

Healthy

Courtesy of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center | Winter-Spring 2024 | vol 2 no 2



Women:
What is your heart
trying to tell you?



Quit!

Tips to
help stop
smoking



**Life
without
Insulin?**

New options
for diabetics



Mitchell Carl, MD, Matthew Vernon, MD; James Kalmuk, MD; Allen Hutcheson, MD; Dawn Murphy, APRN-ANP; and Dorisanne Wonsor, PA-C

This is what exceptional looks like.

Ensuring exceptional patient care is at the heart of everything we do at the Dartmouth Cancer Center at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center. In fact, it's part of our mission.

Our multidisciplinary team of oncology doctors, nurses, social workers, and nutritionists work closely with every patient to provide the personalized treatment and support they need. State-of-the-art technology onsite paired with access to clinical trials of new treatments through Dartmouth Cancer Center means patients receive the very best of care close to home.

svhealthcare.org/cancer-care



Southwestern Vermont
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Bennington, VT
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Hello,



Pamela M. Duchene, PhD, APRN

What a difference a year makes.

Last year, when I penned this letter for our winter/spring issue, Phase One of the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center's (SVMC) most ambitious building project in the last forty years was in its earliest stages. Twelve months later, Phase One is complete and the new Kendall Emergency Department, the Richard and Pamela Ader Foundation Lobby, and Marro Café are open to the public. Doubling the size of the previous space, the new emergency department puts SVMC in a position to better care for the current and emerging needs of the people we serve and brings the quality of the facility into alignment with the level of care offered by our outstanding, board-certified, emergency physicians and nurses.

In that same 12-month period, SVMC officially joined Dartmouth Health, becoming the sixth hospital member of the Dartmouth system. In addition to providing access to more than 2,000 of the Dartmouth system's most distinguished physicians and providers, the formalized integration provides numerous meaningful benefits to the communities we serve (see page 10 for more details).

Even while all that was taking place, the caring never stopped. Our dedicated providers, both at the hospital and our satellite campuses, continued treating patients with the aim of keeping them at their healthy best. That aim is also what this and every issue of *Healthy+* is all about. The topics covered reflect the issues we know have the greatest impact on the health and well-being of our community.

We hope that sharing information on these key health issues, as well as connecting you to related resources and services offered by SVMC and our community partners, will help you and your loved ones enjoy the best health—and life—possible.

Yours in good health,

Pamela M. Duchene, PhD, APRN
Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer
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Every effort is made to avoid errors, misspellings, and omissions. However, if an error comes to your attention, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us.

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Learning to Live in the Moment

See p. 16 for tips on reconnecting with yourself and others

The sweet taste of success

In 2022, Vermont produced **2.55 million** gallons of maple syrup, making it the top producing state in the nation.

Source: Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets

See p. 22 for ideas on how to incorporate maple syrup into your cooking.

You (and a lot of other people) are getting very sleepy

Sleep apnea affects about 30 million Americans. That's almost **1** out of every **10**.

Source: American Medical Association

See p. 12 for information on diagnosing and treating sleep apnea.

A shared struggle

Nearly **half** of Americans have a family member or close friend who's been addicted to drugs.

Source: Pew Research Center

See p. 20 for tips on supporting someone with an addiction.

Cause and effect

More than **16 million** Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

See p. 21 for tips on quitting.

We're going the wrong way

More people died from cardiovascular-related causes in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, than in any year since 2003.

Source: American Heart Association's 2023 Statistical Update

See p. 8 to learn how to improve your heart health.

The risk is real

Adults with diabetes have a **2-to 3-fold**

increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Source: World Health Organization

See p. 4 for the latest on new diabetes medication options.



Making sense of new diabetes medication options

Living life insulin-free may be an option

These days it's hard to watch television or read a magazine and *not* encounter an ad for diabetes medications. While it's great that manufacturers are working to inform the public of advances in treatment options, the ads often leave people with diabetes with more questions than answers. The most pressing question of all being, "Should I be taking that?"

Understanding your options

According to Carolyn Goodwin, FNP, Southwestern Vermont Pulmonology, "These new medications are real game changers for many people with diabetes. In addition to bringing diabetes under control they can help with weight loss, which helps protect against heart attacks—the leading cause of death among diabetics."

But, as Goodwin notes, transitioning from insulin to a new medication is not quite as easy as saying "sign me up!"

To begin with, the currently highly-promoted medications fall into one of two classes: GLP-1 and SGLT-2.

Here's how they differ:

GLP-1 Inhibitors (popular brand names *Ozempic, Trulicity, Victoza, etc.*) These injectable drugs mimic the action of a naturally occurring hormone called glucagon-like peptide 1. When blood sugar levels begin to rise after eating, the drug stimulates the body to produce more insulin, which lowers blood sugar levels. In addition, GLP-1s slow digestion, which causes you to feel fuller longer and suppresses appetite.

SGLT-2 Inhibitors (popular brand names *Jardiance, Invokana, Farxiga, etc.*) This daily oral medication works to lower blood sugar by blocking sugars from being reabsorbed by the kidneys into the bloodstream. In addition to lowering blood sugar and contributing to weight loss, SGLT-2s reduce the risk of kidney disease, and may lower the risk of heart attack and stroke in people with a high risk of either condition. In fact, SGLT-2 is currently being prescribed for people with congestive heart failure.

Note: this medication is not for use by Type I diabetics.

The realities and risks

While the potential of these medications is exciting, Goodwin adds a few cautions.

"First, the process of getting onto the medications and seeing the benefits can take a bit of time. In the case of GLP-1s, weaning off insulin and increasing your medication level to full dose can take several months," she says. "Plus, the medications aren't a fit for everyone."

For example, neither class of medication should be used by people trying to or planning to get pregnant. In addition, GLP-1s are not recommended for individuals with a family history of medullary thyroid cancer, anyone with a multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome Type 2 or a family history of the condition, and anyone with a history of pancreatitis.

SGLT-2 is not recommended for individuals with stage 4 and 5 of chronic kidney disease or a history of urinary tract infections.

Potential side effects include:

GLP-1 Inhibitors

- Risk of pancreatitis
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Dehydration

SGLT-2 Inhibitors

- Genital yeast infection
- Urinary tract infection
- Constipation
- Dehydration
- Increased need to urinate
- Risk of gangrene



“These new medications are real game changers for many people with diabetes. In addition to bringing diabetes under control they can help with weight loss, which helps protect against heart attacks—the leading cause of death among diabetics.”

–Carolyn Goodwin, FNP, SVMC Pulmonology

Your health is in your hands

The decision to change your diabetes treatment plan shouldn't be made lightly. You and your doctor need to consider your health, medical situation, lifestyle, and what your insurance will and won't cover. If you are prescribed a new medication, you need to remain realistic about what it can and can't do. The closest thing to a “miracle medication” for diabetics since insulin, these options are no substitute for taking care of your health through a healthy diet and regular exercise.

For more information on what's right for you, talk to your provider or contact and SVMC Diabetes Educator (see box). ■

Have concerns about your diabetes care?

Ask an SVMC Diabetes Educator for help—for FREE
SVMC recognizes that managing diabetes is an ongoing and everchanging challenge. Our Diabetes Educators are available to lend support and guidance at every stage of the journey. From consults with the newly diagnosed to helping longstanding patients get their blood sugars under control, educators are available by phone, video chat, or by appointment at your provider's office.

To connect with a Diabetes Educator, ask your primary care provider for a referral, or call 802-440-4025.

Do you have an overactive thyroid?

How to recognize and treat this common condition

Of the more than 20 million Americans affected by some form of thyroid disorder, nearly 3.5 million of them have an overactive thyroid. And of that 3.5 million, more than half don't even know they have a condition that can lead to stroke, heart failure, and even eye disease.

As Dr. Eric Seyferth, an internal medicine specialist at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) explains, "For such a tiny organ, the thyroid plays a huge role in critical bodily functions including heart rate, digestion, brain development, mood, and bone density. When problems arise in the thyroid, the impact is often felt throughout the body." Which is why, he says, early diagnosis and treatment are so critical.

Hyperthyroidism: what is it/ how to recognize it

A healthy thyroid produces thyroxine, a hormone that regulates the body's metabolism—the rate at which the body produces energy from nutrients and oxygen. When too much thyroxine is produced, it's referred to as hyperthyroidism, or, more commonly, as an overactive thyroid. "Excess thyroxine increases a person's metabolism which essentially puts many major bodily functions in high gear—but not in a good way."

Common symptoms of an overactive thyroid include:

- Feelings of anxiety, irritability, and nervousness
- Difficulty sleeping
- A racing or uneven heartbeat
- Unexplained weight loss
- Increased appetite
- Vision changes
- Hair loss

- Sensitivity to heat
- Sweating
- Diarrhea and more frequent bowel movements
- Thinning skin
- Changes to your period
- Tremors
- Muscle weakness
- An enlarged thyroid (goiter)

Seyferth notes that, "Hyperthyroidism sometimes looks like other health problems, which can make it hard to diagnose. If you're experiencing two or more of these symptoms, you should schedule a visit with your doctor to be assessed."

