



2025 Report to the Legislature: Deaths and Hospice Care Report

December 15, 2025

In Accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 5208.

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

Submitted by: Rick Hildebrant, MD, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Health

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

HealthVermont.gov
802-863-7200



Contents

Key Takeaways	3
Legislative Charge	3
Place of Death Statistics	4
Deaths in Hospital Settings	4
Deaths Outside of Hospital Settings	5
Hospice Care within 30 Days of Death	7
Summary	8

Key Takeaways

The following are highlights from the reporting period, January 2023 to December 2024:

- A total of 12,828 deaths occurred in Vermont. In 2023, there were 6,465 deaths, and in 2024, there were 6,363 deaths.
- 73% of total deaths (9,315 deaths) occurred outside of a hospital setting and 27% of deaths (3,513 deaths) occurred in a hospital setting.
- Of the deaths that occurred in a hospital setting, 71% (2,479 deaths) occurred in an inpatient setting, 14% (495 deaths) occurred in a hospital emergency room, and 15% (526 deaths) occurred in an intensive care unit.
- Of the deaths that occurred outside of the hospital, 54% (5,051 deaths) occurred in the decedent's home, 21% (1,914 deaths) occurred in a nursing home, 8% (761 deaths) occurred in a long-term care facility,¹ and 8% (712 deaths) occurred in a hospice facility.
- A total of 6,089 people (47% of all Vermont deaths) received hospice care within 30 days of their death, 90% of whom died outside of the hospital.

Legislative Charge

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

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

Given that the legislative charge, initially established in 2009, does not include the purpose of reporting this data to the Legislature, the Department would benefit from renewed clarity from the Legislature about the purpose and use of the requested data. The Department recommends that the Legislature consider whether this data should still be required to be reported to the Legislature and if so, how often the data should be reported.

¹ 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.

Place of Death Statistics

This report uses information from Vermont death certificates. In the 10 years from 2015 to 2024, an average of 6,111 deaths occurred annually in Vermont. During the current two-year reporting period, from January 2023 to December 2024, a total of 12,828 deaths occurred in Vermont. In 2023, there were 6,465 deaths, and in 2024, there were 6,363 deaths. In total, 73% of deaths occurred outside of a hospital setting and 27% occurred in a hospital setting.

Deaths in Hospital Settings

In the current reporting period (January 2023 to December 2024), an average of 1,757 Vermont deaths occurred per year in a hospital setting. Over the two-year reporting period, there were a total of 3,513 deaths that occurred in a hospital setting—71% of those occurred in an inpatient setting.

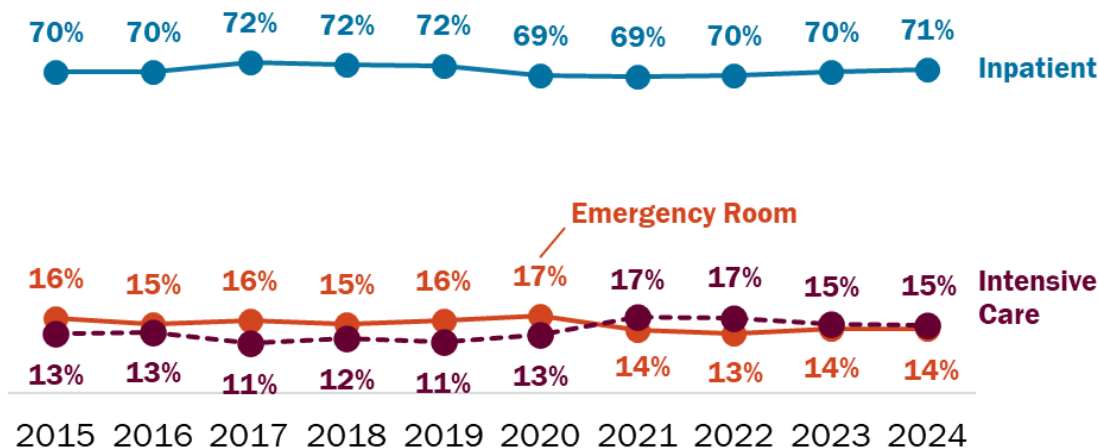
Table 1: Vermont Deaths Occurring in a Hospital Setting

	Inpatient	Emergency Room	Dead on Arrival	Intensive Care	Total
2023	1,243	250	8	266	1,767
2024	1,236	245	5	260	1,746
Total	2,479	495	13	526	3,513

Figure 1 on the next page shows Vermont deaths in a hospital setting by location from 2015 through 2024.

- The proportion of hospital deaths in **inpatient settings** from 2015 through 2024 has generally remained stable.
- The proportion of deaths in **emergency rooms** decreased slightly from 2015 (16%) to 2024 (14%) and has remained generally stable since 2021.
- Deaths in **intensive care units** increased slightly from 2015 (13%) to 2024 (15%) and have remained generally stable since 2023.

