



IMPACT REPORT

October 2023 - September 2024

Summary

We support pediatric primary care providers (PCPs) to increase skill and confidence in treating pediatric mental health conditions. Our team of licensed clinical social workers and board certified child and adolescent psychiatrists offer:

- FREE, immediate peer-to-peer consultation
- Screening & assessment tools
- Diagnosis guidance
- Medication recommendations
- Treatment planning support
- Community resource and referrals

Mission

Harness **collaborative relationships** and **evidence-based strategies** to improve mental health care for young Vermonters and those who support them.

How VTCPAP Helps PCPs



PCPs access immediate support and consultation.



Patients with mild to moderate mental health needs receive excellent care within their medical home.



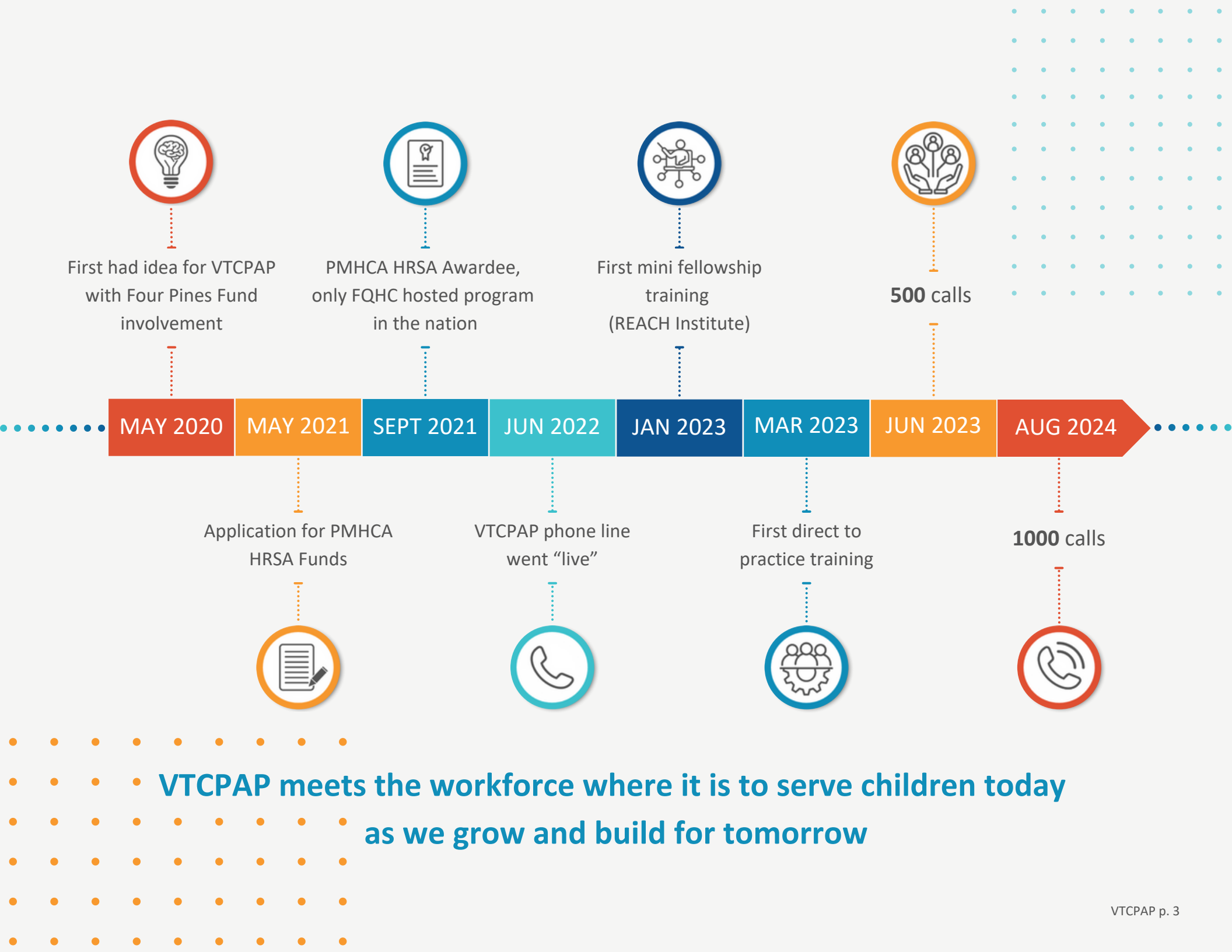
Some patients will no longer need referrals to a higher levels of care.