Are you at risk of an overactive thyroid?

Anyone — men, women, infants, teens, and the elderly— can have an overactive thyroid. However, some factors put you at greater risk of developing the condition.

These include:

- Being female, especially post-menopausal
- Being over age 60
- A family history of thyroid disease
- Certain medical conditions including Type 1 diabetes and pernicious anemia
- Use of medication high in iodine
- Previous history of a thyroid disease
- Have been pregnant or had a baby within the past 6 months

“The thyroid plays a huge role in critical bodily functions including heart rate, digestion, brain development, mood, and bone density. When problems arise in the thyroid, the impact is often felt throughout the body”

-Eric Seyferth, MD, SVMC Internal Medicine

Diagnosing and treating an overactive thyroid

Diagnosing an overactive thyroid is typically done through a blood tests, imaging, or combination of both. Blood tests will reveal how high your thyroxine levels are and what is causing the thyroid to be overactive, while imaging allows your doctor to look for any issues related to the structure of your thyroid, such as inflammation, size, gland activity, or the presence of nodules. There are multiple causes of hyperthyroidism with the most common being Grave's Disease, an autoimmune condition that stimulates the thyroid to enlarge and produce excess thyroxine. With this information, your doctor can recommend the most appropriate treatment based on the cause as well as any personal health factors. Common options include:

- Daily beta blocker pills to reduce tremors, rapid heartbeat, and anxiety
- Medication that lowers thyroxine levels
- Radioactive iodine taken as a liquid or capsule

In very rare cases, surgery to remove part or most of the thyroid gland may be recommended.

Seyferth notes, “Hyperthyroidism is a lifelong condition for most patients; meaning it will need to be continuously treated and monitored for the remainder of their lives.” ■





Heart disease: it's not the same for men and women

Learn to recognize what your heart is trying to tell you

While heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the U.S., causing 1 in 3 deaths each year, only about half of U.S. women recognize it is the number one killer. Even more disturbing, many women don't even recognize the signs of a heart incident when it's happening.

According to Scott Rogge, MD, FACC Medical Director of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Cardiology, "One of the challenges of heart disease and heart attacks is that the signs can be far more subtle in women than in men. Unlike

the 'elephant sitting on your chest feeling' that's common in men and hard to ignore, women sometimes experience nausea, upper back pain, heart palpitations, and shortness of breath. It's much easier to mis-attribute those signs to other things and, unfortunately, delay getting critical care."

Know the signs, know your risks

Because heart disease can affect women at any age—in fact, 1 in 5 heart attacks occur in people age 40 or younger—it's never too early to learn the signs and take steps to reduce

“One of the challenges of heart disease and heart attacks is that the signs can be far more subtle in women than in men. Unlike the ‘elephant sitting on your chest feeling’ that’s common in men and hard to ignore, women sometimes experience nausea, upper back pain, heart palpitations, and shortness of breath. It’s much easier to mis-attribute those signs to other things and, unfortunately, delay getting critical care.”



–Scott Rogge, MD, SVMC Cardiology

your risks. While chest pain, pressure, and discomfort are often indicators of heart trouble in women, it’s important that all women learn to recognize the other potential signs and take them seriously.

Common signs of heart disease in women:

- Pain or discomfort in the neck, jaw, shoulder, upper back, or upper belly
- Shortness of breath
- Pain in one or both arms
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sweating
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Unusual fatigue and feeling of fogginess, often lasts for days or weeks
- Heartburn or indigestion
- Chest pain

Compared to men, women tend to have symptoms more often when resting, or even when asleep.

One thing working in women’s favor is estrogen, which actually helps prevent heart disease. However, after menopause, that advantage disappears.

In addition to menopause, other uniquely female conditions and events—pre-term pregnancy and polycystic ovarian syndrome, for example—have the potential to further increase a woman’s risk of developing heart disease.

Concerning risk factors include:

- Diabetes
- Stress and depression
- Smoking
- Inactivity
- Being post-menopausal

- Pregnancy complications
- Family history of early heart disease
- Inflammatory diseases (rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometriosis, etc.)
- Delivering a baby pre-term

Begin lowering your risks today

Changing your habits and lifestyle is never easy but doing so can make a huge difference in the quality of your life tomorrow and for years to come. And remember, you don’t have to go it alone. Tap into the following resources for help making the changes you need to boost your heart health.

Quit Smoking:

Find free in-person or virtual counseling, tools for quitting, and more. See page 21 for a comprehensive list of available smoking cessation resources.

Exercise:

Move More Together At-Home Workouts

A free streaming series from the American Heart Association heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness

Diabetes Management:

A no-cost lifestyle change program from the American Diabetes Association designed to reduce diabetes risk and manage diabetes safely projectpowerapp.diabetes.org/enrollment/

High Blood Pressure:

Tips for tracking and managing your blood pressure from the American Heart Association heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure ■

Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Joins Dartmouth Health

Care will only get better

Earlier this year, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) officially joined the Dartmouth Health system, becoming the sixth hospital member of the system.

This is an exciting development for SVMC as well as for the 75,000 people served by the health care system. Benefits of becoming a member hospital of Dartmouth Health include:

- **expanded services** in oncology, cardiovascular, primary care, surgical services with a focus on orthopedics, and access to one of only three National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers in New England;
- **enhanced telemedicine services**, including stroke, ICU, MS Neurology, genetics, pharmacy, and psychiatry, allowing for critical care close to home;
- **coordinated electronic medical record platform** (EPIC) for seamless access to patient medical records;
- **cost savings** through joint purchasing power, which contributes to the financial stability of SVMC;
- **enhanced recruitment and retention** of physicians and providers.

The mission remains the same – providing exceptional care

While SVMC is now part of Dartmouth Health, the organization remains focused on and committed to its mission of providing exceptional care to all the communities it serves.



Dr. James Kalmuk, medical oncologist, joined the Dartmouth Cancer Center at SVMC.

That commitment means patients will experience no changes related to scheduling appointments with their established providers or getting referrals for other services. In addition, SVMC will continue to maintain its strong and long-standing relationships with regional providers, such as Albany Medical Center and others, ensuring patients always have access to the most essential and appropriate care when needed.

Building a better future for all

The current transformation of the SVMC campus—including the new Kendall Emergency Department and main hospital entrance as well as the plans for the new Hoyt-Hunter Regional Cancer Center, will continue to move forward as planned.



While SVMC is now part of Dartmouth Health, it remains focused on and committed to our mission of providing exceptional care to all the communities it serves.

Expanded services in oncology, including participation in clinical trials, is just one of the patient benefits resulting from joining the Dartmouth Health system.

These critical changes were envisioned and planned for over a decade ago. Both SVMC and Dartmouth Health are fully committed to seeing these projects through to better serve the needs of the people for whom we care.

It's important to recognize that none of these projects would be possible without the generous support of countless individuals and businesses who believe in SVMC and its mission. Financial contributions to SVMC will remain locally to support initiatives that benefit our community.

Neighbors caring for neighbors

As Joanne M. Conroy, MD, Chief Executive Officer and President at Dartmouth Health notes, "Having been in existence for more than 100 years each, SVMC and Dartmouth Health are deeply woven into the fabric of the communities they serve. That same idea—neighbors caring for neighbors—is what continues to guide us as we confidently embark on the next chapter in our history, well-positioned for the future." ■



New entrance of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, including the Kendall Emergency Department

Snoring or sleep apnea?

How to tell the difference and what to do about it

An estimated 45% of American adults snore on occasion. Caused by the vibration of tissues near the airway in the back of the throat as you inhale and exhale, occasional snoring is usually harmless. But, in the case of loud, disruptive snoring, a more serious, life-threatening issue may be to blame.

According to Dr. Michael Algus, a pulmonary specialist at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC), an estimated 30 million Americans have sleep apnea. But perhaps more startling than that big number is the fact that 80% of people with the disorder haven't been diagnosed. "This is particularly concerning," says Algus, "as people with severe untreated apnea have three times the risk of dying from any cause."

Understanding sleep apnea

Unlike snoring, which may be noisy but doesn't interfere with breathing, sleep apnea causes an individual to repeatedly stop and start breathing while sleeping. Algus notes, "A person with sleep apnea may stop breathing for up to a minute at a time. How often this occurs can range from around five times per hour to as many as 100 or more times per hour. Patients often find themselves gasping awake throughout the night and missing out on quality sleep."

As a result of interrupted sleep, sleep apnea is strongly linked to high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, depression, and an increased risk of dementia.



"People with severe untreated apnea have three times the risk of dying from *any* cause."

-Michael Algus, MD,
SVMC Pulmonology

Common symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea

In Adults

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Loud snoring interrupted by choking or gasping for air
- Restless sleep
- Dry mouth or headache upon waking
- Reduced ability to focus
- Depression, anxiety, or irritability

In Children

- Bedwetting
- Exacerbated asthma
- Hyperactivity
- Learning and academic performance issues

While there are several types of sleep apnea, the most common type is obstructive sleep apnea (OSA). This type of apnea occurs when your throat muscles intermittently relax to the point of collapse and block your airway during sleep and contributing to the loud, often interrupted, snoring.

