

2023

Annual Report

VITL

VITL's mission is to securely aggregate, standardize, and share the data needed to improve the effectiveness of health care for Vermonters.

A Message from the CEO & Board Chair

Our annual report offers a chance to celebrate what the VITL team has built together with our partners across the state.

This year's report will look at the evolution of the Vermont Health Information Exchange from 2020 – 2023 and the ways in which health data sharing advancements have supported care delivery, public health, and Vermont's Medicaid services.

2020 was a year when our worlds changed. COVID arrived when VITL was already in the midst of a major evolution – installing a new technology platform and implementing a new consent model. COVID pushed us to put those advancements to work faster, to find where VITL data was needed most and to quickly build not only the infrastructure, but also the partnerships, to get it there. Three years on, it's those partnerships that continue to inspire and enable growth and to prove the power of data sharing.

We will share stories of partnerships with providers, like the Emergency Medical Services providers we first reached out to in 2020 and who now are some of the top users of VITLAccess. We'll feature our continued collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health, including the new service we developed together in 2023 to deliver immunization histories and forecasts directly into providers' EHRs. Vermont Medicaid is another partnership that continues to grow in new directions.

This year we are highlighting how Medicaid nurse case managers use VITL data every day to understand and support the health of Vermonters in moments of vulnerability, like after a new chronic disease diagnosis or on the way home from a hospital stay. While we can't fit every VITL partnership into these pages, these are three that show what we have achieved by listening to the needs of our health care community and building capabilities that directly deliver on those data needs.

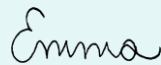
The stories in our 2023 Annual Report show what we have achieved by listening to the needs of our health care community and building capabilities that directly deliver on those data needs.

As you read this the team is working on building new data sharing connections, planning for integration of new data types to the Vermont Health Information Exchange such as social determinants of health data, envisioning new capabilities like analytics offerings, and more. The [State's Health Information Exchange Strategic Plan](#) and the following pages of this report offer a look at projects to come.

On behalf of the VITL Board of Directors, Leadership, and Staff:



Beth Anderson, President and CEO



Emma Harrigan, Board Chair

VITL Participants

201 organizations contribute and/or access data through VITL

	Contribute Data	Access Data
Hospitals (including all Vermont hospitals and a border hospital, along with their inpatient and ambulatory services, emergency departments, and owned specialty and primary care practices)	16	16
Vermont Federally Qualified Health Centers	11	10
Independent Specialty and Primary Care Practices	31	63
Home Health Agencies	5	7
Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities	0	5
Pharmacy Chains and Independent Pharmacies	11	1
Laboratories (State and Commercial)	14	0
Departments of the State of Vermont	2	3
Designated Mental Health Agencies and Specialized Services Agencies	0	11
Emergency Medical Services	0	48
Payers	0	2



In 2023, VITL delivered **1,119,541** laboratory results, radiology reports, and transcribed notes directly into the electronic health records of **610** health care providers.

VITL Services

Health care organizations rely on VITL for secure data access and streamlined data delivery that informs patient care and public health

VITL Data Access Options - for Secure Access to the Right Data at the Right Time

The **VITLAccess clinical portal** is accessible by web browser for access to health data by many types of health care organizations, such as rural primary care practices, community health centers, and academic medical centers.

Delivery of test results, imaging reports, and notes into electronic health records (EHRs), for greater efficiency compared to fax- and phone-based workflows. Some health care organizations can also pull clinical record summary documents from VITL into their EHRs.

In-EHR Immunization Registry query & response, a service that delivers comprehensive immunization histories from the Vermont Department of Health's Immunization Registry directly into the patient record along with a forecast of patient immunization recommendations based on Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Event notification, which delivers real-time data about patient care provided in emergency departments and hospitals, helping the whole care team coordinate services and supports.

Custom reporting and analytics, which provides data about patient and population health. This includes data from across organizations and regions of Vermont.

VITL Data Delivery Makes Required Reporting More Efficient

VITL enables our data contributors to send data once – to the Vermont Health Information Exchange – instead of building point-to-point connections with each of the organizations they are required to send data to. The data that we deliver informs care delivery, public health, and population health efforts.

