

Vermont's Health Care

Compiled by Rick Ramseyer

Vermont took a big step toward universal health coverage last year with new legislation that creates an insurance program for uninsured Vermonters. The centerpiece of the plan is Catamount Health, which in the fall of this year will begin providing coverage that is publicly subsidized, yet offered by private insurers.

The state's new initiatives also emphasize chronic-disease prevention and management, and strive to "ensure people get the right care in the right setting at the right time, every time," says Bea Grause, head of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

Here's a look at Vermont's eight largest hospitals:

Fletcher Allen Health Care

Burlington

Licensed beds: 620

fletcherallen.org

The state's academic health center, Fletcher Allen has strong ties with the University of Vermont. FAHC serves approximately 1 million people throughout Vermont and northern New York from three Burlington campuses and more than 40 patient-care sites, while providing more than 100 clinics, programs, and services.

Rutland Regional Medical Center

Rutland

Licensed beds: 188

rrmc.org

The second-largest hospital in Vermont, RPMC has the state's first nationally accredited sleep disorders center. Patients, ranging from infants to older adults, can undergo testing for conditions such as sleep apnea and narcolepsy.

Retreat Healthcare

Brattleboro

Licensed beds: 149

retreathealthcare.org

Founded in 1834 as the Brattleboro Retreat, this mental health and addictions treatment center provides diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitation services.

Central Vermont Medical Center

Barre

Licensed beds: 122

www.cvmc.hitchcock.org

CVMC is the primary health-care provider for 66,000 people who live and work in central Vermont. Its 121-physician staff provides care from their private practices, as well as from CVMC's nine community-based medical-group sites.



Fletcher Allen Health Care is the state's largest hospital.

COURTESY OF FLETCHER ALLEN HEALTH CARE

Southwestern Vermont Health Care

Bennington

Licensed beds: 99

svhealthcare.org

SVHC dates back to 1910, when Vermont businessman Henry W. Putnam donated his water company to the town of Bennington, specifying that the proceeds be used to fund a public hospital. SVHC now serves 55,000 people in parts of Bennington, Windham, and Rutland counties, plus sections of eastern New York and northern Massachusetts.

Northwestern Medical Center

St. Albans

Licensed Beds: 70

northwesternmedicalcenter.org

With roots in northwestern Vermont since the late 1880s, NMC gets high marks for efficiency. Its costs-per-admission are among the lowest in the state, and for the past five years its rate increase has been one-third lower than the Vermont hospital average of 7.7 percent.

Springfield Hospital

Springfield

Licensed beds: 69

springfieldhospital.org

Springfield Hospital's new Ludlow-based walk-in health center will replace an existing facility in the town and is slated to open in May 2007. The center will house nine exam rooms, two procedure rooms, and digital X-ray equipment.

Brattleboro Memorial Hospital

Brattleboro

Licensed beds: 61

bmhvt.org

BMH is in the midst of a \$10.6 million renovation, the hospital's first new space in 23 years. The three-story, 25,000-square-foot facility, focused on outpatients, will include pre-admission testing, oncology, rehabilitation services, X-rays, and EKGs. It also will house a mammography center, an HIV clinic, and a diabetes-education program.