Patients with higher needs have improved access to care as waitlists are reduced.

Funding

VTCPAP is supported by the VT Department of Mental Health, Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program (PMHCA) with funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), VT Department of Health funding via the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP), and the Four Pines Fund. VTCPAP continues efforts to secure on-going, sustaining funding.



**VTCPAP meets the workforce where it is to serve children today
as we grow and build for tomorrow**

Vermont Context

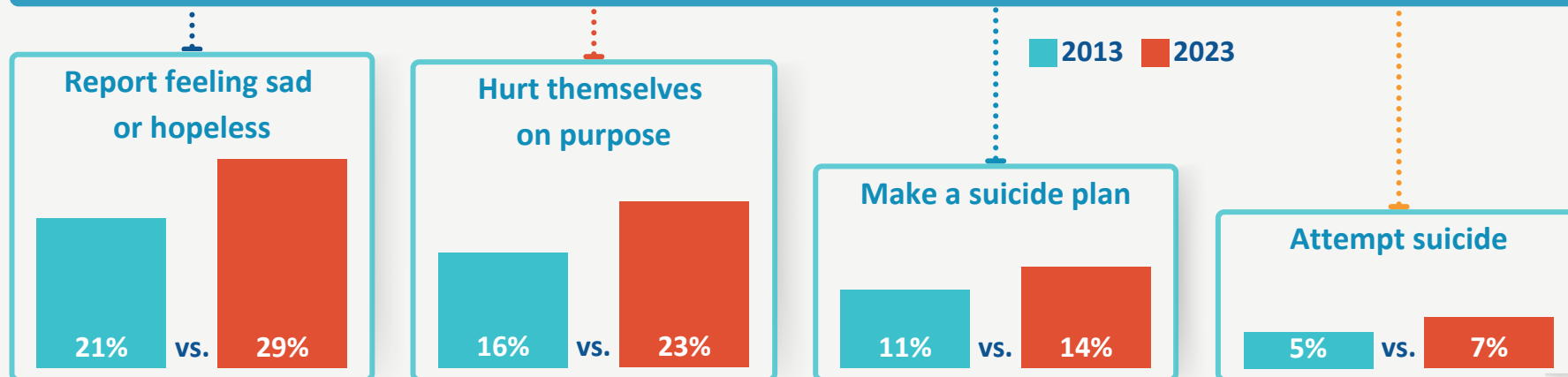
Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023 Report*

Children and youth continue to experience significant mental health challenges. The 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that:



BIPOC youth are more likely to experience violence, and unfair treatment at school.

There is a high level of need and much work ahead to meet children's mental health needs. Compared to 2013, students are statistically more likely to:



*Vermont Department of Health. (2024, November). [2023 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#): Statewide report. Division of Health Statistics and Informatics.

A pediatrician highlights the essential role VTCPAP can play in supporting the mental health needs of children and youth.

Dr. Ashley Millers Collaboration with VTCPAP

"Prior to VTCPAP I was frustrated and disheartened about the inability for my patients to access appropriate and timely psychiatric care. I was often left trying to figure out how to stabilize, diagnose and treat patients that were beyond my knowledge and experience, but had no one else to help them.



I had to watch patients spiral into significant dysfunction, wait in emergency departments and be admitted to inpatient units, before they were able to access the appropriate care. Sometimes even then it was six months after an admission that they were seen [by specialty outpatient care].

I would also hear about my busy colleagues, understandably sending patients with classic ADHD or anxiety or depression to be evaluated by psychiatry because they did not feel comfortable diagnosing and treating. So these patients would be taking slots that patients dealing with more complex challenges really needed as soon as possible."

