

Health drivers

- ✔ The four tribes in the Abenaki nation: Missisquoi, Elnu, Nulhegan, and Koasek, are **consistently underrepresented** in statewide data.
- ✔ The 2020 US Census notes **2,289** people identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN). Another **14,526** include AI/AN in their multi-racial identity.
- ✔ Causes of data underrepresentation:

The 2022 Health Equity for Abenaki Indigenous People report:
“...there is little to no peer reviewed published literature about the Abenaki, and we found no publications for this review that explicitly address mental health, substance use, health or well-being within Abenaki communities”.

- ✔ **Institutionalized racism** leading to exclusion of non-white groups in studies
- ✔ Land theft **decentralizing communities**, making inclusion harder
- ✔ Inherent mistrust of institutions by AI/AN community members following a long history of **eugenics, forced sterilizations, and genocide**
- ✔ Reluctance to participate in data collection due to **sustained hopelessness**

*“A mistrust in medical and social institutions creates a barrier to parenting ...**There is a fear** that organizations that are supposed to help will fracture the family structure”*

- ✔ Median incomes for Indigenous households were **\$35,000 in 2022**, for white households they were \$64,412.

“I’ve known people who have lost jobs, including myself, once they found out that they were native. If I can take advantage of white privilege, why would I want to detriment my kids[?]”

Health conditions

- ▮ Middle school and high school-aged Indigenous students report feeling **hopeless**, having **thoughts of suicide**, or **make suicide attempts** at higher rates than all Vermont students.

"My mom...elderly and disabled...a lot of doctors struggle with trying to communicate with her because they don't know the source of her fear."

- ▮ From 2014-2022, 38% of Indigenous community members reported being **current cannabis users**, compared to 22% for Vermont as a whole.
- ▮ 15% of Vermonters have experienced intimate partner violence, but that numbers **jumps to 27%** among the American Indian/Alaska Native communities.
- ▮ Chronic disease rates are **consistently higher** among the AI/AN communities.

Prevalence rates for chronic conditions	COPD	Diabetes	Hypertension	Cardiovascular disease
All VT	7%	9%	25%	8%
AI/AN	13%	17%	30%	24%

- ▮ Living in food deserts, with **little access to affordable, healthy foods**, contributes to high illness rates.
- ▮ **Twice as many** Indigenous students tried alcohol before the age of 13 compared to all students, 26% to 13%.

"It's like we're all missing like a huge part of ourselves. Some of that pain is cellular. It's generational and ancestral."

Key themes:

- Limited data on health needs
- Culturally responsive services
- Multiple environmental stressors
- High chronic disease burden

Data Sources used in this document

- ✔ [County Health Rankings](https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/vermont/data-and-resources), University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. Rely on multiple resources and partnerships to arrive at data. Resources are outlined on this page: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/vermont/data-and-resources> and include:
 - VT Department of Health Population Health Surveys and Data: <https://healthvermont.gov/stats/population-health-surveys-data>
 - State of VT Agency of Education Data and reporting: <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting>
 - VT Cancer Registry: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/stats/surveillance-reporting-topic/cancer-data>
 - VT Crime Information Center: <https://vcic.vermont.gov/ch-information/statistics/online>
 - VT Department of Health Environmental Public Health Data Tracking: <https://healthvermont.gov/environment/tracking>
 - VT State Highway Safety Office: <https://shso.vermont.gov/content/reports-and-data>
 - VT Health Research Data and records: <https://healthvermont.gov/stats>
 - VT Vaccination coverage: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/disease-control/immunization/vaccination-coverage>
- ✔ [CARES database](#), University of Missouri. Data compilation is from many resources, including and not limited to:
 - US Census Bureau
 - the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-202
 - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - Department of Transportation
 - Federal Bureau of Investigations
- ✔ [Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System \(BFRSS 2021\)](#)
- ✔ [Health Equity for Abenaki Indigenous People: Improving Access to Quality Mental Health and Substance Use Services](#) by Maria Mercedes Avila, Christine Begay Vining, Joshua Allison-Burbank, and Christine Velez
- ✔ DMH Vision 2030
- ✔ [Title V report](#)
- ✔ [Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)