Diagnosing and treating sleep apnea

There are several ways to diagnose OSA, all of which involve 'measuring your sleep' through a sleep study. While not an option for everyone, Sleep studies are beneficial for adults between the ages of 18 and 65 who have a high probability of moderate-to-severe OSA and no other medical conditions.

A common first approach is a home sleep study, which requires the patient to wear small recording device, sensors, belts, and related cables and accessories while sleeping at home.



Sleep studies can also be performed at a sleep disorder center. These include:

- Polysomnography sleep study to measures brain waves, blood oxygen level, heart rate, breathing, and movement and to diagnose sleep disorders or to adjust treatment
- Multiple Sleep Latency Testing, or a daytime nap study, to measure excessive daytime sleepiness
- Maintenance of Wakefulness Test to determine whether you are able to stay awake for a defined period of time

Based on the finding of your study, your doctor may recommend one of the following treatment options:

Continuous Positive Air Pressure (CPAP) Therapy

Placed at the bedside, a CPAP machine forces pressured air through a flexible plastic tube that connects to a face mask you wear while sleeping.

Dental Appliance

Like a mouthguard, this device holds the lower jaw forward just enough to keep the airway open and prevents blockage

in the upper airway. Dental appliances are recommended for individuals who are unable to use a CPAP.

Behavioral and Lifestyle Changes

Often, simple lifestyle changes can improve or eliminate OSA. These include:

- Weight loss
- Sleeping on your side rather than your back
- Eliminating alcohol intake at night

Surgery

Enlarged tonsils and/or adenoids are the most common cause of snoring or sleep apnea children. In 75% of cases, surgery resolves the problem.

Surgery is a bit more challenging option for adults as it often difficult to determine what part of the upper airway is causing the obstruction. Your doctor can discuss the challenges and potential outcomes of surgery with you.

If you are experiencing any of the signs of sleep apnea—or notice signs in your bed partner, don't disregard them. Contact a healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment. ■



Reducing cold-weather arthritis pain

5 ways to make winter more bearable

If you're one of the 58.5 million Americans living with arthritis, there's a good chance you may not be looking forward to winter."

According to Matthew Stainszewski, DO, a rheumatologist at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC), "For many people with various forms of arthritis, cold weather and joint pain go hand in hand. From dropping temperatures that cause the fluid in our joints

to thicken, making joints stiff and sensitive, to changes in barometric pressure that can cause the muscles and tendons joints to expand putting even more pressure on already tender joints, there are valid reasons for people with arthritis to not love winter."

But, as Stainszewski notes, "There's a lot you can do to ease the pain and stiffness even when winter is at its worst."



“For many people with various forms of arthritis, cold weather and joint pain go hand in hand. From dropping temperatures that cause the fluid in our joints to thicken, making joints stiff and sensitive, to changes in barometric pressure that can cause the muscles and tendons joints to expand putting even more pressure on already tender joints.”

–Matthew Stainshewski, DO, SVMC Rheumatology

Relief is within reach

Short of heading to a warmer climate for the winter months, there are other measures you can take to find relief from winter arthritis flare ups. Here’s what Stainshewski recommends:

1: Get moving: Arthritis doctors are fond of the phrase ‘motion is lotion,’ and with good reason. Exercise is the single best thing you can do to prevent arthritis pain at any time of year. Stationary biking, Tai Chi, Yoga, and swimming are all great winter options. Be sure to include a 5-minute warm up to ready your joints, tendons, and muscles for the workout ahead.

2: Keep warm: Whether you’re indoors or outside, do what’s necessary to keep yourself warm. Heat works to loosen up muscles and tendons and helps to ‘thin’ the fluid in your joints so that movement comes easier. If you’re staying inside, use heating pads, electric blankets, and warm baths to keep warm. When venturing out, bundle up—and not just your hands. By keeping your core warm, you’ll keep the blood that goes to your arthritic joints warm and more comfortable. For extended stretches of time outdoors, consider investing in hand warmers.

3: Stay loose: While it’s tempting to stay tucked under a blanket all day, be sure to stretch and move all the parts of your body throughout the day to keep from getting stiff. Wrist and ankle rolls, toe touches, and knee and side bends are all easy and effective ways to keep yourself loose and comfortable.

4: Eat smart: Research suggests that certain foods can help fight inflammation throughout the body. If you’re diet doesn’t already include these foods, consider adding them:

- | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| Fish | Nuts & seeds | Olive oil |
| Beans | Whole grains | Turmeric |
| Fruits and vegetables, especially blueberries, cherries, spinach, kale, and broccoli | | |

5: Remedy: In the short term, pain relieving over the counter medications can be a source of relief to people with arthritis. Be sure to speak to your doctor about taking any new medication, especially if you’re taking other drugs for arthritis or other conditions.

If your joint pain is interfering with your normal activities, talk with your health care provider about additional pain-relieving strategies. ■



Tune in and take control

Live Yes! With Arthritis is a podcast by people with arthritis for people arthritis. A service of The Arthritis Foundation, the free podcast covers topics ranging from:

- Pain management
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Emotional wellbeing and relationships
- Access to medical care
- Medication
- Juvenile arthritis

Available free on: Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify, iHeart, Stitcher, TuneIn, and Amazon Music.

Present Moment Living

How to focus on the here and now—and stop worrying about the past and future

How often do you find yourself distracted thinking about things that happened yesterday—or even longer ago—and what’s going to happen tomorrow? It could be in the middle of an important work meeting, over coffee with a friend, or at dinner with your family. You’re there, but you’re not present.

“Daily living is fraught with so many distractions and so many things to do,” says Billie Lynn Allard, MS, RN, FAAN, Co-Founder/Co-Program Director of the Association of Chronic and Complex Care Nurse Navigation, “It’s sometimes hard to turn off the continuous loop of messages in your head reminding you of what you need to do, what maybe you didn’t do so well yesterday, who needs your help next, and, you know, SQUIRREL!” She continues, “Apart from being mentally exhausting, this inability to be present in the moment takes a very real toll on the quality of our lives. It impacts our ability to meaningfully connect with others, the quality of our sleep, it contributes to anxiety and depression and, really, just makes life less enjoyable.”

Finding a path to a more peaceful and present state of being

For Allard, her breaking point—and the “ah-ha!” moment—came when, as a very busy working mother of three who was also tending to her aging parents and earning her master’s at night, her four-year-old daughter called her out

for not actively listening to her.

“That was a humbling yet clarifying moment,” says Allard. “I knew that I could, and had to, do better.”

The experience inspired Allard to explore the practice of being mindful. Today, she not only practices what she calls “present moment living” in her daily life, she also lectures on the subject across the country.

“Becoming mindful isn’t difficult but it is a conscious decision you have to make repeatedly throughout the day,” she says. She encourages newcomers to the concept to begin by trying a simple mindfulness exercise. Wherever you are reading this, do the following:

- Close your eyes
- Relax your muscles into the chair
- Take slow deep breaths, feeling the air move in and out of your body

Resist the urge to race through the exercise and instead, slow down and focus on your breath. Continue to breathe in and out until you feel a lifting of emotional weight and a lightness within you.

Other practices Allard regularly engages in to reinforce present moment living include:

- Recognize the value of every moment afforded you; just because you put your shoes on this morning doesn’t mean you’ll get to take them off tonight. Make a point to appreciate the minutes and hours of every day regardless of how you spend them.
- Savor every bite of food and drink: to reinforce this concept, try chewing a raisin for ten minutes. Really appreciate the evolving flavor and texture and how your mouth and mind respond to every sensation.
- Make the most of every interaction you have, no matter with whom you have it. Put away your phone when you’re in the presence of others. Look directly at others when they are speaking to you. Try to listen more than you speak.

Mindfulness & Meditation Apps

Headspace
Free 10-day trial

Smiling Mind
Free

Healthy Minds Program
Free

UCLA Mindful
Free

Insight Timer
Free 30-day trial

For more options, visit [Psyberguide.org](https://www.Psyberguide.org)

“Apart from being mentally exhausting, the inability to be present in the moment takes a very real toll on the quality of our lives. It impacts our ability to meaningfully connect with others, the quality of our sleep, contributes to anxiety and depression and, really, just makes life less enjoyable.”

-Billie Lynn Allard, MS, RN, FAAN, Co-Founder/Co-Program Director of the Association of Chronic and Complex Care Nurse Navigation



- Savor meaningful relationships with friends and family: try to appreciate all the ways others enrich your lives and share that gratitude with them.

If you want to dive deeper into mindfulness, Allard recommends meditation (see box at lower left).

She also adds, “Present moment living takes effort and it’s not a switch you can just turn on. It takes practice. But making one small effort a day and building on that can help you quiet your mind, create a positive mindset, and overall add value and beauty to your life.” ■



Loving someone with a substance use disorder

Tips for supporting a loved one in recovery while taking care of yourself

Watching someone you love struggle with a substance use disorder (SUD) is one of the most difficult things a person may have to endure in their lifetime. Fraught with emotions ranging from frustration, guilt, and helplessness to fear, shame, and yes, anger, it's an exhausting and challenging experience. For many, feels like it will never end.