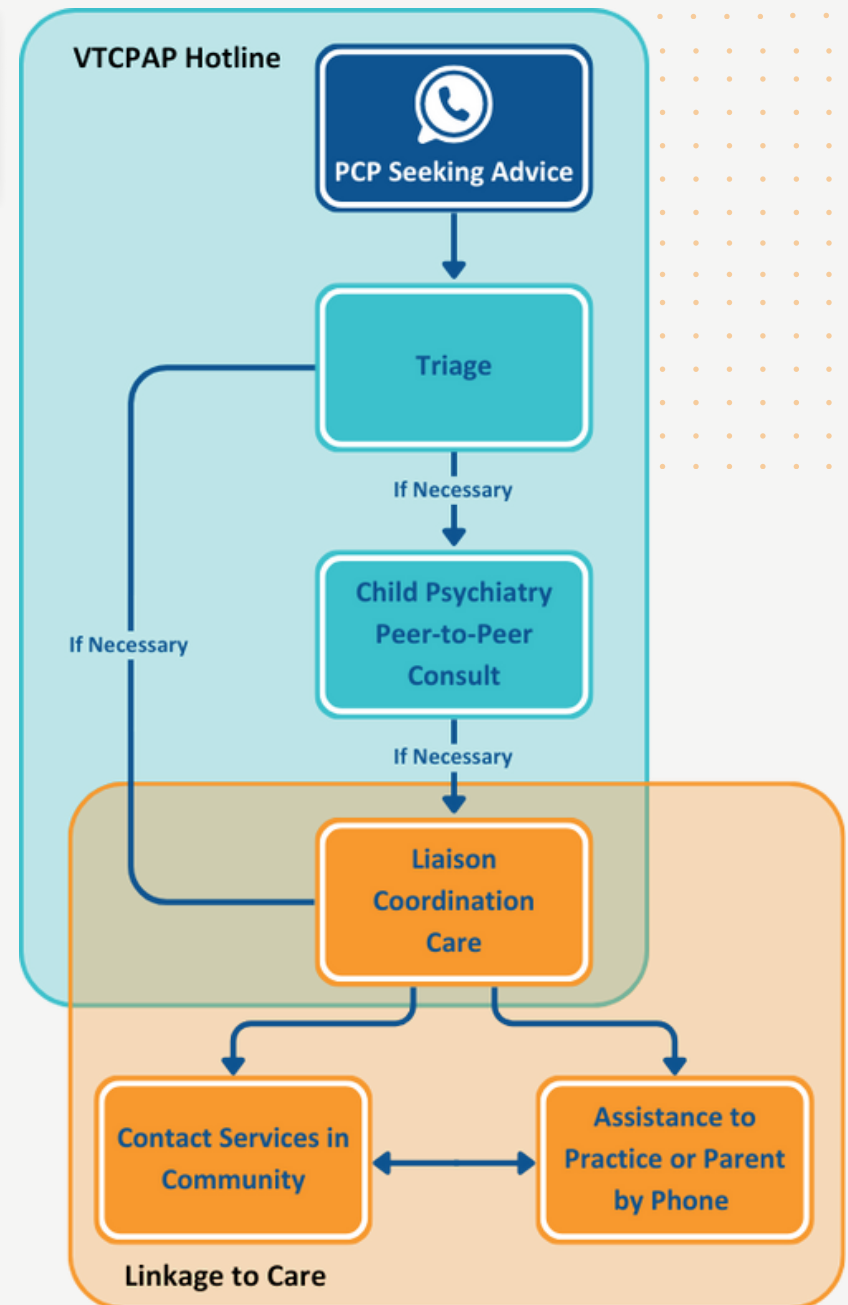
How VTCPAP Works

We are staffed by licensed clinical social workers and board certified child and adolescent psychiatrists who answer PCP phone calls between 9:00AM – 3:00PM, Monday - Friday.

During business hours, we return the call within 30 minutes, or at a time the PCP prefers.

Calls result in recommendations for appropriate screening, treatment, or available referral resources, all within a trauma-informed approach.

Each interaction with VTCPAP increases the PCP's knowledge and enhances their ability to treat the rest of their patient population with confidence.



"From the minute I started accessing the help line and a few one-time psychiatric consultations for my patients, my comfort level and confidence that my patients were getting the care they needed skyrocketed.

It was such a relief to know that five days a week if a psychiatric challenge came up that I wasn't comfortable handling, I could reach out and speak to a qualified child psychiatrist who could talk me through my options for next steps, and if I was really worried, would get them in for a telepsych evaluation within 7-10 days. It felt like a miracle.

