

Health Care Workforce Census

Dental Hygienists, 2023

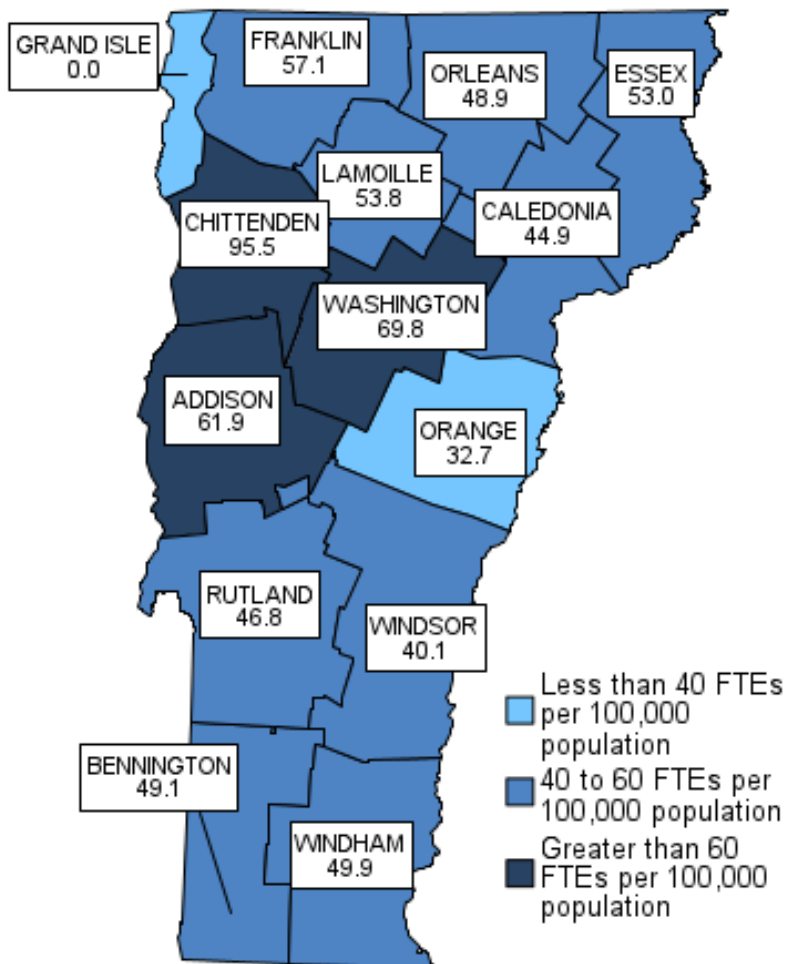
July 2024

Overview

This dental hygienist census is part of the Vermont Department of Health's healthcare provider data program, which is used to monitor and measure the supply of health care providers in our state over time. Vermont dental hygienists are relicensed every two years. Data for this report was obtained during the September 2023 relicensing period and represents a snapshot of the profession at that time.

Dental hygienists, working under the general supervision of a licensed dentist, provide screening procedures, teeth cleaning and other dental care, and oral health education to their patients.

Hygienist FTEs per 100,000 population by county



In Brief

Workforce

Census period – September 2023
 Response Rate: 100%
 Licenses renewed: 622
 Active in VT: 553
 Full-time Equivalent (FTEs): 402.8

Demographics

% Female: 97%
 Median Age: 45
 % 60 or older: 16%

Education and Training

% associate degree: 78%
 % bachelor's degree or higher: 22%
 % educated in VT: 71%
 % educated in Northeast: 96%

Current Employment

Working in a dental office: 85%
 Full-time hours at one site: 8%
 Full-time hours at all sites: 11%
 Working at multiple sites: 11%
 Plans to reduce hours: 5%
 Plans to retire or stop working in VT as hygienist: 2%

Geographic Distribution

(FTEs per 100,000 population)
 Highest: 95.5, Chittenden County
 Lowest: 0, Grand Isle County

Trends in Statewide FTEs

2015: 398.2
 2017: 415.1
 2019: 414.1
 2021: 402.4
 2023: 402.8

Workforce

- 622 hygienists renewed their licenses during the surveyed period, and all completed the workforce census for a response rate of 100%.
- Out of 622 respondents, 553 (89%) indicated they are actively practicing as hygienists in Vermont.
- 26% of hygienists that are not currently providing care in Vermont indicated they planned to do so within the next 12 months.
- The remainder of this report is based on the 553 active hygienists who reported providing direct patient care in Vermont.