According to Chad Foster, LICSW, the Lead Site Therapist at SaVida Health in Bennington, VT, "When someone with an SUD's behavior begins to impact the life of a family member or other loved one—be it stealing, not showing up as promised, being aggressive or even violent—it's easy for the loved one to question whether the person even loves them. What they need to recognize is that the individual is having a hard time even loving themselves in the moment. Their actions aren't about hurting you; they're about feeding their addiction. They are so wrapped in the pain that that need creates that they can't even consider the consequences of their actions beyond whether or not it gets them what they need in the moment."

Moving toward peace through compassion and communication

Foster, who provides one-on-one counseling to individuals with SUDs, as well as family counseling to those individuals and their loved ones, says it's important for loved ones to look beyond what the person is doing and try to consider what's driving the behavior. "Very often," he says, "the choice to begin using is motivated by a desire to escape some sort of pain. The source of that pain may be very obvious—like growing up in a physically or verbally abusive home—or it may be an event that loved ones aren't even aware of ... in fact, the individual who's using may



"Being willing to make changes yourself will not only benefit you emotionally, it will also demonstrate that change is possible ... that old patterns can be broken and things can get better."

—Chad Foster, LICSW, SaVida Health

not even understand what's driving the behavior. But, recognizing that there's more to the situation than what you see on the surface is an important step in helping the individual feel safe and comfortable in your presence. That alone can open doors to honest communication that can provide a level of peace to all involved."

Be the change

In his experience, Foster finds a lot of people tend to carry guilt related to their loved one's SUD. "It's easy to find and focus on the moments when the circumstances in your life weren't the best or maybe you weren't as present as you now realize you needed to be. But when people tell



me they feel like a failure, I always ask, 'What do you think you failed at?' That child or partner or parent is still here and so are you. That's far from failure. What you have to ask yourself is what are you doing now that's different? Are you finding ways to be more present, more patient, or whatever it is you need to be? There's a saying, 'nothing changes if nothing changes.' Yes, the individual with the SUD needs to make changes; but being willing to make changes yourself will not only benefit you emotionally, it will also demonstrate that change is possible... that old patterns can be broken and things can get better."

Loving fully from a distance

It's important to recognize that every individual's recovery operates on its own timeline. Just because you've made changes, doesn't mean others will keep pace. And, as Foster notes, sometimes patience isn't enough.

"Love does not require you to support someone's unhealthy behaviors at the expense of your own well-being," he says. "Your life is as important as the individual's who is struggling. You can't allow yourself to be pulled down physically and emotionally by their SUD. If it gets to that, you need to draw some lines to protect yourself. That doesn't mean withdrawing love and compassion, but it may mean setting some boundaries for what you're willing

to do and provide, and learning to love them from a distance.”

Foster adds that very often the first response to new boundaries is anger. Which, he says, is a reasonable response to having the support system they’ve relied on no longer in place. “It’s not uncommon to see someone go deeper into their abuse when first faced with a change of this nature. But, as with all parts of recovery, it’s up to them to figure out what’s next for them.”

He concludes, “As long as a loved one feels they’ve done their best and given all they reasonably can, they should feel comfortable in their decision to set boundaries.” ■



Starting the conversation

Supporting a loved one with a substance use disorder

When a family member is struggling with a substance use disorder, your support can be key to getting them the treatment they need. Starting the conversation is the first step to getting help.

How You Can Help

- 1. Identify an appropriate time or place.** Consider a private setting with limited distractions, such as at home or on a walk.
- 2. Express concerns and be direct.** Ask how they are feeling and describe the reasons for your concern.
- 3. Acknowledge their feelings and listen.** Listen openly, actively, and without judgement.
- 4. Offer to help.** Provide reassurance that mental and/or substance use disorders are treatable. Help them locate and connect to treatment services.
- 5. Be patient.** Recognize that helping your loved one doesn’t happen overnight. Continue reaching out with offers to listen and help.

What to Say

- “I’ve been worried about you. Can we talk? If not, who are you comfortable talking to?”
- “I see you’re going through something. How can I best support you?”
- “I care about you and am here to listen. Do you want to talk about what’s been going on?”
- “I’ve noticed you haven’t seemed like yourself lately. How can I help?”

For more resources, visit [SAMHSA.gov/families](https://www.samhsa.gov/families). If you or someone you know needs help, call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) for free and confidential information and treatment referral.

Support for families and loved ones

The following resources offer a range of services including one-on-one counseling, family counseling, and online and in-person support groups.

VERMONT

United Counseling Services

ucsvt.org
SaVida Health

Savidahealth.com

Sunrise Family Resources
sunrisepcc.com

The Turning Point

tpcbennington.org

MASSACHUSETTS

The Brien Center

briencenter.org

NEW YORK

Rensselaer County Mental Health All Recovery Meeting

518-925-8067

NATIONWIDE

Al-Anon

al-anon.org

Nar-Anon

nar-anon.org

Parents of Addicted Loved Ones

palgroup.org

Families Anonymous

familiesanonymous.org

SMART Recovery Family & Friends

smartrecovery.org/family/

Ready to Quit Smoking?

We're ready to help

While it's no surprise to anyone that smoking isn't healthy, what may be surprising is just how hard it is to quit. But the truth is, no matter your age or how long you've smoked, quitting is the most important thing you can do to improve your health and increase your chances of living a longer and healthier life.

While you can go it alone, studies also show that quitting with the support of counseling and medicine can double—or even triple—your chance of success.

If you're ready to quit, contact the following resources for help.

IN VERMONT:

My Healthy Vermont

Myhealthyvt.org

Offers free weekly, small-group workshops online and in person with trained leaders. Fellow aspiring ex-smokers guide and support you in creating a plan of action for becoming tobacco-free, and provide tips for managing the stress of quitting and cravings, as well as free gum, lozenges, and patches.

For a list of upcoming classes, visit: myhealthyvt.org, select <workshops> and then <quit smoking>.

IN MASSACHUSETTS:

1-800-QUIT-NOW

1-800-784-8669

Call for free, confidential one-on-one coaching from a trained Quit Coach who will share, by phone or online, strategies to curb cravings, handle life's big and small stresses, and tackle relapses. Quit Coaches can help you connect with quit-smoking medicines through your health insurer or community programs and may also be able to send you an initial two-week supply to your home at no cost to you.

IN NEW YORK:

New York State Smokers' Quitline

1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487)

Call to be connected to a trained Quit Coach who can support and guide you as you navigate a path to smoke-free living.

Learn2QuitNY

Text 716-309-4688 to participate in a six-week text messaging program that will take you through the quitting process step-by-step.

This Is Quitting

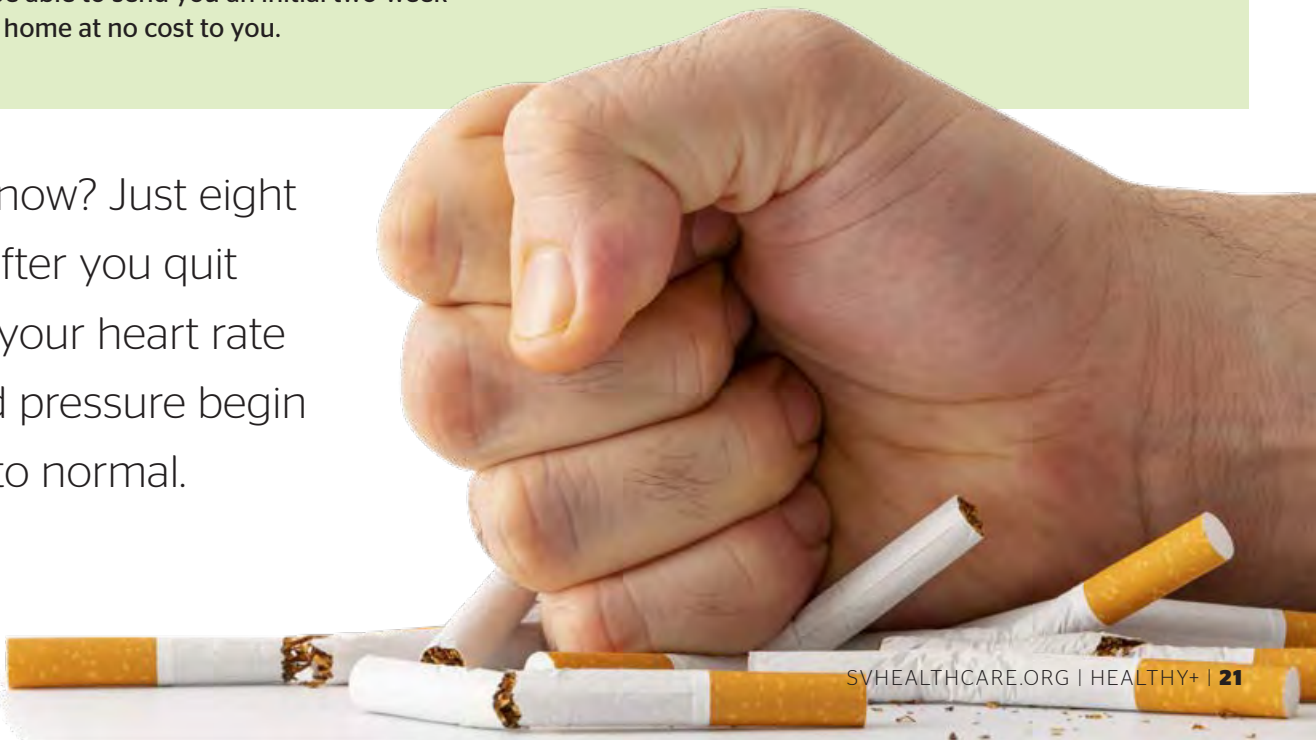
Text "DROPTHEVAPE" to 88709

A free texting support program for teens and young adults (ages 13-24) looking to quit vaping. Parents can also text "QUIT" to 202-899-7550 to receive daily advice to help youth quit.