The initial limitation was just figuring out how to make it fit into my schedule in the office, and how to assure I was following up the questions I had in a timely manner. Once we scheduled time on a weekly or biweekly plan, I was quickly able to work through the backlog of many of my complicated patients and feel confident to develop a plan of care. After the initial period of six months, I no longer needed these scheduled regular calls."

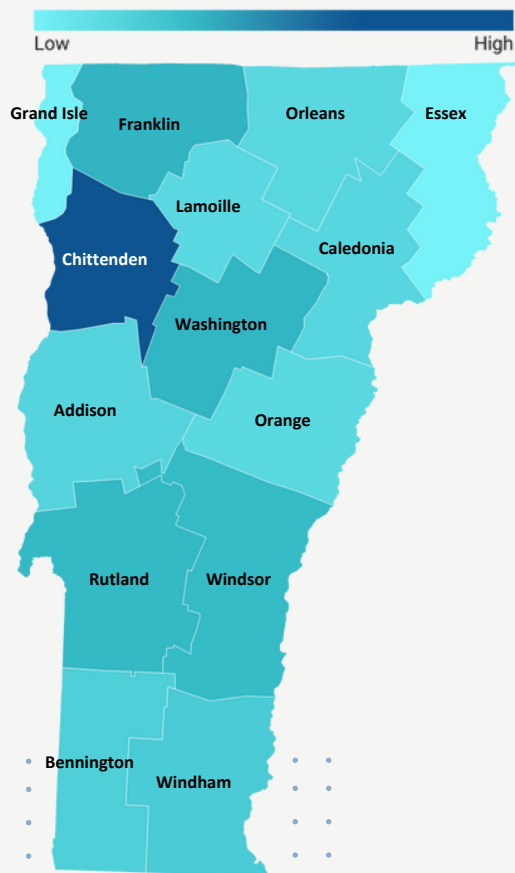
-Ashley Miller, MD



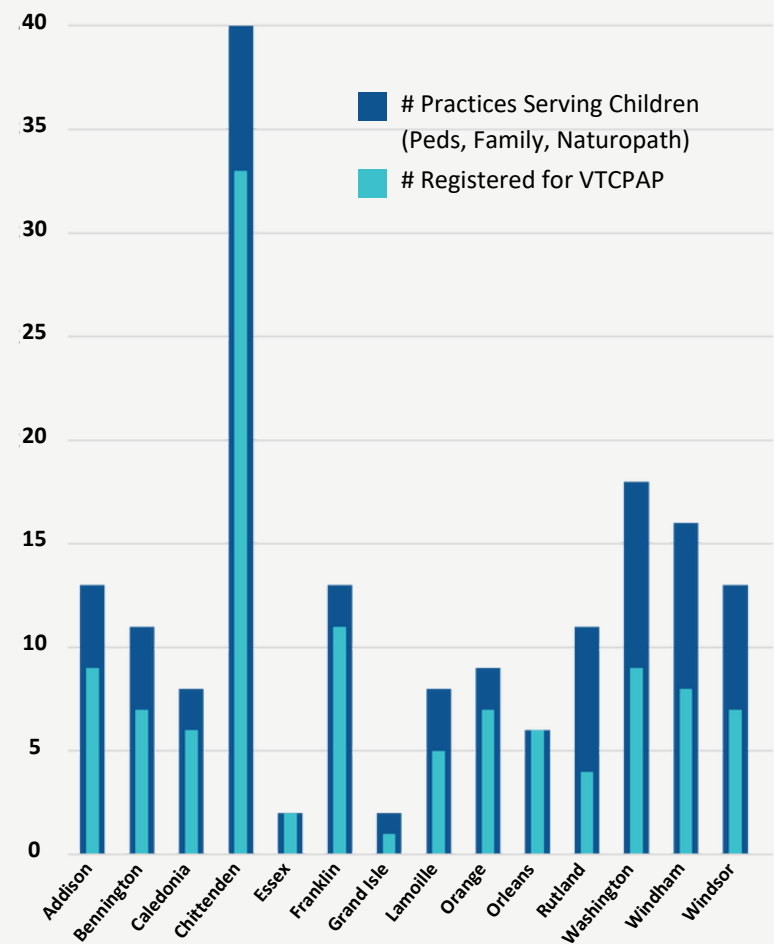
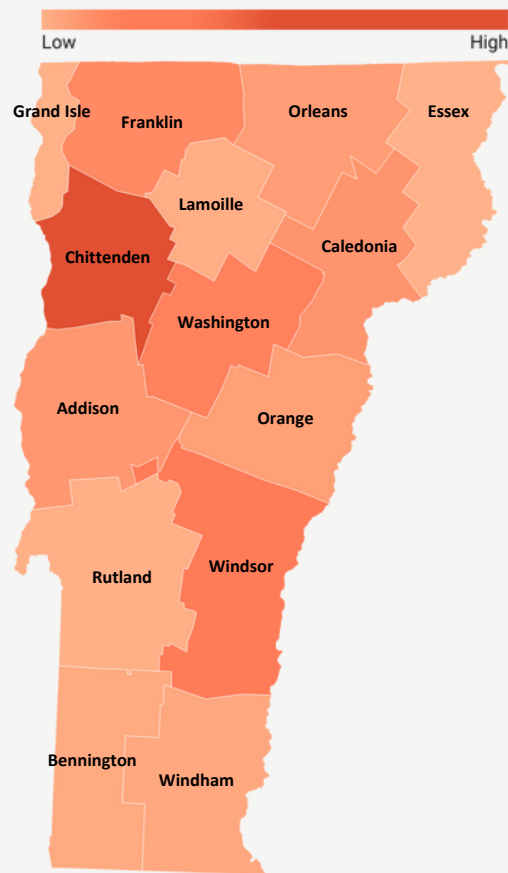
Who We Serve

