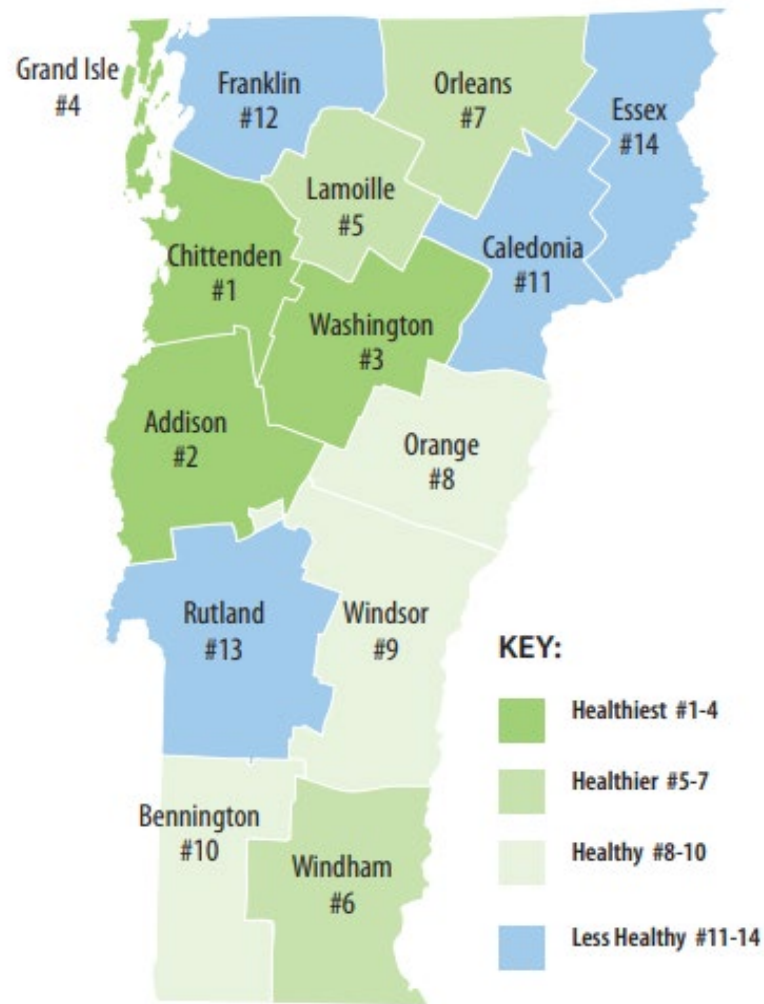


# Rural Health Services Task Force

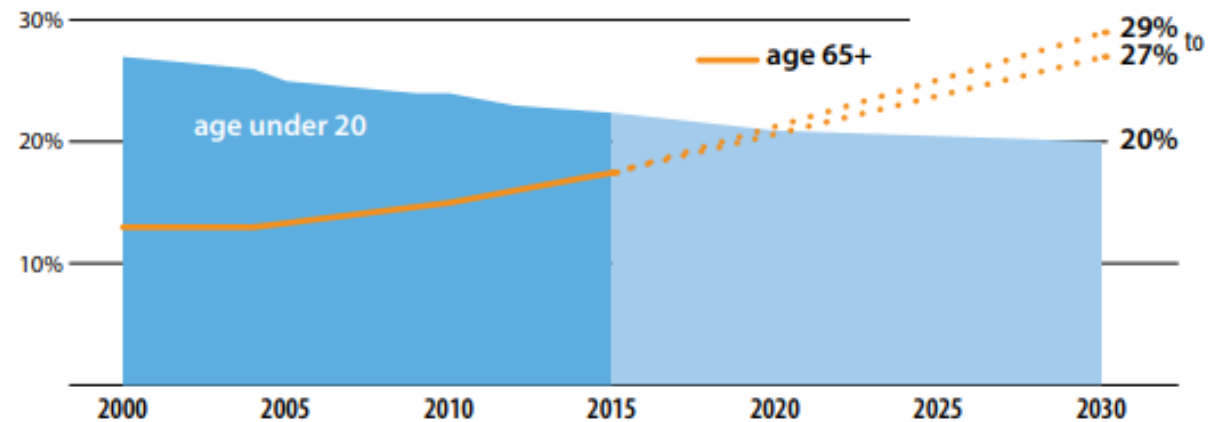
December 2, 2019

ACT 26 OF 2019

# Rural Vermont: Older and Less Healthy

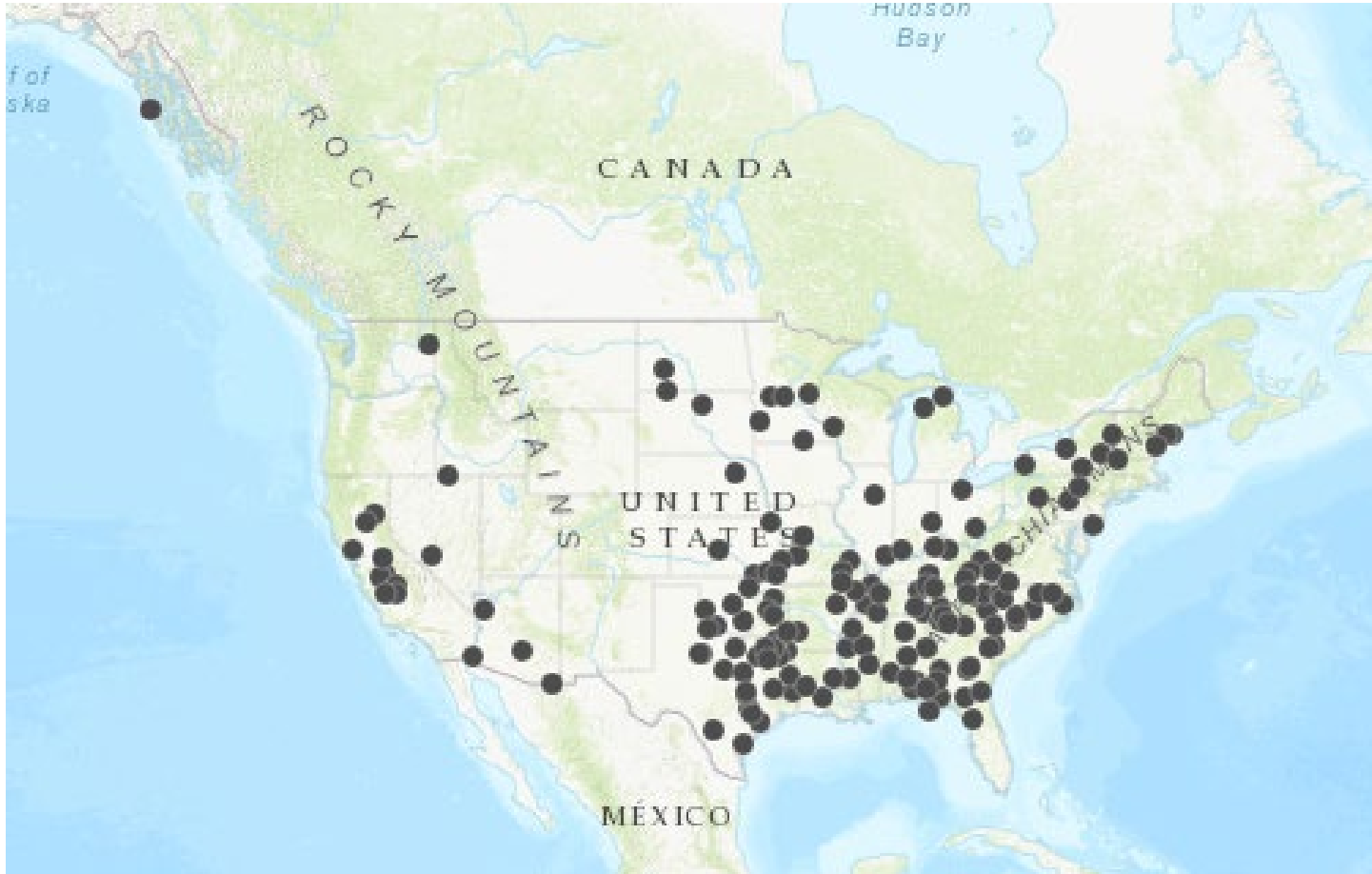


- Vermont is one of the most rural states in the nation
- Vermont is the 3<sup>rd</sup> oldest state and is aging at a faster rate
- 61% of Vermonters live in rural areas
- % of Vermonters age 65+ is growing while the % under age 20 is declining
- In Vermont, the least populated and most rural counties are the oldest and have the poorest health outcomes



Source: [State Health Assessment Plan: Healthy Vermonters 2020](#); [Vermont Department of Health State Health Assessment](#)

# Hospital Closures: Background



- **118** Hospital closures nationwide since 2010
- Springfield Hospital filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in June 2019
- 50% of Vermont hospitals projecting operating losses in FY19

# The Task Force: Legislative Charge

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Act 26 of 2018 Legislative requirements:

1. Current system of rural health delivery in Vermont, including the role of rural hospitals in the health care continuum
