



# Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics

Connecting You With Health Care

## 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



*Free Medical Care & Health Services for Vermonters in Need*

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**People’s Health and Wellness Clinic**  
*Medical and Dental Services*  
553 North Main Street, Barre, VT 05641

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*Medical Services*  
121 Depot Street, Bennington, VT 05201

## MIDDLEBURY

**Open Door Clinic**  
*Medical and Dental Services*  
100 Porter Drive, Middlebury, VT 05753

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*Referral Services Only*  
44 South Main Street, Randolph, VT 05060

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*Referral Services Only*  
289 County Road, Windsor, VT 05089



# Welcome!

## Free Medical Care & Health Services for Vermonters in Need

Dear Reader,

There is no question that we are living through a period of upheaval. Staring down the gutting of our country's social and healthcare safety net, we cannot pretend that we are untouched by these actions and the uncertainty of our future. Yet as we navigate these challenges, our commitment to the health and well-being of Vermonters remains steadfast. We will do whatever is in our power to remain a vital safety net for individuals and families who face barriers to accessing healthcare—whether due to cost, coverage gaps, or systemic inequities.

We promise to continue to work tirelessly - as we have for decades, through other administrations and most recently, through the COVID-19 pandemic - to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, income, gender and more, receives the compassionate and high quality care they deserve. In the face of rising economic pressures and changing healthcare landscapes, we remain a dependable source of support, advocacy, and healing for our community.

Now more than ever, we understand that stability and trust are essential. That's why we are doubling down on our mission to provide accessible healthcare services, foster partnerships across the state, and advocate for a more inclusive healthcare system. Whether through direct clinical care, outreach efforts, or preventive health education, we are here for Vermonters. While our role may evolve in response to emerging needs, our purpose does not waver: to ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to their health.



Dan Barlow, VFRC Board Chair, and Olivia Sharrow, Executive Director

Olivia Sharrow  
VFRC Executive Director

Daniel Barlow  
VFRC Board Chair

### VFRC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Olivia Sharrow, MPH**  
Executive Director

### 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Elizabeth Franson, MHA**  
Good Neighbor Health Clinic

**Samantha Ball, MBA**  
Valley Health Connections

**Daniel Barlow - Chair**  
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**Natalie Basil - Secretary**  
Dr. G. Richard Dundas Free Clinic

**Chelsea Boardman**  
Health Connections  
at Gifford Medical Center

**Tia Poalino - Treasurer**  
Rutland County Health Partners

**Kelli Rapp**  
Mount Ascutney Health Connections  
at Mount Ascutney Hospital

**Heidi Sulis, MPH - Vice Chair**  
Open Door Clinic

### Our Mission

To support member free clinics in Vermont that identify gaps and provide access to care, via on-site or by referral services, to uninsured and under-insured people.

125 Tremont St. | Barre, VT 05641  
802-448-4280 | [vtfreeclinics.org](http://vtfreeclinics.org)

# Our Impact

### What we do is unique.

VFRC is a vital safety net for individuals and families facing barriers to accessing healthcare. We never charge any fee for our services, and we provide high quality, compassionate care.

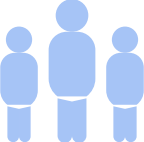
### What we do is important.

In the face of rising economic pressures and changing healthcare landscapes, we remain a dependable source of support and healing for our community. Our clinics served over 13,000 patients this year at no cost to them.

“ The value of these services in avoided Emergency Room and hospitalization charges is an estimated \$4.9 million. ”


– Olivia Sharrow, Executive Director

### In 2024, VFRC Member Clinics served:




## 13,421

INDIVIDUAL PATIENTS




### Who are our patients?




## 41%

ARE AT OR BELOW  
200% OF THE FEDERAL  
POVERTY LEVEL



## 26%

ARE UNINSURED  
(this is also 16% of  
Vermont’s total uninsured)



## 45%

ARE UNDERINSURED

## 34%

have delayed  
their care  
due to cost  
or access


## 20%

have no  
primary  
care  
provider

## 10%


are best served  
in languages  
other than  
English

### During 2024 VFRC Clinics provided:




## Over \$1 million

TOWARDS VOUCHERS FOR DENTAL SERVICES, FREE MEDICATIONS, DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT ETC.