Goal: Promote equitable engagement of services in rural and urban areas.

Population < 18



Consults since June 2022



Who Is Calling?

June 2022 - Oct 2024



1,092

consultations completed
and served



998

unique patients

Top 5 conditions providers are calling about:

Oct 2023 - Sept 2024

ADHD

Anxiety disorders

Depressive disorders

Disruptive, impulse-control, and conduct disorders

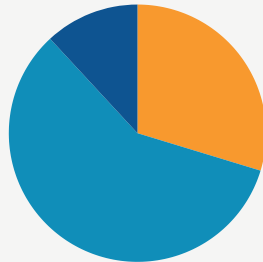
Trauma and stressor-related disorders



Percent of Clinic Types Registered

June 2022 - Oct 2024

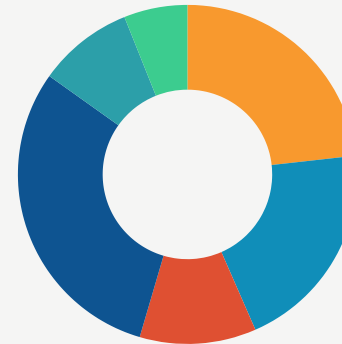
- Family Med 59%
- Pediatric 30%
- Naturopathic 12%



Percent of Provider Type who Consulted

June 2022 - Oct 2024

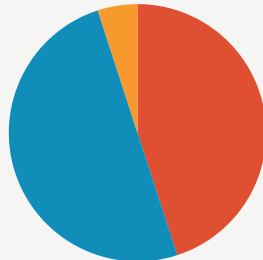
- Pediatrician 23%
- Family Practitioners 20%
- Medical Directors 11%
- Nurse Practitioners 30%
- Physician Assistant 9%
- Other 6%



Patient Gender

June 2022 - Oct 2024

- Female 50%
- Male 45%
- Gender Diverse 5%

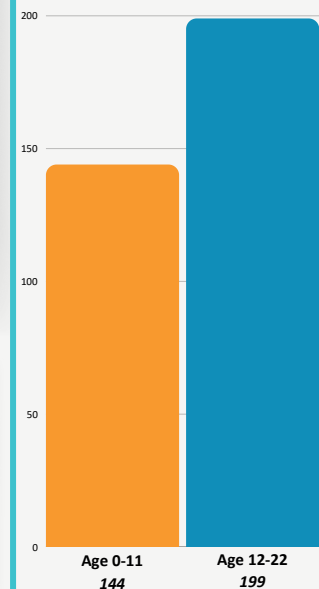


Race and Ethnicity

We track and address discrepancies between actual and expected calls for marginalized groups in order to access culturally appropriate care.