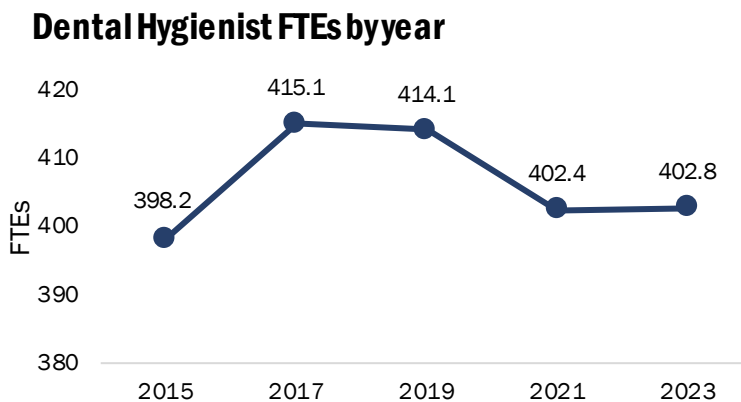
Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)

- 553 hygienists provide 402.8 FTEs.
- Most hygienists (73%) work 20 to 39 hours a week at their work locations.
- 11% of hygienists work 40 hours or more at their work locations.
- 55.9 FTEs, (14%) of total hygienist FTEs, are provided by the 90 dental hygienists ages 60 or older.

Average weekly hours - all sites	Number	Percent
Less than 20 hours	90	16%
20 to 39 hours	402	73%
40 hours or more	61	11%

Trends in Statewide FTEs

- Hygienist FTEs increased by 16.9 from 398.2 in 2015 to 415.1 in 2017.
- FTEs dropped to 402.4 in 2021.
- In 2023, FTEs increased for the first time since 2017, but the increase was very small (less than 1 FTE).



Demographics

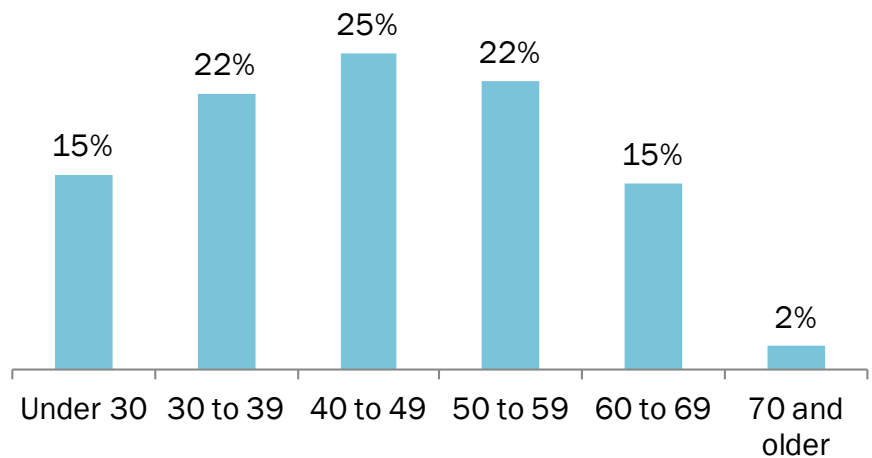
Gender

- 97% of active hygienists are female.
- 2% of active hygienists are male.
- 1% of active hygienists preferred not to answer.

Age

- Median age of active hygienists is 45. This is younger than many other VT health professionals.

Age distribution of VT hygienists



Race and ethnicity

Dental hygienists were asked to select their race and could select multiple responses or choose not to answer, so numbers may not equal the total number of hygienists.

- 93% of dental hygienists are white, 1% are Asian, and 0.2% are American Indian or Alaska Native or Black, 31 preferred not to answer or did not answer, and two people selected a race that was not listed (one Mediterranean, one Portuguese/Italian).
- 1% of dental hygienists are Hispanic, Latino/a, or of Spanish origin, and 94% are not.
- 27 hygienists preferred not to answer or were missing data about ethnicity.