## 889

MEDICAL  
CLINICS



## 478

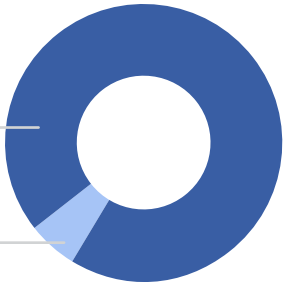
DENTAL  
CLINICS

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# Our Volunteers

**Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics are like Vermont itself - small but mighty.** The positive impact we have on healthcare in Vermont is tremendous, and our services are always free for patients.

Since 1995, our free clinics have been able to provide high quality, professional patient care and services due to the unwavering commitment of our volunteers. Hundreds of retired medical professionals, current medical students, practicing doctors and nurses, and non-medical volunteers generously donate their time and expertise to serve Vermonters in need. **Their dedication is what makes this work possible.**



**Nearly 700 volunteers and our resourceful staff are deeply committed to serving Vermonters in need.**

We ensure that no one is left behind when it comes to their health. We are a vital safety net for patients from all walks of life.



▲ Visit their website

## BARRE

### People's Health and Wellness Clinic

51 Church St Barre, VT 05641

*Accessible, high-quality, no-cost care for uninsured and underinsured adults.*

**Important 2024 work:**

- Served nearly 700 patients, providing essential healthcare services at no cost.
- Comprehensive care including wellness checks, chronic disease management and preventive screenings.
- Dental hygiene and tooth extractions, meeting a critical need for oral health care.
- We treat everyone with compassion and dignity, creating a trusted resource for vulnerable individuals.



Visit their website ►

## BENNINGTON

### Greater Bennington Community Service's Dr G. Dundas Free Clinic

121 Depot St Bennington, VT 05201

*A much needed lifeline for medical care for people in transition between jobs, housing, and primary care providers.*

**Important 2024 work:**

- Hosted a 2-day Remote Area Medical clinic where 201 patients received free medical, dental and/or vision care
- Helped hundreds of patients navigate complex social services and hospital systems.
- Served as a weekly collaboration hub for social service organizations to assist individuals & families in accessing housing, food and health care services.
- Our patients would not have access to care if our clinic didn't exist.



Visit their website ►

## MIDDLEBURY

### Open Door Clinic

100 Porter Dr Middlebury, VT 05753

**Important 2024 work:**

- Visited 57 Vermont farms, orchards and businesses where 578 patients were seen by an RN, NP, or MD.
- Our Spanish-speaking intern (UVM MSW) assisted Spanish-speaking patients seeking mental health support. (48% of our patients identify as Hispanic Latino or Spanish)
- Provided 166 patients with dental work for a total value of \$349,712 through our collaborative dental program.
- Our staff health insurance assistant provided 293 patients with guidance navigating the insurance marketplace.





Visit their  
website ►

## RUTLAND

### Rutland County Health Partners

204 N. Main St Rutland, VT 05701

Rutland County Health Partners (formerly Rutland County Free Clinic) rebranded in 2024. Changing from "Free Clinic" to "Health Partners" eliminates the stigma associated with 'free clinic', and recognizes the many volunteers and partners involved in providing services.

#### Important 2024 work:

- 491 medical appointments were conducted by 22 healthcare providers, for patients ranging from age 20 to 90 – always at no cost.
- Spending 200 hours in the field, our Homeless Healthcare program assisted 225 homeless adults in Rutland City, providing first aid, supplies and referrals for care.
- Our customized mobile medical unit arrived – a project 3 years in the making! This will significantly expand our reach.
- Our Homeless Healthcare Outreach Program in Rutland served 361 individuals!