In 2023, VITL delivered data to:

- Clinicians and organizations that provide patient care
- The Vermont Department of Health
- The Vermont Blueprint for Health
- OneCare Vermont
- The Vermont Chronic Care Initiative

862 connections collecting data
513 connections delivering data

Commitment to Vermonters: Security & Transparency

VITL is committed to continuously securing patient data, and to helping patients understand how their data is shared and used

VITL Protects Health Information

The security and confidentiality of patient health records in the Vermont Health Information Exchange has always been a core focus of VITL's work. Here's how we do it:

- **A privacy officer and a security officer oversee policy development and implementation** and deliver education for all VITL staff. Our security policies align with National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) security and privacy controls, which include incident response, identity and authentication, access control, audit and logging, configuration management, contingency planning, and supply chain risk management.
- **Access to Vermont Health Information Exchange data is logged and is audited regularly**, in compliance with federal and state laws and VITL policies. Patients can also request an audit of access of their data.
- **VITL engages in thorough security testing**, including an annual third-party evaluation of our adherence to rigorous security standards to identify improvement opportunities and priorities.

VITL will continue to regularly review and update our security tools and policies to ensure alignment with best practices and mitigate the ever-changing threat landscape. Our goal is to maintain effective, sustainable protections across all data managed by VITL.

VITL Delivers Public Education

VITL is committed to providing accessible information for Vermonters about how their health information is shared through the Vermont Health Information Exchange. We also work to make it easy for anyone to choose to continue sharing or to opt-out of sharing their data.

We know individuals are most interested in learning about health data sharing from their providers, so VITL offers participating health care organizations a robust [toolkit of education materials](#) to share with their patients.

In 2023, we also reached out directly to Vermonters with education campaigns in the spring and fall. These campaigns included social media content, a YouTube video, and messages in digital and printed newspapers. We used a mix of tactics with broad reach, such as messages on public and commercial radio, and opportunities for deeper education, like an explainer article.



You can listen to the [radio message](#), read the [explainer article](#), and visit the [education website](#).

98.9% of Vermonters are sharing their data
1.1% of Vermonters have opted-out of sharing their data

Supporting Care Delivery

VITL provides data to support informed, effective health care delivery – this has been at the core of our work since we launched in 2005

Highlights of VITL’s Work in Support of Care Delivery 2020 – 2023

- Launching a new VITLAccess clinical portal in 2022, a more user-friendly application where authorized users access comprehensive health records containing information about Vermonters’ health and health care.
- Making health records available when providers don’t have access to their own systems – such as during cyberattacks and planned systems upgrades.
- Identifying more ways VITLAccess can be useful to Vermont providers and health care organizations. New and growing uses include care management and use by Emergency Medical Services.
- VITL is exploring adding additional data protections or sharing options for reproductive health and gender affirming care data while discussions take place about sharing health records through national data networks. This is in support of the shield laws the Vermont Legislature passed in 2023.

Health records in VITLAccess were accessed **163,394** times in 2023. The number of health care professionals who used VITLAccess grew by over **150%** in 2023.

Supporting Care Delivery in 2024 and Beyond: Data Where Providers Need in Most

Vermont’s [Health Information Exchange Strategic Plan](#) includes a focus of delivering more data directly into the EHRs that providers work in all day, every day. Two VITL services already deliver data directly into EHRs: the results delivery service and the new immunization data query-and-response service. Next, we’re building connections to deliver clinical records summary documents into some organizations’ EHRs. And we are exploring opportunities to use new health care technology standards to deliver more data into providers’ EHRs, to reduce time spent switching systems and searching for data, leaving more time for direct patient care.

2023 Feature: Vermont EMS Agencies Use VITL Data Daily

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, most Vermonters were called on to keep themselves and their neighbors healthy by staying at home. But Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers had a different duty. Calls for emergency medical care kept coming, and Vermont’s EMS practitioners kept responding. VITL saw an opportunity to help them prepare to treat the people who needed their help and protect themselves as best as possible, by checking VITLAccess for their patients’ COVID test results and other relevant health information on the way to a call. VITL reached out to Vermont’s EMS agencies, offering VITLAccess service to them for the first time.