Education and Training

- 78% of dental hygienists have an associate degree.
- 22% of dental hygienists have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 71% of dental hygienists received their schooling in VT.

Highest degree awarded in...	Number	Percent
Vermont	391	71%
Northeast excluding Vermont	139	25%
South	6	1%
West	6	1%
Midwest	5	1%
Outside US	3	1%
* Missing data from 3 individuals		

Practice Characteristics

Number of sites

- 88% (487) work at a single location.
- 11% (60) work at two locations.
- 1% (7) work at three or more locations.

Practice setting

- 85% (470) of hygienists' main practice setting were in dental practices.
- 85% (467) provided primary care (general or pediatric dentistry) at their main site.

Main Setting	Number	Percent
Solo dentist practice	173	31%
Practice of 2 dentists	182	33%
Practice of 3 or more dentists	115	21%
Health center	45	8%
Educational/Training Center	16	3%
Local Health Office/Other Public Health/Community Health Setting	11	2%
School Health Services (Tooth Tutors, etc.)	9	2%
Mobile Unit Dentistry	2	0.4%

Current Experience

- Median years licensed in Vermont: 15.
- 27% of hygienists in Vermont have been licensed here for over 25 years.

Years licensed in Vermont	Number	Percent
0 to 5 years	135	24%
6 to 10 years	74	13%
11 to 15 years	68	12%
16 to 20 years	70	13%
21 to 25 years	53	10%
Over 25 years	151	27%
Missing data from 2 individuals		

Future Plans

- 85% are planning to continue working the same number of hours as they are currently in the next 12 months.
- 4% are planning to increase hours.
- 6% are planning to decrease hours.
- 2% are planning to seek employment in a different field, stop working in VT, or retire.

Key Takeaways

- Chittenden County has the largest hygienist FTE per 100,000 population ratio at 95.5 - most other counties in VT have an FTE per population ratio around half of that.
- There was an increase in hygienist FTEs from 2015 to 2017, followed by a decrease in FTEs through 2021. FTEs from 2021 to 2023 increased slightly for the first time since 2017.
- Hygienists in VT are one of the younger health professional groups with a median age of 45.

Hygienists are one of the younger health professions in VT: Only 16% are 60+.

For more information, contact: AHS.VDHPPhysicianCensus@vermont.gov

Appendix

Active hygienist

A hygienist who reported working in Vermont as such (regardless of how many hours) is considered active.

Census

The census was taken during the biennial hygienist relicensing process which ended on September 30, 2023. The data include all licensed hygienists except for new licensees enrolled less than three months before the renewal date (June–August 2023), as their license was valid until the next renewal date of September 30, 2025. Census questions available upon request.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Full time is defined as 40 or more working hours in Vermont per week, 48 weeks or more per year. Reporting more than 40 hours per week is defined as one FTE regardless of the number of hours over 40 per week worked.

Maps

For county map, colors define quartiles. The lowest 25% of FTE equivalents to population ratio is displayed in the lightest color, the middle 50% in medium, and highest 25% in the darkest color.

Missing data

Unless otherwise noted, missing data are excluded from tables. Thus, totals may vary from table to table.

Population Estimates

Population estimates are for July 2022 and were provided by the Department of Health.

Primary Practice, Site, Setting, and Specialty

The primary or main practice, site, setting, or specialty refer to the practice with the greatest number of reported annual hours per individual.

States

States were grouped into the following regions:

Northeast	Midwest	South		West
Connecticut	Illinois	Alabama	North Carolina	Alaska
Maine	Indiana	Arkansas	Oklahoma	Arizona
Massachusetts	Iowa	Delaware	South Carolina	California
New Hampshire	Kansas	Florida	Tennessee	Colorado
New Jersey	Michigan	Georgia	Texas	Hawaii
New York	Minnesota	Kentucky	Virginia	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Missouri	Louisiana	Washington DC	Montana
Rhode Island	Nebraska	Maryland	West Virginia	Nevada
Vermont	North Dakota	Mississippi		New Mexico
	Ohio			Oregon
	South Dakota			Utah
	Wisconsin			Washington
				Wyoming

Weekly Hours

Average weekly hours is based on hours and weeks reported, adjusted to a full-time 48-week working year (hours * (weeks/48)). Thus, the average weekly hours for an individual working 40 hours a week for half the year (24 weeks) is 20.