Patient Age

June 2022 - Oct 2024



Educational Offerings

1

Robust training in evidence-based modalities to PCPs and mental health clinicians

2

Increased competence and confidence

3

Improved access to high-quality mental health treatment

In the past year we provided **63 trainings** to over **1200 attendees** in collaboration with state partners.

ADHD & Toxic Stress

ADHD & Behavioral Challenges with Younger Pediatric Patients

School Nurse ECHO: Anxiety & Resilience

Trauma Responsive Care

Disordered Eating

Exposure & Response Prevention Therapy

Pediatric Anxiety & Depression

Developmental Trauma

Suicide Care

ADHD

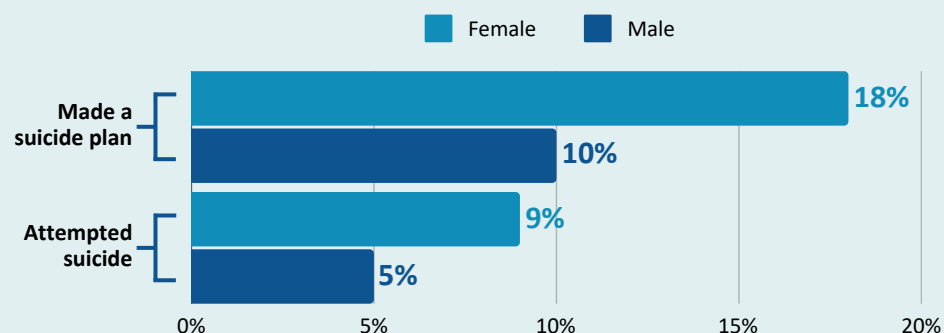
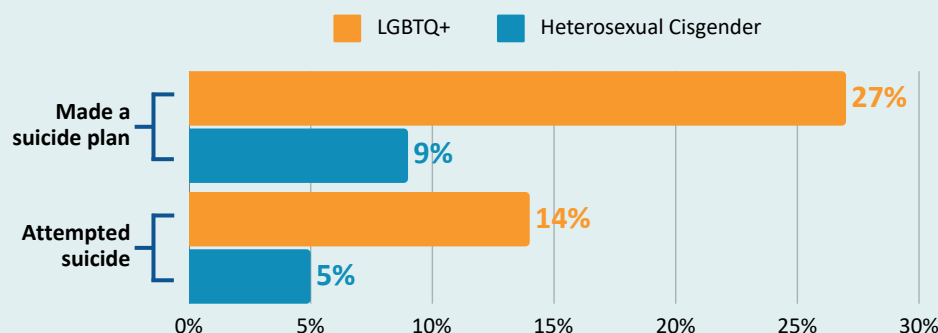
Suicide Risk

Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023 Report*

The 2023 Vermont YRBS report indicates female and LGBTQ+ students are significantly more likely to self-harm, make a plan to kill themselves, and attempt to kill themselves compared other students.

High School Students:

One in 7 made a plan about how they would attempt suicide in the past 12 months.



Middle School Students:

One in 5 seriously thought about killing themselves.



15% made a plan about how they would kill themselves and 7% have tried.



During their lifetime, LGBTQ+ students are roughly three times more likely than heterosexual cisgender students to:

make a suicide plan



attempt to kill themselves



Female students are twice as likely as male students to:

make a suicide plan



attempt to kill themselves



Suicide Care Efforts



- Provide robust training around how to screen and assess patients;
- Connect patients (via their PCP) to high-quality therapy;
- Advocate with state partners and stakeholders around identified gaps in access;
- Disseminate suicide care research and guidance through the our newsletter and website;
- Work with our our IT platform to better understand call data related to suicidality to inform future quality improvement projects;
- Work with our partners at the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) to better understand Vermont healthcare practices' approaches to care for patients who may be at risk for suicide;

We will continue to focus on suicide care as a priority in our consultation service, training, and advocacy work.



**Four
Pines Fund**

The ultimate goal of providing effective suicide care is to address and alleviate human suffering, and to build on resilience, connection, and hope. VTCAP's work in this area is made possible by the Four Pines Fund.