Virtual The Butt Stops Here Program

A free 7-week online group tobacco cessation program that meets once per week with a trained facilitator. To register or for more information, email ButtStopsHereNY@gmail.com.

Did you know? Just eight minutes after you quit smoking, your heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal.





Sweet and savory maple recipes

It's not just for pancakes

While maple syrup will always be the star of any breakfast table featuring pancakes or waffles, it also has a rightful place in the kitchen when preparing these tempting dinner entree and side options. ■

Maple Crock Pot Pork Roast

Serves 6

Ingredients

3 pounds pork roast, trimmed and cubed
2 pounds red or white potatoes, cubed
6 cloves garlic, peeled
5 medium carrots, roughly cut
½ small yellow onion large dice
1 cup maple syrup
1 tablespoon Dash original seasoning blend
1 cup beef broth
6 cups fresh spinach or 2 10.5-oz boxes of frozen spinach

Instructions

1. Place all items in crock-pot on low for 4-5 hours.
2. 10 minutes before the pork is ready, prepare the fresh spinach by steaming until wilted or follow the package directions for frozen.
3. Serve pork and vegetables on a bed of spinach.

Maple-Roasted Butternut Squash

Serves 6

Ingredients

6 cups cubed butternut squash,* 1-inch cubes
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
salt and pepper, to taste
1-2 pinches cayenne pepper for a little kick (optional)

**Note: While some people choose to peel butternut squash, the skin is completely edible and will soften with roasting.*

If cutting squash is a challenge, pre-cubed squash is often available in the produce section.

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or coat with a nonstick cooking spray.
3. Place cubed squash into a large bowl and toss to evenly coat with olive, syrup, cinnamon, and salt and pepper.
4. Spread squash in an even layer on the prepared pan.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until squash is golden brown on the outside.



Maple Facts

- In 2023, Vermont maple syrup producers put out 6.35 million maple taps and collected roughly 86 million gallons of sap, which they boiled down to 2.05 million gallons of syrup. That impressive haul accounted for nearly half the country's total maple syrup production for the year.
- A maple tree needs to be about 40 years (10-12 inches in diameter) to be large enough to tap.
- Unopened maple syrup can be stored at room temperature, but once open, it should be refrigerated to prevent mold growth.
- From maple ketchup and sesame noodles to maple-rosemary roast turkey and maple whoopie pies, you can find over 70 amazing maple recipes at the Vermont Maple Sugar Maker's Association website: VermontMaple.org/recipes/

Tap into the goodness near you

To find maple producers near you as well as sugaring tours and events, visit the following websites:

MASSACHUSETTS

MassMaple.org

NEW YORK

NYSMaple.com/buy-local

VERMONT

VermontMaple.org/buy-pure-maple

Project Against Violent Encounters

Shining a light on a new way of living and making it possible through support and resources

For the past 42 years, PAVE has been a vital resource to survivors of domestic violence in our community as well as source of hope for ending the cycle of violence.

According to Lindsay Brillon, M.Ed., LSW, Executive Director of PAVE, “While domestic violence happens to an individual, it’s very much a community health issue. Factors ranging from a lack of economic opportunity and strict gender roles to substance use disorders and untreated mental health issues, all play a part in limiting the kind of life an individual believes they can live or even feel they deserve. It’s our job to help them to, first, recognize that there is a way to live differently and then, to connect them to the resources that make taking that first step away from a life of violence possible.”

Breaking the cycle of violence through education and compassion

Based in Bennington, PAVE provides a range of services to individuals throughout Bennington County.

“Many people think of PAVE as a place to turn when there’s been an incident,” says Brillon, “And we are that resource. But we’re also focused on breaking the cycle of violence.”

Towards that end, PAVE works with local elementary schools, preschools, daycares, and after school programs to teach children how to identify their emotions and express

them without the use of violence. The program is provided at no cost to the hosting organizations, and in 2022 more than 400 area children benefited from the life lessons shared.

In addition, PAVE provides community training for support agencies throughout the area to help them more effectively engage with survivors. “Very often, people in domestic violence situations are encountering different agencies including the police, EMTs, or substance abuse treatment centers. We work with and provide training to those agencies to ensure they are sensitive to the delicate nature of these types of situations so they can work with individuals in a way that doesn’t trigger trauma or cause anyone to feel shame.”

“Many people think of PAVE as a place to turn when there’s been an incident. And we are that resource. But we’re also focused on breaking the cycle of violence.”

- Lindsay Brillon, M.Ed., LSW, Executive Director of PAVE

Guiding people down the path to a better life

Even in the best of circumstances, navigating the legal system can be extremely challenging. This is especially true for victims of abuse who often feel intimidated by the inherent judgmental aspects of the courts, etc. To help them through this all-important process, PAVE provides a legal advocate who attends hearings with clients; assists with paperwork—including

Relief from Abuse orders; explain procedures; educates clients on how best to utilize the police; provides referrals to social service agencies that provide access to food stamps, assistance with employment and housing and childcare; and, in general, helps individuals



The Family Time Program supports the survivor and helps children engage with and maintain a relationship with their caregiver in a safe manner.

understand their options and prepare for the next right step for them.

In instances involving supervised visits, PAVE offers the Family Time Program. The only supervised visitation program in the county that does not require DCF intervention, the program supports the survivor and helps children engage with and maintain a relationship with their caregiver in a safe manner. PAVE representatives are present at visitations and can monitor the encounter and provide safe exchange options that do not require the adults to encounter each other.

PAVE also manages a five-bedroom emergency shelter. Located in a peaceful, residential area, the shelter is staffed with an advocate who works to help guests become accountable and self-sufficient. In addition to helping

them stay on task with any necessary legal requirements, advocates also provide financial literacy and employment training.

“The goal,” says Brillon, “is to get people on their feet as fast as possible and provide them with the tools they need to begin living the life they truly want.” ■

PAVE Hotline

Help is just a phone call away: **802-442-2111**

If you're actively in crisis or looking to explore your options for making a change, the PAVE Hotline can help.

Staffed 24/7, we provide support and assistance to victims of violence and their family and friends.

Community Health Resources

Aging and Disability Resources

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Bennington Senior Center

A place that brings together older adults who want to be engaged in their communities and with their peers.

802-442-1052

benningtonvt.org/departments/senior-center/
124 Pleasant St., Bennington, VT

Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living

A division of Vermont state government focused on making Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability—with dignity, respect, and independence.

802-241-2401

dail.vermont.gov

HC 2 South, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT

Meals on Wheels of Bennington County

Offers healthy, nutritious, and tasty meals to eligible seniors over 60 years old, and to disabled adults under age 60.

802-442-8012

mowbennington.org

124 Pleasant St.,
Bennington, VT



Senior Solutions:

Council on Aging for SE VT

Senior Solutions offers guidance to older Vermonters, so they can thrive as they age.

866-673-8376

seniorsolutionsvt.org/services

38 Pleasant St., Springfield, VT

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging

A community force in creating and sustaining opportunities for elders and caregivers in our region to help assure that elders are able to maintain maximum independence and quality of life.

802-442-5436

svcoa.org

160 Benmont Ave. Suite #90, Bennington, VT

Support and Services at Home (SASH)

SASH coordinates the resources of social-service agencies, community health providers, and nonprofit housing organizations to support Vermonters who choose to live independently at home.

802-442-9920

sashvt.org/Bennington-county/

814 Gage St., Bennington, VT



Vermont Center for Independent Living

Vermont Center for Independent Living

Working to promote dignity, independence, and civil rights of Vermonters with disabilities.

802-447-0574

vcil.org

601 Main St., Bennington, VT

WINDHAM COUNTY

Senior Solutions: Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont

Senior Solutions offers guidance to older Vermonters, so they can thrive as they age.

866-673-8376

seniorsolutionsvt.org/services

38 Pleasant St., Springfield, VT

Support and Services at Home (SASH)

SASH coordinates the resources of social-service agencies, community health providers, and nonprofit housing organizations to support Vermonters who choose to live independently at home.

802-246-1538

sashvt.org/windham-county

PO Box 275, Brattleboro, VT

Vermont Center for Independent Living

Working to promote dignity, independence, and civil rights of Vermonters with disabilities.

