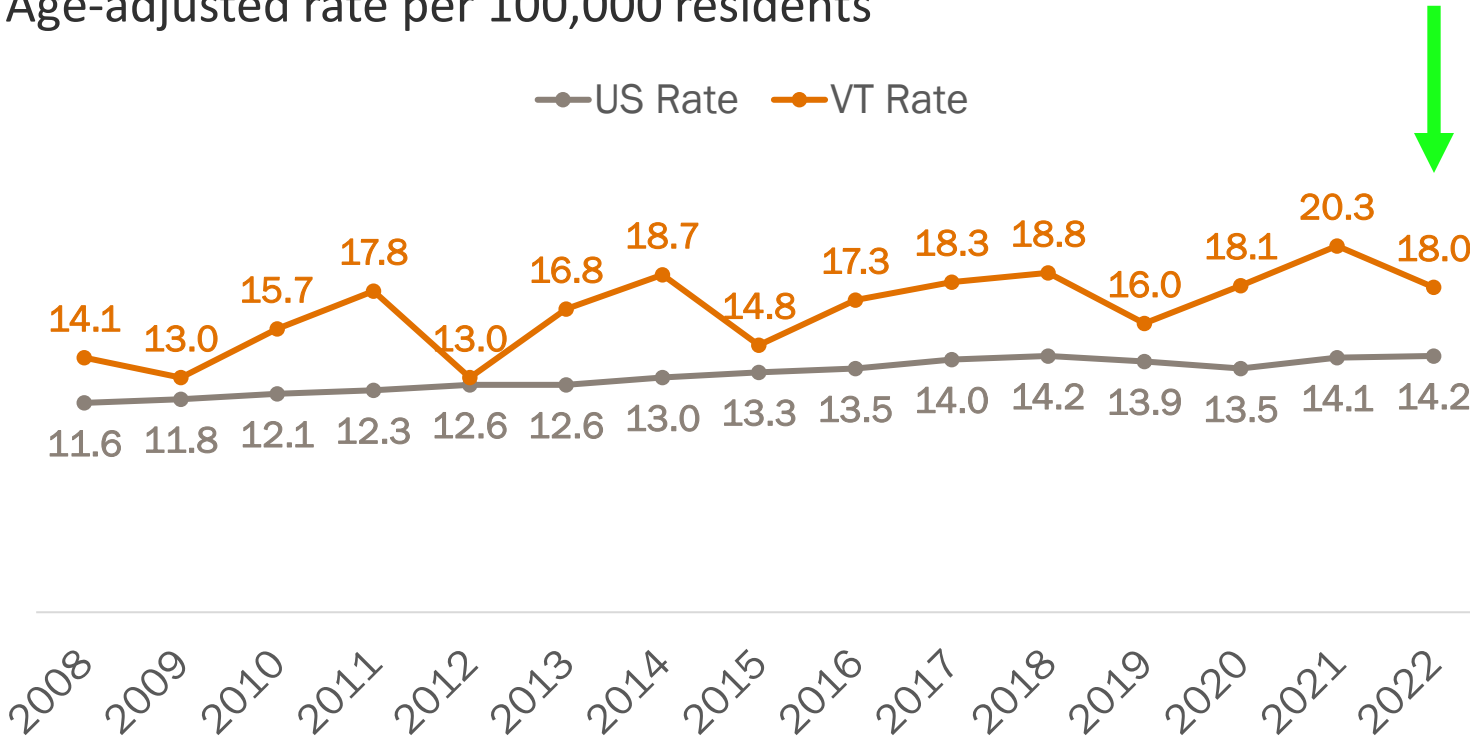
Source: Vermont Vital Statistics, 2014-2023. 2023 data is preliminary.

\*Suicide death numbers may slightly vary from previous publications from the Vermont Department of Health due to an updated, more inclusive, data inclusion criteria. See Methodology for more information.