Today, 48 EMS agencies around the state rely on VITLAccess, and they’ve found many valuable uses for the tool. Many agencies use VITLAccess for quality assurance and quality improvement work after calls, to understand a patient’s outcome in the hospital where they were transported and assess whether the treatment provided by EMS was optimal. This information fuels learning and improvement. Some EMS agencies have found VITLAccess also helps with operational efficiency, giving quick access to demographic and insurance information that previously required administrative effort from the agency, receiving hospital, and patient.

Better emergency care, data for learning and improvement, and enhanced operational efficiency are all possible with the help of VITLAccess. Learn more about how EMS agencies are using VITLAccess in this [EMS Case Study](#).

Supporting Public Health

VITL's partnership with the Vermont Department of Health continues to grow

Highlights of VITL's Support of Public Health 2020-2023

- In 2020, VITL rapidly built data sharing connections (interfaces) to new sources of COVID-19 lab test results, and then to COVID-19 immunization records. Most of these connections continue to deliver essential information.
- VITL continues to deliver COVID-19 hospitalization data to the Health Department on behalf of participating hospitals, saving the hospitals administrative effort.
- VITL provided data to support Vermont's initial COVID-19 vaccination rollout and its immunization equity work.
- The Health Department's infectious disease epidemiology team used the VITLAccess clinical portal in COVID-19 case investigation and continues to use it in their work today.
- More and more Health Department staff are relying on VITLAccess to support their work caring for Vermonters. VITL has onboarded the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Fostering Health Families, death investigators with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, other fatality review teams, and recently added You First.

Strategic Planning for Health Data Sharing to Support the Vermont Department of Health in 2024 and Beyond

In 2023 the Vermont Department of Health engaged a consultant to map opportunities for integrating Health Department data into the Vermont Health Information Exchange and for utilizing the data in the Vermont Health Information Exchange in public health work including health equity initiatives. VITL participated in the information gathering process and looks forward to reviewing the resulting strategic roadmap in early 2024, then working with the Health Department to implement its recommendations.

2023 Feature: New Immunization Registry Query Service

For many years, health care organizations have relied on VITL to deliver information about the immunizations they provide to the Vermont Department of Health's Immunization Registry. In 2023, VITL and the Health Department began offering a new service that delivers complete immunization records for patients directly into providers' EHRs. Taken together, these services create a bi-directional flow of data that ensures providers and the Health Department are working with complete information, and nobody has to leave their own data systems to access the data they need. This [press release](#) provides more information about the launch of this service.

Since the launch in April 2023, VITL connected three more pediatric practices and one primary care practice. We are currently working to build thirteen new connections with hospitals, primary care and family practices, Federally Qualified Health Centers, pediatric practices, and naturopaths.

We have learned so much in the process of offering and expanding immunization data sharing services and were proud to be invited along with the Health Department to participate in the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) learning community about immunization data exchange.

In 2023, 88% of immunization data in the Health Department's Vermont Information Registry was delivered by VITL. This is an increase from 62% in 2020.

Supporting Vermont Medicaid

VITL data and infrastructure are essential to Vermont's innovative approach to Medicaid

Highlights of VITL's Support for Vermont Medicaid 2020-2023

- In 2022, VITL was certified as a module of the Vermont Medicaid Enterprise, as part of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Outcomes-Based Certification Program, enabling enhanced federal funding to support ongoing clinical data sharing to advance Medicaid operations in Vermont. Vermont was one of the first states to receive this certification for its health information exchange.
- VITL continues to deliver clinical data into the Vermont Chronic Care Initiative (VCCI) care management system. VITL delivers several data types, including Admission, Discharge, and Transfer data that informs VCCI providers and staff when their patients have been to the Emergency Department or have been discharged from the hospital, supporting timely, informed follow-up with services and supports.
- VITL continues to provide data to the Vermont Blueprint for Health. The Blueprint combines clinical data from VITL with claims data to produce profiles of the health status, health care utilization, and health care outcomes of Vermont communities.