Suicide Care & PPP Mini-fellowship

- VTCAP has sent ~90 PCPs to the [REACH Institute's Patient-Centered Mental Health in Pediatric Primary Care \(PPP\) Program](#).
- Feedback consistently shows this empowers PCP practice change.
- One cohort completed the PPP mini fellowship with a **special focus on suicide care**; including discussion of ongoing suicide care throughout the eight follow up calls.
- The VTCAP team, with support from the Four Pines Fund, prompted the REACH Institute to rewrite their standard training to *now always include an additional focus on suicide-related assessment and care*.
- Following training PCPs demonstrated increased knowledge and comfort with evidence-based assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients in suicidal distress.



"It was excellent, the best adult learning I have done. It was interactive and had information for all levels of learners, from those just getting started with straightforward diagnosis and treatment, to PCPs who have been providing care for years and need the nuance.

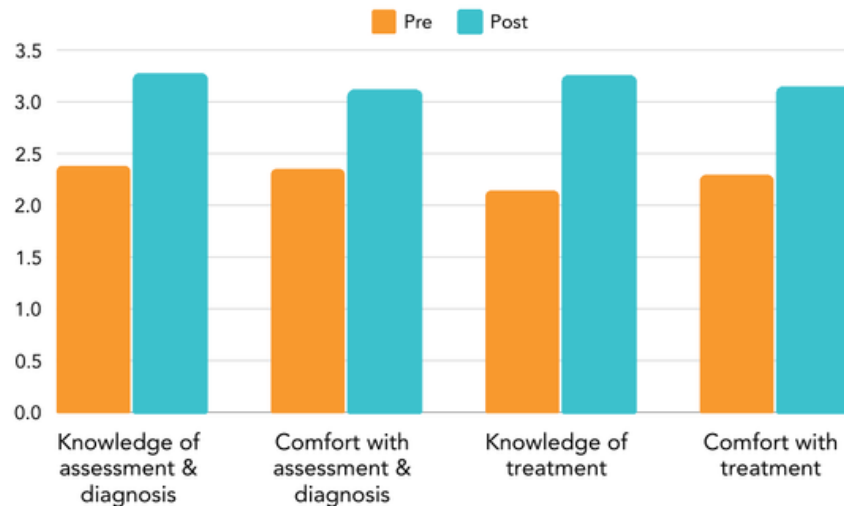
It helped me move forward in my goals to feel comfortable starting and monitoring the few atypical medications prescribed in my practice. With VTCPAP, I could consult with a psychiatrist prior to starting them which was the confidence I needed to assure I was making the right choice and hadn't missed anything."

-Ashley Miller, MD



Suicide Assessment

Provider knowledge & comfort in assessing, diagnosing, and treating Suicide Risk improves with training.

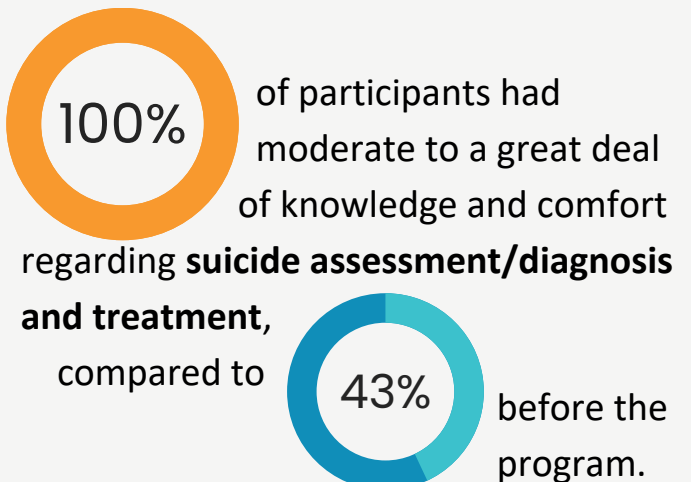


Attendees' ratings of their knowledge and comfort in assessing, diagnosing, and treating Suicide Risk statistically significantly improved after their training experience compared to prior to the training.

Six months after the training:

All respondents reported using screening tools for suicidal ideation as part of treatment monitoring most of the time.

Based on data from the Post Training Survey:



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"After completing the training, I can enter a patient's room with confidence knowing I can utilize the ASQ, suicide risk screening tool. It provides clarity to next steps and allows me to better care for my patients in that crucial moment of need."

