



Not Out of The Woods Our Region's Urgent Need to Mainstream Mental Healthcare

Picturesque doesn't always mean picture perfect. Although we may feel fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the country, when it comes to mental health, New Hampshire and Vermont are especially vulnerable. For rural communities, access to mental healthcare is a particular challenge. Here's why:

- Rural areas have 20% fewer primary care providers than urban areas.
- 65% of rural counties do not have a psychiatrist.
- 81% of rural counties do not have a psychiatric nurse practitioner.
- In rural communities, the suicide rate is between 18.3 and 20.5 per 100,000 residents, compared to large urban communities where the rate is between 10.9 and 12.5 per 100,000.

For more information about rural mental health, visit [Rural Minds](#).

How Dartmouth Health is Confronting Crisis & Squashing Stigmas

These alarming facts tell a disturbing story—but we can change the narrative. The truth is—there is no health without mental health. Too many people are suffering in silence and the numbers are simply too alarming to ignore. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, roughly **221,000 adults in New Hampshire have a mental health condition**. That's more than five times the population of Concord. At Dartmouth Health, we're mindful of this escalating crisis and the devastating toll it's having on individuals, families, and businesses throughout our region. By promoting awareness, advancing research, and providing better access to comprehensive interventions/treatments, we can save lives and dramatically improve the overall wellbeing of our friends and neighbors. The following are some of the many ways we are striving to minimize this unprecedented health crisis for the people of New Hampshire and Vermont.

Harsh REALITIES

32.3% of NH youth had one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions, and of those, only **55.5%** received mental health treatment or counseling within the past year.

National Survey on Children's Health, 2021



In New Hampshire, drug-related deaths more than **QUADRUPLED** between 1999-2017.



In 2016, New Hampshire had the **3rd** highest opioid fatality rate of any state & **8th** leading cause of death among Granite Staters.

Top 10 Rural States 2024

Vermont	64.9%
Maine	61.4%
West Virginia	55.4%
Mississippi	53.7%
Montana	46.6%
Arkansas	44.5%
South Dakota	42.8%
Alabama	42.3%
New Hampshire	41.7%
Kentucky	41.3%

We Hear Your Pain

Recently, Dartmouth Health conducted a comprehensive community needs assessment. Regional respondents were asked to select the top 5 most pressing health needs or issues in the community from a list of 27 potential topics. For the people of New Hampshire and Vermont, access to **mental health is their number one concern**. For this reason, we must continue to pursue innovative, urgent approaches to intervention, treatment, and access.

Heads Up

Through an ongoing series of easily accessible mental health webinars, we are meeting people where they are with meaningful guidance about next steps. For more information about our Heads Up program visit [Heads Up: A Year-long Mental Health Awareness Journey | For Patients | Dartmouth Health \(dartmouth-health.org\)](#)

MORE Is Better

Our Moms in Recovery program (MORE) is a safe space where women who are in recovery from substance use disorder can get the help they need. We offer a variety of services to support pregnant and parenting women including prenatal care, immunizations, family planning, screening/treatment for sexually transmitted infections and hepatitis, and help with finding primary care providers. To learn more about MORE visit <https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/moms-recovery>

On Call 24/7 For Crisis

Dartmouth Health understands that mental health intervention can't wait. This is why we've developed a 24/7 crisis response network. Our mobile crisis response and behavioral health crisis support teams are a just a phone call away for those who need it, and help is just three digits away. In 2019, the federal government recognized the growing need for accessible and immediate mental health intervention. Soon after, 988 was launched as the nationwide, easy-to-use, 3-digit dialing code for individuals in crisis. The goal of the **988** Lifeline was to improve immediate support to meet the nation's growing mental health, suicide, and substance use distress needs. Getting access to urgent care has never been more convenient with Dartmouth Health's Virtual Urgent Care (powered by MDLIVE). With fast, 24/7 access to virtual emergency care by laptop or smartphone, we're making it easier than ever for individuals to get the care they need, when and where they need it most. For a complete listing of the many ways in which Dartmouth Health's Substance Use and Mental Health Initiative (SUMHI) is making a positive difference in communities throughout our region visit <https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/sumhi>

New Hampshire Stats:

- The state of New Hampshire has the **second** highest suicide rate in New England, and the **19th** highest suicide rate in the US.
- Suicide is the **8th** leading cause of death in NH overall, and the **second** for residents aged 15-34 in the state.
- On average, **one** person dies by suicide every **36 hours** in the state.

– M.I.A.S.P. "SUICIDE RATES IN NH - ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES IN THE COUNTRY," 2018

Vermont Stats:

- In 2021, there were 142 suicide deaths among Vermont residents, with a rate 21.0 per 100,000. This is the **highest number and rate** of suicide deaths recorded in Vermont.
- Suicide is the **8th** leading cause of death in the state.

– Vermont Department of Health, "Intentional Self-Harm and Death by Suicide," 2022

Dartmouth Health, New Hampshire's only academic health system and the state's largest private employer, serves patients across northern New England. Dartmouth Health provides access to more than 2,000 providers in almost every area of medicine, delivering care at its flagship hospital, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in Lebanon, NH, as well as across its wide network of hospitals, clinics and care facilities. DHMC is consistently named the #1 hospital in New Hampshire by U.S. News & World Report, and is recognized for high performance in numerous clinical specialties and procedures. Dartmouth Health includes Dartmouth Cancer Center, one of only 56 National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the nation, and the only such center in northern New England; Dartmouth Health Children's, which includes the state's only children's hospital and multiple locations around the region; member hospitals in Lebanon, Keene and New London, NH, and Windsor and Bennington, VT; Visiting Nurse and Hospice for Vermont and New Hampshire; and more than 30 clinics that provide ambulatory and specialty services across New Hampshire and Vermont. Through its historical partnership with Dartmouth and the Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth Health trains nearly 400 medical residents and fellows annually, and performs cutting-edge research and clinical trials recognized across the globe with Geisel and the White River Junction VA Medical Center in White River Junction, VT. Dartmouth Health and its more than 15,000 employees are deeply committed to serving the healthcare needs of everyone in our communities, and to providing each of our patients with exceptional, personal care.