Supporting Medicaid in 2024 and Beyond

VITL is currently working on several projects to support Vermont Medicaid's evolving data needs. One of these projects is the Medicaid Data Aggregation and Access Program (MDAAP), through which the Department of Vermont Health Access will provide incentives to providers for adopting electronic health records, sharing data with the Vermont Health Information Exchange, and accessing data from the Vermont Health Information Exchange. Eligible provider types include home health agencies, physical therapists, occupational therapists, substance use disorder treatment providers, mental health counselors, and other provider types. VITL will support program participants by building data sharing connections, offering security risk assessment consulting, and onboarding providers to the VITLAccess clinical portal.

2023 Feature: Data for Medicaid Care Management

The nurse case managers of the Vermont Chronic Care Initiative (VCCI) work closely with Vermonters during times in their lives when they are vulnerable. VCCI is a program that provides intensive and holistic supports to people on Medicaid with complex health and social needs.

VITLAccess is an essential tool for VCCI's case managers in their work on behalf of their patients. One VCCI nurse case manager logs into VITLAccess every morning to track her patients' progress. When a patient is hospitalized, she relies on VITLAccess for treatment plans and discharge summaries that will help her support her patient in transitioning back home.

The information VCCI nurse case managers access in VITLAccess is available through connections built by the VITL team and contributing organizations. Accessing data this way prevents burdensome records requests, giving both hospital clinicians and VCCI nurse case managers more time for direct patient care.

You can read the case study about how VCCI nurse case managers used VITLAccess to help Vermonters in 2023: [VCCI & VITL Case Study](#).

VCCI nurse case managers viewed patient records in VITLAccess over 7,500 times in 2023.



We're doing groundbreaking work in Vermont, many states don't have a health information exchange. They don't have any way to coordinate this information centrally and say, "You know who should get the data – the central people, so there is one place to go," which is a big deal. It's really helpful. I get to help patients and our communities; that's really important.

We're making life better for Vermonters by looking at this data."

– Heather Skeels, Director, Health Data Operations Bi-State Primary Care Association / Project Director, Vermont Rural Health Alliance

Read about how Heather and the Vermont Rural Health Alliance are putting VITL data to work in our [community profile](#).

A Look to the Future

The VITL team is excited about the opportunities ahead. Over the next several years, VITL will work with the State to support the development of the Unified Health Data Space (UHDS), an infrastructure that builds on existing investments to incorporate additional data types and tools in support of the State's Health Information Exchange Goals. Social determinants of health (SDOH), substance use disorder, mental health, public health, payment, and patient-generated data will all be included. The UHDS will offer an analytics layer and a care coordination and referral platform, along with other new or expanded services. VITL will support advancements towards the UHDS in 2024 and will:

- Continue our commitment to connecting to as many providers supporting Vermonters as possible, and integrating that data into the Vermont Health Information Exchange;
- Partner with the Vermont Agency of Human Services to create opportunities to integrate new data types into the Vermont Health Information Exchange. A particular focus in the near term will be to develop a strategy to integrate SDOH data;
- Continue to work with our stakeholders and clients to find opportunities to leverage our new technical capabilities to deliver the health data that providers need when and where they need it;
- Explore using Vermont Health Information Exchange data in new ways to support the delivery of quality measures and other analytics;
- Evaluate opportunities to participate in and support federal interoperability initiatives, such as the Office of the National Coordinator of Health Information Technology's (ONC) Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA), while also protecting the privacy of reproductive health and gender affirming care data that is protected under Vermont law.

Each of these commitments serves the Health Information Exchange Steering Committee goal of **Creating One Health Record For Every Person**.

We look forward to updating you about this work next year.

People Are VITL



VITL collaborates: VITL team members working together at our all-team meeting

We are a small team delivering big on health data progress for our communities and neighbors.

We are rooted in our community, and we are the people we serve.