– Gussie Logan, MD

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"I feel like my comfort level was very high for the basics (ADHD or anxiety or depression) prior, but the mini-fellowship offered through VTCPAP and the ongoing peer-to-peer consultation has taken my ability to practice and care for patients needing 'beyond the basics' to a comfort level that I never expected to have."

-Ashley Miller, MD



Future Plans

VPQHC

Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc.

The Community Health Centers of Burlington graciously incubated VTCPAP from its launch in 2022. VTCPAP extends heartfelt gratitude. As of October 2024, we will move to our new fiscal sponsor, the Vermont Program for Quality in Healthcare. VPQHC offers a statewide quality-improvement lens.

We will prioritize work in collaborative suicide care.

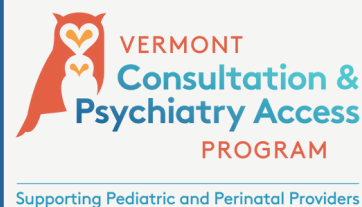
We will continue to provide trainings for PCPs and community therapists to expand the pool of highly trained mental health providers.



In October 2024, VTCPAP is merging with the perinatal psychiatric consultation service to serve both pediatric and perinatal providers. VTCPAP will partner with Dr. Sarah Guth to provide perinatal consultations.

New name! To reflect this expanded scope, the program will now be called the Vermont Consultation & Psychiatry Access Program.

We will seek to secure sustainable funding for this vital work supporting PCPs equitably throughout our state.



"The biggest need right now is available psychiatrists working with skilled mental health teams to follow the highest level patient needs. Our community mental health centers and psychiatric specialty clinics are still overwhelmed, so when we do have a young adult patient newly diagnosed with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, or patients with other significant needs that are not stabilized with the basic treatments, there remains a need for those higher levels of care.

If patients stop engaging in therapy due to mental health challenges, we need agencies that persist to support them. If not, my patients end up in expensive emergency rooms and even admitted to the hospital in order to get reconnected with services. Primary care is positioned to provide excellent care but there are higher-intensity patient needs that require and deserve available and persistent higher-level care."

-Ashley Miller, MD



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"With a quick consultation, the psychiatrists help with my more challenging mental health cases and offer real-time medication changes that have greatly benefited my patients and their families... Children grow quickly and their lives are so dynamic. We don't always have the luxury to wait months for a consultation. VTCPAP empowers me to provide excellent mental health care right from their medical home."

- **Courtney Riley, MD**, *Gifford Pediatrics*

"The team at VTCPAP has been so incredibly helpful to me as a newer primary care pediatrician. They support me to give the best care to my patients dealing with mental health challenges, and teach me along the way to build my own skills!" - **Nick Bonenfant, MD**, *Lakeside Pediatrics*

"They have helped me use questionnaires more effectively to monitor patients with OCD and trauma; given great advice about managing patients with cannabis dependence; and helped me sort through learning disability/anxiety /ADHD comorbidities. I always get a call back the same day, at a time I can spare to talk."

- **Mary Bender, MD**, *Mt. Ascutney Pediatrics*

"VTCPAP has been such an amazing resource for myself and the families I serve. Staff are quick to respond, learning from psychiatry is so valuable, and resources include available counselors, handouts, and community support for my patients." - **Marin Katz, NP**, *NVRH St. Johnsbury Pediatrics*

"VTCPAP has been such a valuable service to support me as I provide care. It's increased my confidence around prescribing and the referrals and educational materials are spot-on. The clinicians who staff VTCPAP are warm, knowledgeable, responsive and really care about the important work they help me do. I am very grateful for this resource."

- **Jessica Stadtmauer, ND**, *Vermont Naturopathic Clinic*

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Partnership, collaboration, and a state-level lens are key to VTCPAP's work and success. VTCPAP could not have met key benchmarks for success, such as registering 100% of pediatric practices in Vermont within our first year, without these strong relationships. We continue to work closely with state and philanthropic partners to improve access to mental health care for young Vermonters and their caregivers.



“Engaging with VTCPAP has decreased moral injury for those serving patients in my office, improved and expanded the care I am able to provide, and has genuinely improved my quality of life.”

-Ashley Miller, MD