2. How to ensure sustainability of rural health care system, including identifying the major financial, administrative, and workforce barriers
3. Ways to overcome any existing barriers to the sustainability of the rural health care system, including prospective ideas for the future of access to health care services in rural Vermont across the health care continuum
4. Ways to encourage and improve care coordination among institutional and community service providers
5. Potential consequences of the failure of one or more rural hospitals in Vermont

# The Task Force: Membership

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## Membership

**Ena Backus**, Director of Health Care Reform, Agency of Human Services

**Robin Lunge**, J.D., MHCDS, Board Member, GMCB

**John Olson**, M.Ed., Chief, State Office of Rural Health & Primary Care, VT Dept. of Health

**Michael Fisher**, Chief Health Care Advocate, Office of the Health Care Advocate

**Dan Bennett**, Present & CEO, Gifford Medical Center

**Steve Gordon**, President & CEO, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

**Dr. Melissa Volansky**, MD, Stowe Family Practice, Executive Medical Director, CHSLV

**Dr. Paul Parker**, Richmond Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine

**Tony Morgan**, Executive Director, The Rutland Free Clinic

**Dillon Burns**, Director, Mental Health Services of Vermont Care Partners

**Kate Burkholder**, LADC, Treatment Associates, Inc

**Dr. Rick Barnett**, Licensed Psychologist-Doctorate, Licensed Alcohol/Drug Counselor

**Jill Olson**, Executive Director, VNAs of Vermont

**Laura Pelosi**, Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Vermont Health Care Association

# Report and Recommendations

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The report is due January 15, 2020. Recommendations aim to be:

- Focused on priority areas
- Built from existing work
- Inclusive of financial and non-monetary solutions

# The Task Force: Priority Areas

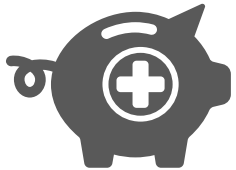
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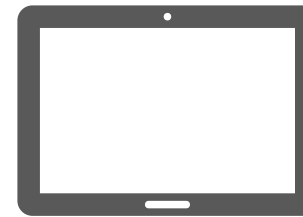
Workforce



Care Management



Financial Sustainability



Telehealth

# Telehealth: Task Force Report

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- Terminology
- Impact in Rural Communities
- Vermont
  - Definitions
  - Reimbursement by Payer
  - Barriers
  - State and Federal Expansion Initiatives
  - Recommendations