Figure 1: Most Vermont deaths in hospitals have occurred in inpatient settings.*



*Dead on arrival was 1% or less in all years and is not shown in the figure.

Deaths Outside of Hospital Settings

More than 4,600 Vermont deaths occur outside the hospital each year. About 83% of these deaths are in the decedent's home, nursing home or long-term care facility. A long-term care facility includes assisted living facilities and residential care homes licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. About 2,500 deaths occurred in decedents' homes in 2023 (2,578) and 2024 (2,473). In both years, approximately 1,300 deaths occurred in nursing homes or long-term care facilities. See Table 2.

Table 2: Vermont Deaths Occurring Outside of a Hospital

	Decedent's Home	Nursing home or Long-Term Care Facility*	Hospice Facility	Other+	Unknown	Total
2023	2,578	1,325	366	426	3	4,698
2024	2,473	1,350	346	446	2	4,617
Total	5,051	2,675	712	872	5	9,315

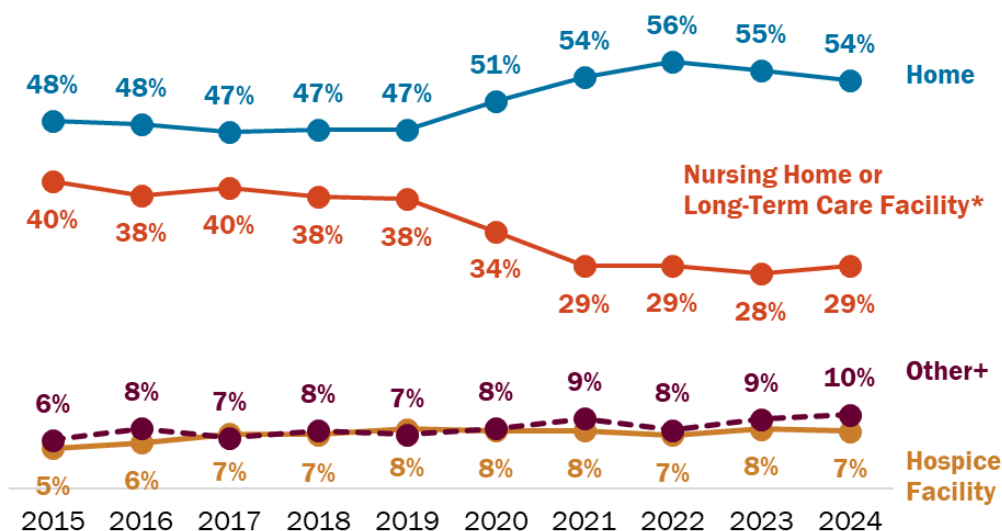
* Long-term care facilities include assisted living facilities and residential care homes licensed by the State of Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

+ Examples of "other" settings of death are homes that are not the decedents', outside, worksites, medical clinics, hotels, motels or inns, correctional facilities, or temporary shelters. Note that this category may include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

Figure 2 shows Vermont deaths outside of hospital settings by location from 2015 through 2024.

- From 2015 to 2024, the proportion of deaths occurring in **decedents' homes** increased from 48% to 54% and has generally remained stable since 2021.
- Deaths occurring in **nursing homes or long-term care facilities** decreased from 40% in 2015 to 29% in 2024 and have generally remained stable since 2021. Of the deaths occurring in nursing homes or long-term care facilities during the two-year reporting period, more deaths occurred in nursing homes than in long-term care facilities (i.e., assisted living facilities and residential care homes). See Table 3.
- Deaths occurring in **other settings** represented approximately 10% of Vermont deaths in 2024 and approximately 9% of Vermont deaths in 2023. This is up from 6% of deaths reported in other settings in 2015. Examples of “other” settings are homes that are not the decedents', outside, worksites, medical clinics, hotels, motels or inns, correctional facilities, or temporary shelters. Note that this category may include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.
- Over 10 years, from 2015 to 2024, deaths in **hospice settings** continue to represent about 7% of Vermont deaths each year.

Figure 2: Around half of deaths outside of hospital settings were in decedents' homes.



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

+ Examples of “other” settings of death are homes that are not the decedents', outside, worksites, medical clinics, hotels, motels or inns, correctional facilities, or temporary shelters. Note that this category may include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