VITL participates: Team VITL at the Vermont Corporate Cup event in May 2023



VITL volunteers: VITL team members Dustin and Jillian drop off food and clothing donations from our staff



VITL in the community: VITL team members at Tech Jam 2023 in Burlington

2023 Financials

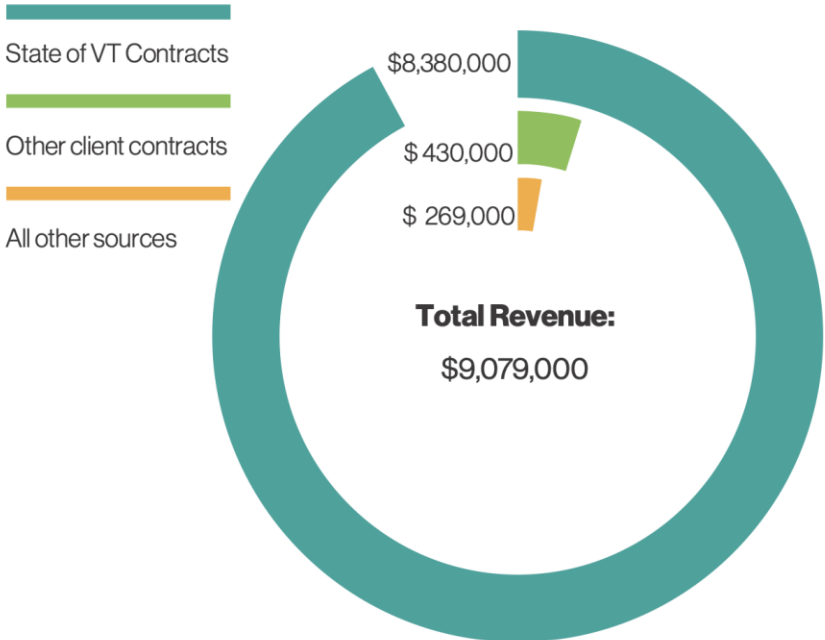
Revenue and Expenses

VITL’s audited financials for Fiscal Year 2023 show total revenue of \$9,079,000, which was less than budgeted revenue due to the delay of the completion of some projects to Fiscal Year 2024. Expenses were \$8,529,000 and were also below budget, largely due to the project delays. Overall, VITL experienced a larger than budgeted end of year surplus.

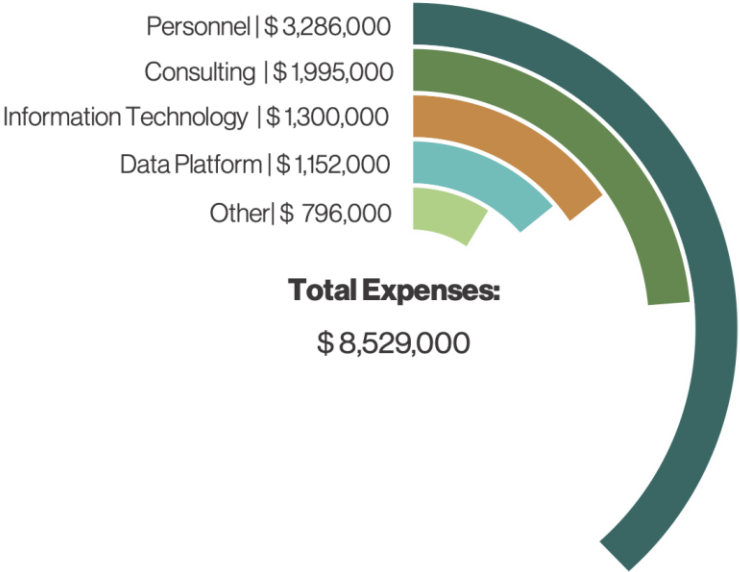
Cash on Hand

As of June 30, 2023, VITL’s balance sheet reflected approximately 226 days of operating cash on hand. VITL’s approved Fiscal Year 2024 Budget includes the use of a portion of the unexpected surplus to make improvements to Vermont Health Information Exchange platform infrastructure, which will allow for operational efficiencies.

FY23 Audited Revenue



FY22 Audited Expenses



The complete financial statements, as well as historical financial statements and annual reports, are available at vitl.net/financials



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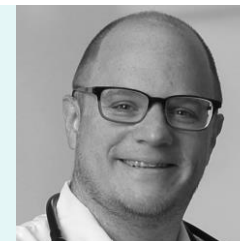
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*Board Chair through
September 2023*
Veradigm
VITL thanks Richard for his
service on the Board of Directors.



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Board Member through June 2023
Dartmouth Health
VITL thanks Mary Beth for her
service on the Board of Directors.



Beth Anderson
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