802-254-6851

vcil.org

28 Vermont St., Suite 436, Brattleboro, VT

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Washington County Office for Aging and Disabilities Resource Center

Offers unbiased education, information, referral, and service to residents in need of emergency or long term home and community-based supports.

800-848-3303

washingtoncountyny.gov/148/Office-for-Aging

383 Broadway Building B, Fort Edward, NY

RENSELAER COUNTY

The Arc of Rensselaer County

Advocates for the rights and safety of individuals of all ages who have an intellectual disability and/or a developmental disability or delay.

518-274-3110

renarc.org

79 102nd St., Troy, NY

Hoosick Falls Senior Services Center

518-686-7561

Provides a network of supportive services to seniors, socialization opportunities, access to Meals on Wheels, and fitness programs.

townofhoosick.org/seniorcenter.shtml

69 Church St., Hoosick Falls, NY 12090

Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley

A disability rights organization that is led by and inspires people with disabilities to achieve self-determination and advocate for an integrated society.

518-274-0701

ilchv.org

15-17 Third St., Troy, NY

NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Supervises programs that provide assistance and support to eligible families and individuals.

518-473-1090

otda.ny.gov/

40 North Pearl St., Albany, NY

Rensselaer County Department of Aging

Providing a network of supportive and preventive services, which enable the County's elderly to maintain themselves productively and independently within the community.

518-270-2730

rensco.com/departments/department-of-aging

1600 Seventh Avenue, Fourth Floor, Troy, NY

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Elder Services of Berkshire County

Provides Berkshire elders, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities the opportunity to live with dignity, independence, and self-determination, and to achieve the highest possible quality of life.

413-499-0524

esbci.org

877 South St., Suite 4E, Pittsfield, MA

North Adams Council on Aging

Responsible for understanding, supporting, strengthening, and improving the lives of residents who are 55 or older through advocacy, communication, and collaboration.

413-662-3125

northadams-ma.gov/government/boards_and_commissions/council_on_aging/index.php

10 Main St., North Adams, MA

Food Security

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Arlington Food Shelf

A food pantry serving those in the Arlington region.

802-375-6328

Arlington Food Shelf on Facebook
165 Old Mill Rd., Arlington, VT

Bennington County Regional Commission

Maintains a Bennington County Food Asset Map, providing comprehensive information about programs in place to address food insecurity in Bennington County.

802-442-0713

bcrcvt.org/Bennington-county-food-system-asset-map.html

210 South St., Suite 6, Bennington, VT

Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council

A food shelf with necessary staples to keep families fed.

802-447-7515

broc.org

332 Orchard Rd., Bennington, VT

Community Food Cupboard

Provides access to nutritious food and resources that help families in Manchester and fifteen surrounding towns to achieve their potential.

802-362-0057

communityfoodcupboard.org

40 Jeff Williams Way, Manchester Center, VT

Greater Bennington Community Services, Inc.

Operates the Kitchen Cupboard, providing free food to individuals and families in need.

802-447-3700

gbcsbennington.org

121 Depot St., Bennington, VT

Harvest House Soup Kitchen

Soup kitchen offering free meals and fellowship.

802-447-4739

Harvest House Soup Kitchen on Facebook

101 River St., Bennington, VT

Meals on Wheels of Bennington County

Offers healthy, nutritious, and tasty meals to eligible seniors over 60 years old, and to disabled adults under age 60.

802-442-8012

mowbennington.org

124 Pleasant St., Bennington, VT

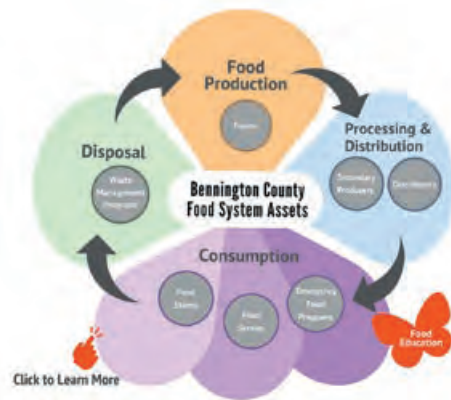
Sacred Heart Saint Francis de Sales Church—HIS Pantry

A ministry of Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales parish that serves locally those in need of supplemental food.

802-442-3141

sacredheartsaintfrancis.org

238 Main St., Bennington, VT



Bennington County Regional Commission food assets map

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

Provides access to healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and other community resources.

802-447-6408

healthvermont.gov/local/Bennington/wic

324 Main St., Suite 2, Bennington, VT

WINDHAM COUNTY

Deerfield Valley Food Pantry

Organization ensuring that no one in the Deerfield area goes hungry or lacks the basics for personal care.

802-464-0148

deerfieldvalleyfoodpantry.org

7 Church St., Wilmington, VT

Food Connects

Delivers local food as well as educational and consulting services aimed at transforming the local food system.

802-451-0538

foodconnects.org

22 Browne Court Unit 110, Brattleboro, VT

Groundworks—Foodworks Food Shelf

A program providing supplemental food to individuals in need.

802-490-2412

groundworksvt.org

141 Canal St., Brattleboro VT

St. Brigid's Kitchen and Pantry

Volunteer organization dedicated to feeding the hungry.

802-254-6800

stbrigidskitchenandpantry.org

38 Walnut St., Brattleboro, VT

Townshend Community Food Shelf

A volunteer-run community food shelf offering supplemental food assistance to all people in need.

802-365-4348

46 Common Rd., Townsend, VT

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

Provides access to healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health care and other community resources.

802-257-2882

healthvermont.gov/local/Brattleboro/wic

232 Main St., Suite 3, Brattleboro, VT

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Cambridge Food Pantry and Christian Outreach Center

Food pantry serving the Cambridge region.

518-677-7172

Cambridge Food Pantry & Christian Outreach Center on Facebook.

59 S. Park St., Cambridge, NY

St. James Food Pantry

Food pantry serving those in the Albany region.

518-247-6433

50 Summit Ave., Albany, NY

Washington County EOC Food Pantry

518-746-2390

foodbankofhudsonvalley.org

383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

Committed to improving the nutrition and health status of women, infants, and children by providing nutritious foods, nutrition and health education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to health and human service providers for all eligible families within New York State.

518-746-2460

washingtoncountyny.gov/179/WIC-Program

411 Lower Main St., Hudson Falls, NY

RENSELAER COUNTY

Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO) Family Resource Center

Developing partnerships and creating opportunities for growth and empowerment in the community, with a focus on health, housing, early childhood, and family supports.

518-272-6012

ceoempowers.org

2331 Fifth Avenue, Troy, NY

Food Pantries for the Capital District

A coalition of more than 65 food pantries in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady Counties.

518-458-1167

thefoodpantries.org

32 Essex St., Albany, NY

Hope 7 Food Pantry

A food pantry serving local families.

518-272-1547

hopeseven.com/food-pantry

520 Pawling Avenue, Troy, NY

Community Health Resources *(continued)*

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Berkshire North Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

A nutrition program that provides nutrition and health education, healthy food, breastfeeding education and support, and other services free of charge.

413-447-3495

berkshirehealthsystems.org/wic

510 North St., Suite #5, Pittsfield, MA

Berkshire Food Project

Seeks to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and social isolation by serving healthy, no-cost meals and connecting people to other resources, all in a dignified and respectful manner.

berkshirefoodproject.org

413-664-7378

134 Main St., North Adams, MA

Friendship Center Food Pantry

Providing healthy and nutritious supplemental food to those in the northern Berkshire area experiencing food insecurity.

413-664-0123

friendshipfoodpantry.org

45 Eagle St., North Adams MA

Williamstown Food Pantry

Serving residents in need from the Williamstown region.

Williamstown Food Pantry on Facebook.

53 Southworth St., Williamstown, MA.

Housing and Shelter Services

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless

Provides safe shelter, food, and support services for homeless families and individuals in Bennington County.

802-442-2424

bcchvt.org

966 Main St., Bennington, VT

Bennington Housing Authority

Administers Section 8 and provides affordable rental properties.

802-442-8000

benningtonhousingauthority.org

22 Willowbrook Dr., Bennington, VT

Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC)

Providing hope, opportunity, and a path forward out of crisis or poverty, so neighbors and communities thrive. Includes housing/fuel/utility assistance and weatherization support.

802-447-7515

broc.org

332 Orchard Rd., Bennington VT

NeighborWorks of Western Vermont:

Bennington office

Community development nonprofit supporting individuals, neighborhoods, and communities through community building and engagement efforts, including a focus on homeownership, home repair, efficiency improvements, and loan assistance.

802-438-2303

www.vt.org

136 North St., Bennington, VT

Shires Housing

Nonprofit providing quality, affordable housing in Southwestern Vermont including apartments and family homes.

802-442-8139

shireshousing.org

307 North St., Bennington, VT



Windham and Windsor Housing Trust

WINDHAM COUNTY

Brattleboro Housing Partnerships

Ensuring the provision of quality affordable housing opportunities in viable communities for lower income individuals.

802-254-6071

brattleborohousing.org

224 Melrose St., Brattleboro, VT

Groundworks Collaborative

Offering food, health, and other support for individuals in Windham County, including a 30-bed shelter and drop-in center.