# Vermont's rate has consistently been higher than the U.S. rate.\*

## Suicide Deaths

Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 residents



Over the past 15 years, Vermont's suicide rate has consistently been higher than the U.S. rate.\*

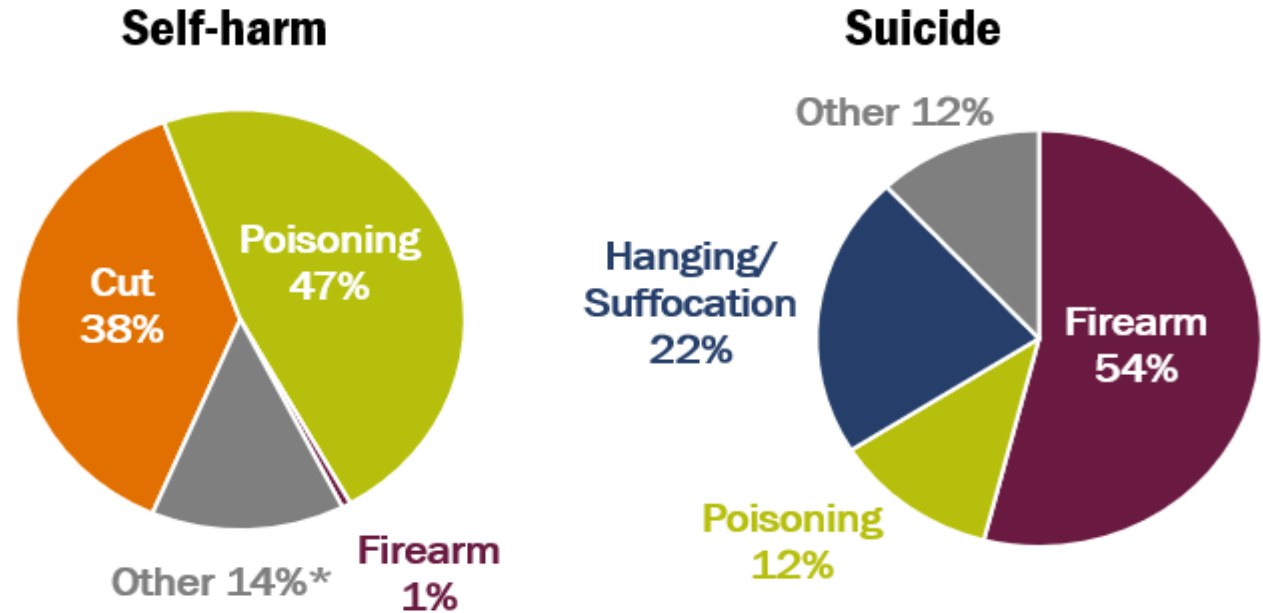
Vermont rank: 19<sup>th</sup> (by rate)

