

Access to health care is essential for people with diabetes. The availability of health care providers is a critical part of that access. In 2021, nearly 45,000 (9%) of Vermont adults were diagnosed with diabetes. Almost all of them (96%) reported having a primary care provider and most (94%) had a routine check-up in the last year. One in sixteen (6%) delayed medical care due to cost (VT Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2021). Depending on where someone lives in Vermont, access to a health care provider can vary. This geographic gap in care can impact an individual's health.

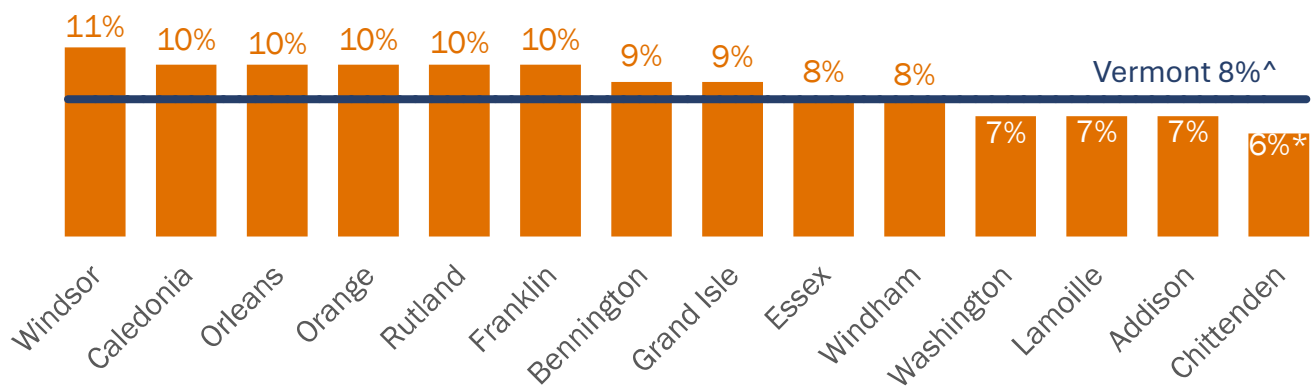
KEY POINTS

- **Diabetes prevalence ranges from 6% to 11% across Vermont counties.**
- **Vermont county PCP availability rates range from 22.0 to 146.6 providers per 100,000 Vermonters.**
- **Windsor, Grand Isle, Essex, & Orleans Counties stand out with high diabetes prevalence and lower PCP availability.**

County Diabetes Prevalence

In Vermont, 8% of adults have diabetes. However, this rate varies by county. This ranges from 6% among Chittenden County residents to 11% among Windsor County residents. Eight of fourteen counties have a diabetes prevalence above the state average. Diabetes prevalence among Chittenden County residents is significantly lower than the statewide average.

Vermont Adult Diabetes Prevalence by County, 2020-2021



Data Source: VT BRFSS, 2020-2021.

* Notes statistically significant difference from state rate.

^ Vermont estimate represent 2-years of data for county-level comparisons. It may therefore differ slightly for reported single year data.

Primary Care Provider (PCP) Availability

Primary care providers (PCPs) give a wide range of care. They are often the first point of contact for health problems, treat common conditions and provide referrals to specialists. PCPs include licensed physicians, physician assistants (PAs), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs). To estimate the number of full-time PCPs there are, full-time equivalent (FTE) is used.

Rate PCP[^] FTEs by County, 2019 & 2020

County	Provider FTEs per 100,000 Vermonters
Chittenden	146.6
Windham	128.7
Caledonia	125.2
Vermont	119.1
Bennington	118.1
Rutland	117.8
Washington	115.3
Windsor	111.1
Addison	107.3
Orange	106.3
Franklin	95.0
Orleans	91.0
Lamoille	89.5
Essex	86.3
Grand Isle	22.0

There are 119.1 full-time PCPS for every 100,000 Vermonters.

- When measuring only physicians, the rate drops to 93.9 FTEs per 100,000 Vermonters.
- PAs and APRNs fill the gap, increasing PCP capacity by 27% (data not shown).
- While the rate of physician FTEs in Vermont alone is higher than the national rate of 83.9 per 100,000 Americans,¹ it is unclear if this is enough coverage or if their distribution are aligned with areas of need.