802-257-0066

groundworksvt.org

81 Royal Rd., Brattleboro, VT

Windham and Windsor Housing Trust

Providing permanently affordable housing solutions in Southeastern Vermont through property management, homeowner education, low-cost loans and financial assistance, and advocacy.

802-254-4604

homemattershere.org

68 Birge St., Brattleboro, VT

WASHINGTON COUNTY

The Open Door Mission

Serving individuals who are homeless and low income, the Open Door Mission maintains a men's and women's shelter.

518-792-5900

opendoor-ny.org/about-us

226 Warren St., Glens Falls, NY

Shelters of Saratoga, Inc.

Transforming the lives of neighbors facing homelessness with supportive services, safe shelter, and a path to independence.

518-581-1097

sheltersofsaratoga.org

14 Walworth St., Saratoga Springs, NY

WAIT House

Provides homeless youth with shelter, intensive services, and case management for up to 12 months.

518-798-2077

hycwaithouse.org

10 Wait St., Glens Falls, NY

RENSELAER COUNTY

City Mission of Schenectady

Provides shelter to homeless men, women, and children.

518-346-2275

citymission.com

311 Clinton St., Schenectady, NY

Family Promise of the Capital Region

Affirming the humanity and dignity of homeless families and engaging the community in helping them achieve sustainable independence.

518-650-8895

familypromisecr.org

738 New Scotland Avenue, Albany, NY

Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless

Provides services to homeless and at-risk individuals and families, including those with complex mental health, substance use, and health issues.

518-434-8021

iphny.org

176 Sheridan Ave., Albany, NY

Joseph's House and Shelter

Provides non-judgmental services to end homelessness.

518-272-2544

josephshousetroy.org

74 Ferry St., Troy, NY

Unity House of Troy

A Rensselaer County-based human service agency providing a wide range of services, including housing support, to meet the otherwise unmet needs of people in our community who are hurting and struggling.

518-274-2607

unityhousenyt.org

2431 Sixth Avenue, Troy, NY

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Berkshire Community Action Council

Provides weatherization support and fuel assistance

413-663-3014

bcacinc.org

85 Main St., 2nd Floor, North Adams, MA

Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority

Provides housing and consumer education programming, legal and educational services, homelessness prevention and resolution, and anti-poverty resources.

413-443-7138

bcrha.com

1 Fenn St., Pittsfield, MA

Louison House

Comprehensive housing agency working to ameliorate and prevent homelessness in Northern Berkshire County.

413-663-6323

louisonhouse.org

149 Church St., North Adams, MA

ServiceNet

A year-round, 16-bed shelter for single adults, and a cold weather shelter.

413-585-1300

servicenet.org/services/shelter-and-housing/shelters

21 Olander Dr. Northampton, MA

Parent, Youth, and Family Services

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Berkshire Family YMCA/Bennington Recreation Center

Programming to build healthy spirits, minds, and bodies for all.

bfymca.org

802-442-1053

655 Gage St., Bennington, VT

Sunrise Family Resource Center

Offering a broad range of services at no cost, including home visits, early childhood services, parent education and support, and playgroups.

802-442-6934

sunrisepcc.com

244 Union St., Bennington, VT



Sunrise Family Resource Center



Berkshire Family YMCA

Project Against Violent Encounters (PAVE)

Provides free and confidential services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in Bennington County.

802-442-2370

pavebennington.org

102 Dewey St., Bennington, VT

United Counseling Service of Bennington County

Administers a variety of programs designed to build a stronger community, including Head Start and Early Head Start, psychiatric, mental health, substance use services, and more.

802-442-5491 (Bennington)

802-362-3950 (Manchester)

ucsvt.org

100 Ledge Hill Dr., Bennington, VT

5312 Main St., Manchester, VT

Vermont Permanency Initiative (VPI) Bennington

Providing individualized comprehensive services to children and adolescents who often have experienced complex developmental trauma.

802-447-1557 ext 100

vermontpermanencyinitiative.org

192 Fairview St., Bennington, VT

Catamount Connections

Supporting families with opportunities to connect to each other and local resources.

802-442-8700

Catamount Connections on Facebook

504 Main St. Unit 1, Bennington, VT

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Providing youth with one-to-one mentoring.

802-689-0092

bbsvt.org

Harvest Teen Center

Teen center for local youth.

802-447-0869

Harvest Teen Center on Facebook

200 School St., Bennington, VT

Bennington Early Intervention

Services and supports available to infants and children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.

802-447-2768

339 Main St., Suite 200, Bennington, VT

WINDHAM COUNTY

Early Education Services of Windham County

The region's Head Start, Early Head Start, and Parent Child Center.

802-254-3742

earlyeducationservices.org

130 Birge St., Brattleboro, VT

Youth Services

Providing transformative prevention, intervention, and development programs for young people and families in Windham County communities.

802-257-0361

youthservicesinc.org/who-we-are

32 Walnut St, Brattleboro, VT 2



Big Brothers Big Sisters

Boys and Girls Club of Brattleboro

Promotes and enhances the development of children by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence.

bgcbrattleboro.org/mission

17 Flat St., Brattleboro, VT

Windham County Safe Place

Supports victims and their non-offending family members through the process of investigation of child sexual abuse.

802-579-1358

safeplacecac.net

62 Black Mountain Rd., Brattleboro, VT

Community Health Resources *(continued)*

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Parent to Parent of NYS Inc.

A place where families of individuals with special needs and the professionals who support them can meet and share information.

518-381-4350
parenttoparentnys.org
500 Balltown Rd., Schenectady, NY

Northeast Parent and Child Society

Provides coordinated, innovative, comprehensive, and responsible delivery of human services.

518-426-2600
nparentchild.org

LEAP Head Start

Aids individuals and families in defining and reaching their goals economically and educationally, and administers Head Start programming.

518-746-2390
leapservices.org
383 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY

Washington County Youth Bureau

Provides training and opportunities for youth to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

518-746-2330
washingtoncountyny.gov/165/Youth-Bureau
383 Broadway, Building B, Room 17,
Fort Edward, NY

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Southern Adirondacks

Matching children with caring adults to guide them on a path to success.

bbbssadk.org
1 Lawrence St., Suite 1B, Glens Falls, NY

RENSSELAER COUNTY

Adoptive Families of the Capital Region

Adoption support group for adoptive families and individuals hoping to build their family by adoption.

518-763-8019
adoptivefamiliesny.org
P.O. Box 603 Glenmont, NY

Southern Rensselaer County Family Resource Center

518-694-9915
ceoempowers.org
1641 Third St., Rensselaer, NY

Boys & Girls Club of Southern Rensselaer County

Inspires and enables youth from all walks of life to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.

518-465-3403
bgcsorensco.org
544 Broadway, Rensselaer, NY

Department for Youth

Providing youth with opportunities, through positive leisure activities and social intervention, to mature into responsible, productive adults.

518-270-2860
rensko.com/departments/department-for-youth/
547 River St., 2nd Floor, Troy, NY

Colonie Youth Center

Provides a variety of childcare, recreation, and wellness services designed to enhance the living experience for all people in the greater Capital Region.

518-438-9596
coloneyouthcenter.org
15 Avis Drive, Latham, NY

Equinox Youth Outreach Center

Offers Rensselaer County youth one-to-one help obtaining services, connecting to resources, problem-solving, and more.

518-462-5528
equinoxinc.org
21 Delaware Ave., Albany NY

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

18 Degrees: Family Services for Western Massachusetts

Provides education, parenting skills and support, prevention and intervention, advocacy, and life skills across a spectrum of programs serving people in early education and care, foster care and adoption, and youth and community development.

413-448-8281
18degreesma.org
480 West St., Pittsfield, MA

Child Care of the Berkshires

Strengthening families through high quality child care, education, support services, and advocacy.

413-663-6593
ccberkshire.org
210 State St., North Adams, MA

Berkshire County Kids' Place

A safe place where help can begin for children who have experienced violence in their lives, either as victims of abuse or witnesses to domestic violence.

413-499-2800
kidsplaceonline.org
63 Wendell Avenue, Pittsfield, MA



Norman Rockwell Early Childhood Center in Pittsfield, part of Child Care of the Berkshires

Berkshire Family YMCA

Programming to build healthy spirits, minds, and bodies for all.

413-663-6529
bfymca.org
22 Brickyard Court, North Adams, MA

Boys and Girls Club of the Berkshires

Enhancing the quality of life for youth as participating members of a richly diverse society, including a children's center and after school program.

413-448-8528
bgcberkshires.org
16 Melville St., Pittsfield, MA

Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, Recovery Services

BENNINGTON COUNTY

The Alliance for Community Transformations

Community-based coalition focused on supporting Bennington-area youth in making healthy choices.

802-430-3347
actbennington.org
215 South St., Second Floor, Bennington, VT

AIDS Project of Southern Vermont Syringe Service Program

Providing access to and disposal of sterile syringes and injection equipment and mobile delivery of harm-reduction bags.

802-440-6776
aidsprojectsouthernvt.org
324 Main Street, Bennington, VT

Center for Restorative Justice

Community justice agency that provides a full continuum of restorative justice programming and services, helping both young people and adults take an active role in becoming positive, contributing members of their community.