Visit their  
website ►

## WHITE RIVER

### Good Neighbor Health Clinic & Red Logan Dental

70 N Main St White River Jct, VT 05001

Cost-free care for individuals throughout the Upper Valley region. We serve individuals living across 22 Vermont and 16 New Hampshire towns.

#### Important 2024 work:

- Installed an innovative 'harm reduction vending machine', allowing individuals to access important supplies 24/7, year-round. This enables supplies to be available in a judgement-free, low-barrier, anonymous way.
- Hosted our first-ever community vaccination event, to prevent seasonal illness.
- Continued to run our small emergency food pantry, and participated in 10 weeks of 'healthcare share produce distribution' for patients with food insecurity. This resulted in 20% of individuals reporting a positive change in food security!

## Statewide Oral Health Partnership



### Free Dental Pop-up Clinics for all Vermonters!

Providing a total of **394 applications** of SDF and glass ionomer filling to treat cavities and decay, as well as toothbrush prophylaxis and general oral health education.

5

CLINICS

September – June

Serving

198

PATIENTS

# Free Referral Clinics

## WORDS FROM PATIENTS:

"This clinic has literally saved my life."

## RANDOLPH

### Health Connections at Gifford

44 S Main St Randolph, VT 05060



The Health Connections program at Gifford Health Care is a referral clinic supporting patients throughout Central Vermont.

While we primarily focus on helping patients obtain / maintain health insurance and financial assistance for medical care, many patients need additional support. We are pleased to work collaboratively with providers at Gifford and the Community Health Team to further support patients. Providers at Gifford ensure that patients' medical needs are addressed, and the Community Health Team meets challenges such as food insecurity, transportation and housing.

The full circle of support that our patients receive improves their physical, mental, and social health.

#### Important 2024 work:

- 1,508 interactions with 755 patients
- Assisted patients in obtaining Medicaid, Medicare and commercial insurances, and in completing financial assistance applications.
- Chelsea Boardman joined our team in October and leads support for patients. (Chelsea was hired after former lead Michele Packard retired after 26 years). Chelsea continues the tradition of providing exceptional care and support to every single patient.

[Visit their website ►](#)

## SPRINGFIELD

### Valley Health Connections

368 River St Unit 115b Springfield, VT 05156



In 2024, Valley Health Connections had its most impactful year yet, providing essential health access services to 1,829 community members across 55 towns. In addition to reaching more people than ever, we moved into a new location—doubling our office space to 1,400 square feet for our 4 full-time staff and 1 per diem employee. This expansion enhances

our ability to serve the community more effectively and comfortably.

#### Important 2024 work:

- Served 1,829 community members across 55 towns.
- Helped clients secure \$501,833 in free medications, significantly improving health outcomes for those without affordable coverage.
- \$10,587 provided for dental care needs.
- 1,342 individuals were assisted with Vermont Health Connect.
- 400+ community members were supported with Medicare navigation.
- 277 Medicaid applications were processed.

[Visit their website ►](#)

## WINDSOR

### Mountain Ascutney Health Connections

289 County Road Windsor, VT 05089



Mt. Ascutney Health Connections is a vital connection point for many in our rural community.

- We're here to connect people to the resources they need – at no cost, and without bias.
- Whether you're uninsured, need help navigating the system, or just have questions – we're here for you.

#### What can we help with?

- Insurance enrollment, Certified Vermont Health Connect assistance
- Medication access, dental assistance, crisis support, transportation
- We help people with disabilities navigate the complex process of obtaining benefits
- Financial assistance & healthcare resources

[Visit their website ►](#)

**Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center**  
Dartmouth-Hitchcock



# Emerging Strain on Our Network

Funding is more critical than ever.

**Over 13,000**  
Vermonters per year  
depend on VFRC  
clinics as a vital  
resource for health.

## Anticipated federal policy and funding impacts:

### Rising Uninsured Rates and Increased Demand for Services

**Medicaid Coverage Loss:** Vermont healthcare leadership estimates 45,000 Vermonters with Medicaid will lose coverage under the One Big Beautiful Bill. Many of these patients will turn to the free and referral clinics for support.