\*statistically significant.  
Source: CDC WONDER



# Lethal Means Matter

## Method of intentional self-harm and suicide.



Source: Vermont Vital Statistics, 2023 (preliminary); VUHDDS, 2022

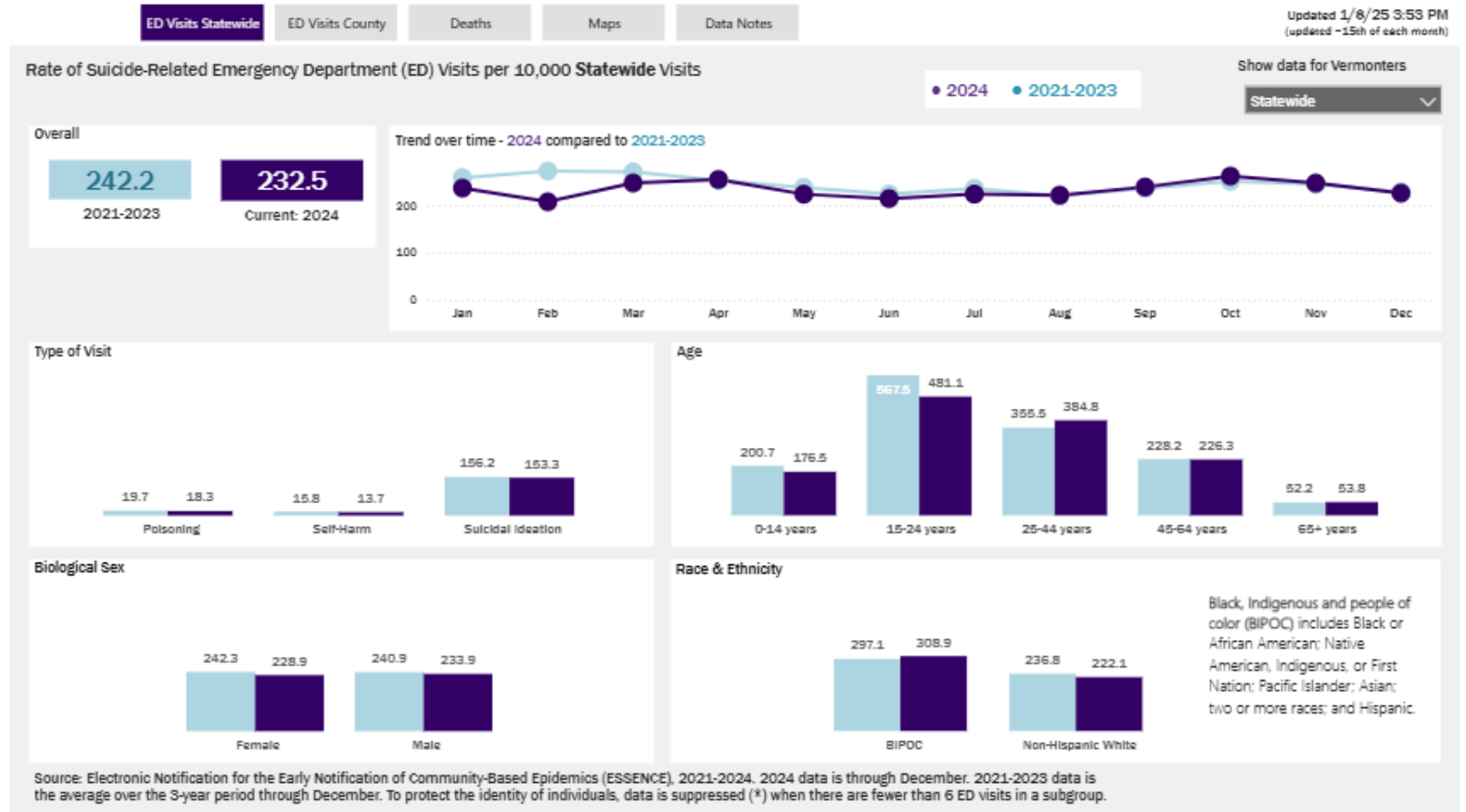
\*"Hanging/suffocation" has fewer than 6 observations and is included in the "Other" total.

Male suicide deaths make up 73% of all firearm deaths (all manners).

[Injury Data | Vermont Department of Health](#)

[Firearm Safety Webpage | Vermont Department of Health](#)





# Data Linkage 2.0 & Suicide Surveillance Dashboard

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/stats/surveillance-reporting-topic/injury-data>

# Ways to stay involved

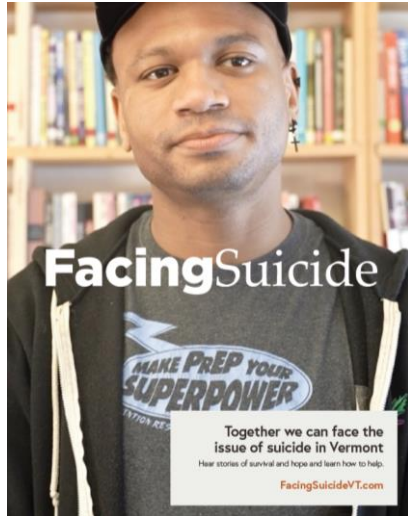
WHAT IS VERMONT DOING TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION?



TO FIND OUT, SIGN UP FOR THE FIRST ISSUE OF OUR NEW NEWSLETTER TODAY.



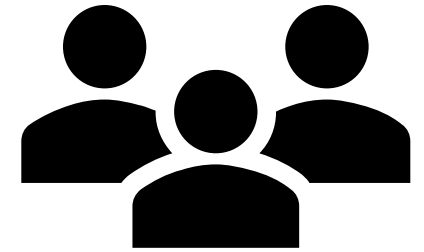
[Newsletter  
signup](#)



[FacingSuicideVT.org](http://FacingSuicideVT.org)



[Vermont Strategic  
Plan](#)



Vermont  
Suicide Prevention  
Coalition

[Statewide  
coalition meeting](#)



Feel free to reach out to us at [FacingSuicideVT@vermont.gov](mailto:FacingSuicideVT@vermont.gov)  
or reach us directly at:

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Stephanie Busch / [Stephanie.Busch@vermont.gov](mailto:Stephanie.Busch@vermont.gov)

**THANK YOU!**