802-447-1595
bcry.org
439 Main St., Suite 2, Bennington, VT

The Collaborative

Community based substance abuse prevention coalition.

802-824-4200
thecollaborative.us
91 VT-11, Londonderry, VT

Spoke Services

Information regarding treatment resources in the Bennington region.

802-440-4234
<https://blueprintforhealth.vermont.gov/about-blueprint/hub-and-spoke>
100 Hospital Drive, Bennington VT

CHILD CARE OF THE BERKSHIRES

Turning Point Center of Bennington

Recovery center in Bennington County.
802-442-9700
tpcbennington.org
160 Benmont Ave, Suite C481
Bennington, VT

United Counseling Service of Bennington County

Administers a variety of programs designed to build a stronger community, including Head Start and Early Head Start, psychiatric, mental health, substance use services, and more.
802-442-5491 (Bennington)
802-362-3950 (Manchester)
ucsvt.org
100 Ledge Hill Dr., Bennington, VT
5312 Main St., Manchester, VT

WINDHAM COUNTY

Brattleboro Retreat

Psychiatric and addiction hospital serving children, adolescents, and adults.
802-257-7785
brattlebororetreat.org
1 Anna Marsh Ln., Brattleboro, VT

Turning Point of Windham County

Peer-run recovery center.
802-257-5600
turningpointwc.org
39 Elm St., Brattleboro, VT

Windham County Consortium on Substance Use

Works across the span of harm reduction, prevention, treatment, and recovery to understand and address the impacts of opioid and other substance use.
cosvut.org
51 Fairview St., Brattleboro, VT

Voices of Hope

Providing harm-reduction bags, Narcan, and Narcan training for the community.
802-490-5645
voicesofhopevt.org
Wilmington, VT

NEW YORK STATE

NYS Hopeline

Hopeline staff can answer questions related to addiction and help connect individuals with treatment options in their area. Available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
1-877-846-7369 or text: 467369
OASAS.ny.gov

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Center for Recovery

Array of outpatient services including evaluations for substance use disorders, individual and family counseling, group therapy, and medication-assisted treatment.
518-747-8001
bhsn.org
340 Main St., Hudson Falls, NY

Council for Prevention

Fosters healthy communities, schools, families, and individuals through addressing the issues of mental health, substance abuse, disease prevention, treatment, and recovery.
518-746-1527
councilforprevention.org
214 Main St., Second Floor, Hudson Falls, NY

Warren Washington Association for Mental Health

Improving the quality of life for those affected by mental illness and promoting the awareness and importance of mental well-being in the community.
518-747-2284
wwamh.org
3043 State Route 4, Hudson Falls, NY

Washington County Alternative Sentencing

Provides opportunities for adults and juvenile offenders to make positive life changes.
518-746-2333
washingtoncountyny.gov/185/Alternative-Sentencing
383 Broadway, Building B, Room 18, Fort Edward, NY

RENSELAER COUNTY

Conifer Park

Addiction treatment center.
800-989-6446
coniferpark.com
79 Glenridge Rd., Schenectady, NY

Rensselaer County Recovery Helpline

Offering confidential crisis intervention and referrals related to substance use disorders
9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.
833-HOPE-123

St. Peter's Addiction Recovery Center Program

Services for those with alcohol or drug addiction.
1-877-525-2227
sphp.com

Senior Hope

Non-intensive outpatient clinic for mature members of the community, 50 years and older, and their families.
518-489-7777
seniorhope.org
650 Warren St., Albany, NY

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

Berkshire Harm Reduction

Offering syringe services, Narcan, Narcan training, and testing for Hep-C, AIDS, and STDs.
6 West Main Street, North Adams, MA
413-398-5603
510 North Street, Pittsfield, MA
413-447-2654
berkshirehealthsystems.org/programs-and-services/berkshire-harm-reduction



Berkshire Harm Reduction Mobile Unit

Offering syringe services, Narcan, Narcan training, and testing for Hep-C, AIDS, and STDs.
413-822-6876
berkshirehealthsystems.org/programs-and-services/berkshire-harm-reduction

Berkshire Opioid Abuse Prevention Collaborative

Implements local policy, practice, systems, and/or environmental changes to prevent the misuse of opioids and to prevent and reduce deaths and poisonings associated with opioids.
413-442-1521 ext. 37
berkshireplanning.org/initiatives/boapc

Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Providing a continuum of care for children, adolescents, adults, and families who suffer from serious and persistent behavioral health disorders.
413-499-0412
briencenter.org
333 East St., Pittsfield, MA

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition

Focusing on community empowerment, prevention, and wellness.
413-663-7588
nbccoalition.org/about-us/history
61 Main St., Suite 218, North Adams, MA

SaVida

Providing medication-assisted treatment of opioid and alcohol addiction.
77 Hospital Ave Suite 104, North Adams, MA
413-398-5180
svidahealth.com/opioid-addiction-treatment-north-adams-ma-1

Southwestern Vermont Medical Center

Resources Directory

Breast Care

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 206
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4240

Cancer Care

Dartmouth Health Cancer Center at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center
140 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-1836

Cardiology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 211
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-0212

Dermatology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 205
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5544

Diabetes Education

802-440-4025

Emergency Department

100 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-6361

Endocrinology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

ExpressCare

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 111
Bennington, VT 05201
802-440-4077

Gastroenterology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

General Surgery

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 205
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5060

Imaging

100 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5541

Infectious Disease

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

Internal Medicine

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 108
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5519

Neurology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

OB/GYN

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 302
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-9600

Occupational Health

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 301
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5317

Orthopedics

SVMC Orthopedics

332 Dewey St.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-6314

Northern Berkshire Orthopedics

375 Main St.
Williamstown, MA 01267
413-398-1000

Palliative & Supportive Care Services

140 Hospital Dr. Suite 116
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-1836

Pediatrics

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 210
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-3930

Primary Care

Deerfield Valley Campus

30 Route 100 South
Wilmington, VT 05363
802-464-5311

Mountain Medical Services

13 Grand Summit Way
West Dover, VT 05356
802-464-9300

Northshire Campus

5957 Main Street
Manchester Ctr, VT 05255
802-464-9300

Pownal Campus

7237 Route 7
Pownal, VT 05261
802-681-2780

Twin Rivers Medical PC

16 Danforth St.
Hoosick Falls, NY 12090
518-686-5770

Plastic Surgery

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 205
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5060

Pulmonology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

Rehabilitation

120 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5140

Rheumatology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 307
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-4555

Sleep Disorders

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-440-6031

Sports Medicine

332 Dewey St.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-442-6314

Travel Clinic

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 301
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5317

Urgent Care

856 State Road
North Adams, MA 01247
413-727-8088

Urology

Medical Office Building
140 Hospital Dr. Suite 100
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-6253

Women's and Children's

100 Hospital Dr.
Bennington, VT 05201
802-447-5160

Exceptional Care Close to Home

Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) is a comprehensive health care system servicing Bennington and Windham Counties in Vermont, eastern Rensselaer and Washington Counties in New York, and northern Berkshire County in Massachusetts.

Mission

SVHC exists to provide exceptional health care and comfort to the people we serve.

Vision

SVHC is recognized as a preeminent, rural, integrated healthcare system that provides exceptional, convenient, safe, and affordable care.

Values

Quality | Empathy | Safety | Teamwork | Stewardship



Thank you to our Corporate Partners





This is what exceptional looks like.

Providing exceptional care is the core of our mission at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC). As a member of Dartmouth Health, the commitment to this mission is reflected in the honors received from some of the nation's leading healthcare organizations, but more importantly, in the care we provide every day. No exceptions.

svhealthcare.org



Southwestern Vermont Medical Center

100 Hospital Drive
Bennington, VT
802-442-6361
svhealthcare.org



SVMC is **one of only 3** hospitals in New England and **53 hospitals worldwide** to have achieved five consecutive designations as a Magnet® Center for Nursing Excellence.

In 2017 SVMC received the **Magnet Prize™**, an award for extraordinary innovation in nursing that is given to only one hospital in the world each year.



SVMC is **one of only 483 hospitals in the country**—including just **three in Vermont**—to receive a coveted five-star Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Five-star ratings are based on mortality, patient experience, readmission rate, safety of care, and timely and effective care.

BECKER'S HOSPITAL REVIEW

SVMC received **top marks** from Becker's Hospital Review as one of the best hospitals in the country for nurse and physician communication with patients.



SVMC earned an **"A" rating** and garnered the distinction of **"most socially responsible" in Vermont** by the Lown Institute. The "A" rating indicates the health system's dedication and commitment to healthy patients and the surrounding community.



The American Hospital Association™ (AHA) named SVMC the 2020 recipient of the **Rural Hospital Leadership Award**. Only one leadership group or hospital in the nation is recognized each year for guiding their hospital and community through transformational change on the road to healthcare reform.



Through our membership with Dartmouth Health, our patients have access to **one of only three** National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers in New England.



SVMC offers **the only nationally accredited Nurse Residency Program** in Vermont.