The amount of PCP FTEs varies by county, which means access can also vary. In Grand Isle, the rate is 22.0 per 100,000 county residents. While the Chittenden County rate is 146.6 per 100,000 residents. Only three counties have a PCP FTE rate equal to or greater than the state average.

Data Source: VT Health care Workforce Census, 2019 (APRN) and 2020 (doctors and PAs).

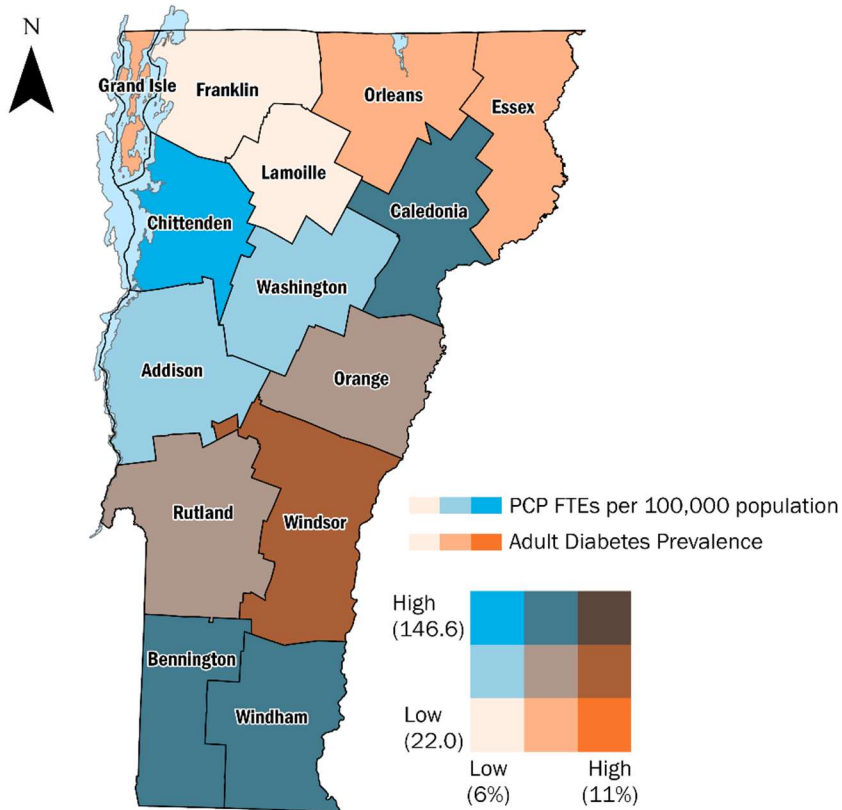
[^] FTEs include physicians, physician assistants, and APRNs reporting providing primary care.

¹ National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. *State of the Primary Care Workforce, 2024*. 2024. Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/state-of-the-primary-care-workforce-report-2024.pdf>

Diabetes Prevalence and PCP Availability

This map shows the overlap of adult diabetes prevalence and PCP FTEs per 100,000 county residents. High rates of both **diabetes** and **PCP FTEs** are shown by darker shades of the blue and orange colors, low rates of both are shown by lighter shade.

- Windsor County has a high prevalence of diabetes but intermediate levels of PCP availability.
- Access to care may also be a challenge in Grand Isle, Orleans, and Essex Counties which each have low PCP availability with intermediate diabetes prevalence.



People with diabetes in counties with lower rates of PCP FTEs may experience challenges accessing health care.

Data Source: VT BRFSS, 2020-2021; Healthcare Workforce Census 2019 (APRN) & 2020 (doctors and PAs).

This map does not account for PCP availability in out of state counties bordering Vermont in MA, NH, or NY where some Vermont residents may be traveling to for care.

Key Takeaways

The data provided here show that people with diabetes in Vermont can access a provider. However, the current data do not tell us if this availability is sufficient or whether a provider is able to spend enough time with a person to give them the level of care needed during a visit. PCPs are generally at capacity with their patient load. Therefore, their ability to engage and encourage individuals in screening and primary prevention tends to be lessened and would be even more so the lower the PCP FTE rate gets. Windsor, Grand Isle, Orleans, and Essex are counties that stand out as areas of higher diabetes prevalence with lower PCP availability, and therefore potentially challenging when trying to access a PCP.

For more information contact the Vermont Diabetes Program, ahs.vdhpdpdiaabetesteam@vermont.gov