**Marketplace Coverage Losses:** Many Vermont Health Connect enrollees will experience significant increases in their monthly insurance premiums. This too may lead to increased demand at free clinics as patients forgo insurance altogether or downgrading to a cheaper plan that exposes them to extremely high costs to access care at hospitals and other providers.

**Eligibility Redeterminations Every 6 Months:** It is a well-documented fact that increased bureaucracy leads to coverage losses due to paperwork issues. This will lead to more patients cycling on and off Medicaid due to variable work such as seasonal jobs, therefore seeking clinical and navigation services in our network.

**Stricter Income Verification Rules:** New hurdles for income verification will increase the number of eligible but unenrolled Vermonters needing care.

### Patients Delaying Care and Arriving With More Complex Needs

**Cost Sharing Burden:** Starting in 2026, Medicaid recipients above the federal poverty level must pay cost-sharing fees. Patients who can't afford this may delay care until conditions worsen, arriving at clinics with more acute or unresolved chronic health issues.

### Reduced Financial Flexibility for States and Clinics

**Provider Tax Limitations:** The loss of this Medicaid revenue to the state may lead to deinvestment in critical safety net/social services programs. It may also lead to loss of revenue at our local hospitals, resulting in restricting charity care programs, which already do not meet patient needs for help with medical bills.

### Coverage Exclusions

**Restricted Access to Healthcare Services for Patients with Both Legal and Illegal Immigration Statuses:** There have been significant limitations put in place for patients who are not citizens to access healthcare services. The free clinics already act as key healthcare providers for these patients and this bill may leave the free clinics as the only option.

**Ban on Gender-Affirming Care via Medicaid:** Many free clinics offer LGBTQ+ and gender-affirming care. As access to these services for patients with Medicaid becomes more restricted and the attacks on Planned Parenthood's funding continue, our network may need to reposition ourselves as a safety net for these patients.

### Administrative Burden on Navigators

**More Complex Eligibility and Referral Processes:** All clinics help patients navigate insurance and other social service program eligibility. Loss of insurance will change referral processes and more complex screening will place greater administrative burden on already limited staff.

### Other Social Determinants of Health

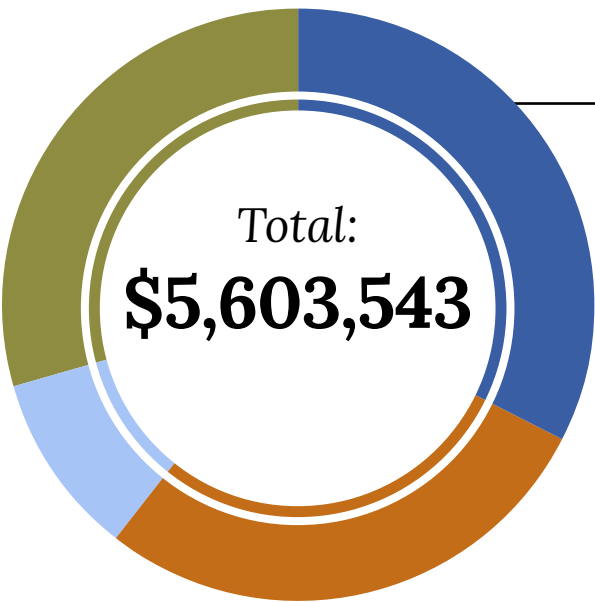
**Increased Need for Food Services:** 13,000 Vermonters are estimated to lose their SNAP benefits due to changes in the program and thousands more will see their monthly stipend drop. The state itself will see the program become more expensive as costs are shifted to states. Clinics support patients with access to food in a variety of ways and are already seeing rising need so we expect this to increase as the changes are implemented.