Table 3: Deaths Occurring in a Nursing Home or Long-Term Care Facility

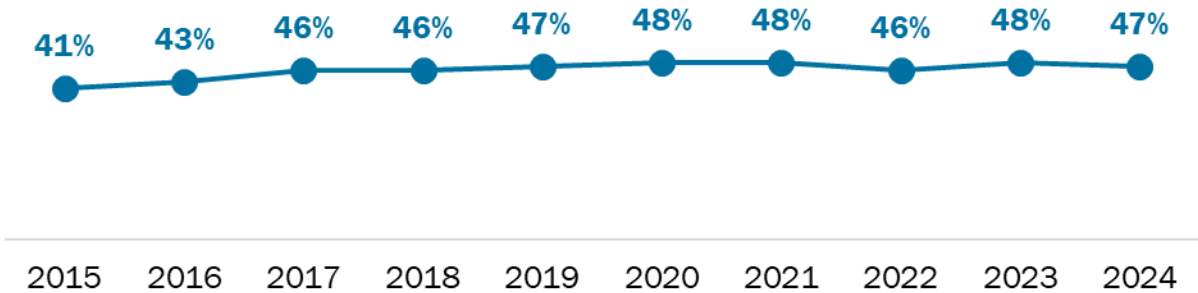
	Nursing Home	Assisted Living Facility*	Residential Care Home	Total
2023	965	165	195	1,325
2024	949	169	232	1,350
Total	1,914	334	427	2,675

* 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.

Hospice Care within 30 Days of Death

In 2023, 3,104 people in Vermont received hospice care within 30 days of their death, compared to 2,985 in 2024. The proportion of people in Vermont receiving hospice care within 30 days of death increased from 2015 to 2017 and has remained consistent in recent years. During the current two-year reporting period, the proportion of people receiving hospice care within 30 days of their death has remained consistent, with 48% in 2023 and 47% in 2024. See Figure 3.

Figure 3: The proportion of people in Vermont receiving hospice care within 30 days of death has been consistent in recent years.



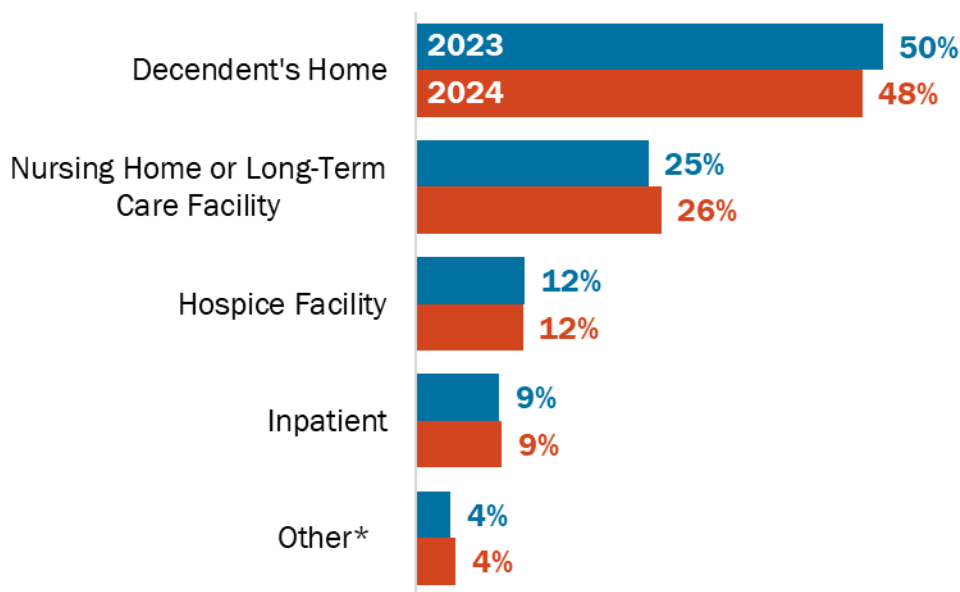
*The receipt of hospice care is reported as unknown for approximately two percent of Vermont deaths each year.

Figure 4 below illustrates where individuals who received hospice care within 30 days of their death died in 2023 and 2024.

- Among those who received hospice care in the last 30 days of life, 90% died outside of the hospital.
- Of the 90% who died outside the hospital,
 - 75% died in their home, a nursing home, or other long-term care facility.

- 12% died in a hospice facility.
- 4% died in other settings.
- Of the 10% who died in a hospital setting,
 - 9% died in an inpatient setting.
 - Less than 1% died in an intensive care unit or emergency room (not shown in Figure 4).

Figure 4: Nine out of 10 people who received hospice care 30 days before death⁺ from 2023 to 2024 died outside of the hospital.



* Examples of “other” settings of death are homes that are not the decedents', outside, worksites, medical clinics, hotels, motels or inns, correctional facilities, or temporary shelters. Note that this category may include deaths that should have been reported under one of the other categories.

+ Few deaths (<1%) occurred in the emergency room/outpatient or intensive care unit and are not included in the figure.

Summary

In 2023 and 2024, 73% of deaths occurred each year outside the hospital. Deaths occurring in the decedent’s home have increased over the last 10 years and plateaued in recent years. Deaths occurring in the decedent’s home comprised more than half of all out-of-hospital deaths in Vermont in 2023 and 2024, 55% in 2023 and 54% in 2024.

The number of Vermont deaths occurring in a hospice facility was also level, with 366 in 2023 and 346 in 2024 (about 5% of all Vermont deaths). Those receiving hospice care within the 30 days before death increased in the past 10 years but leveled off in recent years. In 2023 and 2024, 90% of these deaths occurred outside of the hospital.