# 2024 Finances

**WORDS FROM  
PATIENTS:**

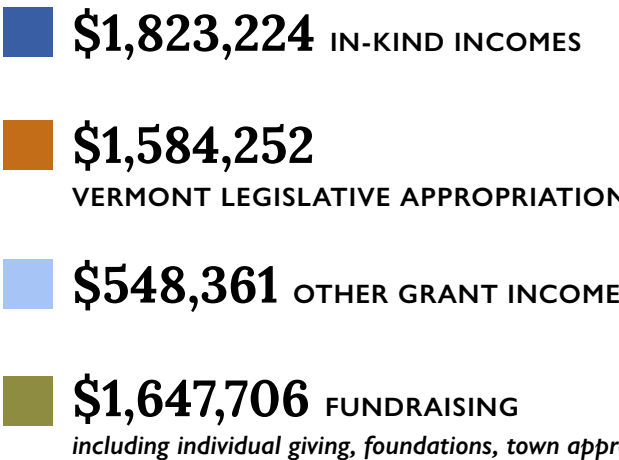
"The medical and  
mental health  
support have  
been an extreme  
blessing for me."

Half of our collective funding comes to us as a Legislative Appropriation of \$1,584,252. Of that, 50% (\$792,126) is federal funding that comes to us for Medicaid Administrative Activities.

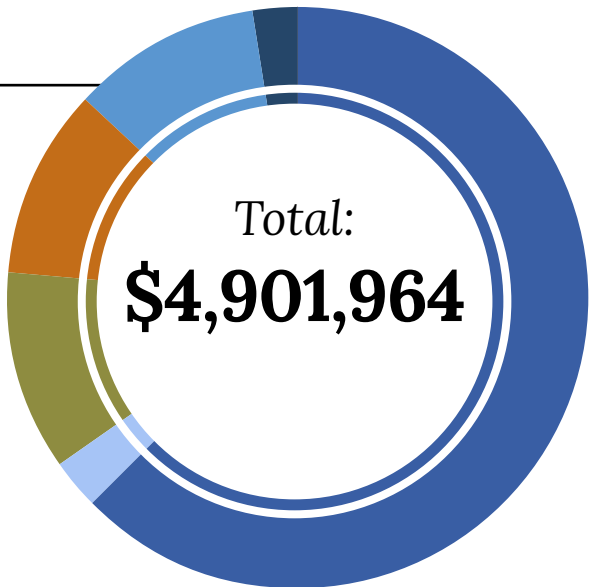
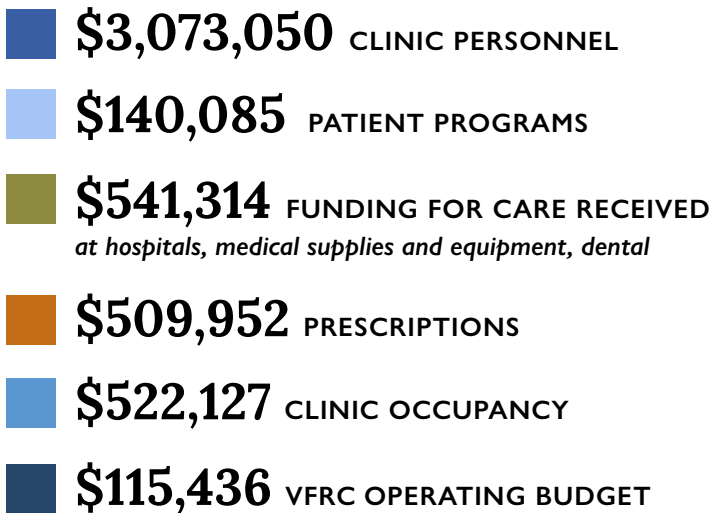


## Income

VFRC Clinics never receive any income from patients. Patient care is always free.



## Expenses



**FOR EVERY \$1**  
INVESTED BY THE LEGISLATURE



OUR CLINICS  
**SAVE VT \$5**

