

Vermont Child and Adolescent Mental Health

An all-payer claims database evaluation of select mental health diagnosis trends in Vermont.



Overview

Youth in America are experiencing a mental health crisis.¹ The National Survey of Children's Health estimated in 2023-2024 that 10% of children (6-11 years old) and 17% of adolescents (12-17 years old) had anxiety, with somewhat lower rates of depression (2% of children and 8% of adolescents).² Another source of mental health distress among children are adverse childhood experiences, with many children experiencing such events³ and diagnoses of trauma or stress disorders increasing over time.^{4,5}

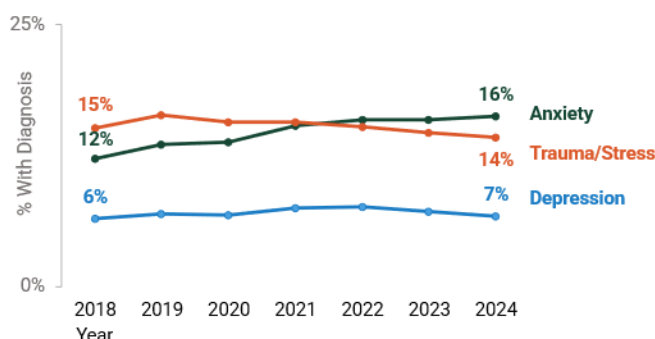
The Health Services Research (HSR) Team at the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP) leveraged Vermont's all-payer insurance claims database (VHCURES) to measure the proportion of 6-17-year-old Vermont children and adolescents with at least one anxiety, depression, or trauma/stress diagnosis each year from 2018-2024 (see Data Note).

Key Findings (Figure 1)

- Anxiety rose by 33%, from 12% to 16%, between 2018 and 2024.
- Depression in 2024 was not significantly different than in 2018. In 2024 depression was slightly and significantly lower than at its peak in 2022 (8%).
- Trauma/Stress was slightly and significantly lower in 2024 compared to 2018.

Figure 1

Percent of Children and Adolescents Aged 6-17 with One or More Diagnosis of **Anxiety**, **Depression**, or **Trauma/Stress** Disorder, 2018-



SOURCE: VHCURES Extract #3007 (2018-2021), #3008 (2022), #3011 (2023), and #3015 (2024). Analysis by VCHIP.

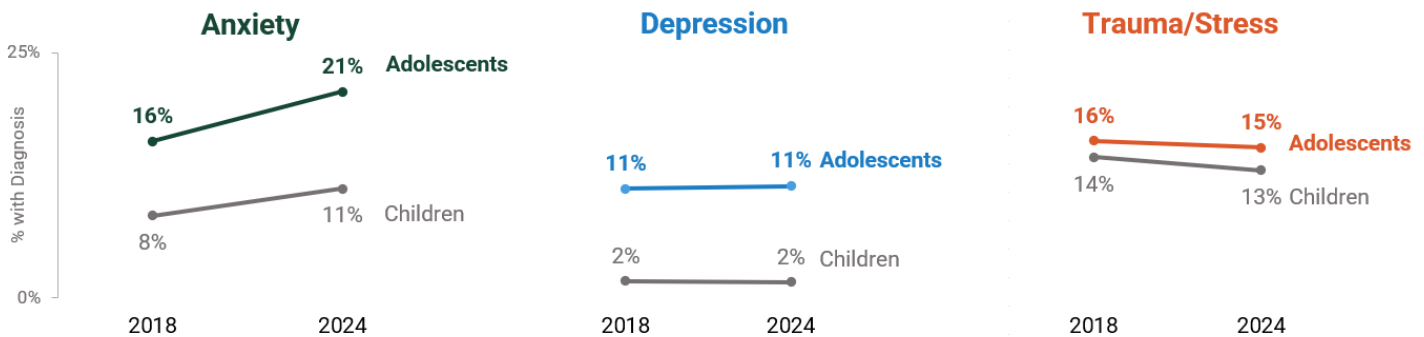
Note: The Vermont Health Care Uniform Reporting and Evaluation System (VHCURES) data are under the stewardship of the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB). The analyses, conclusions, and recommendations from the VHCURES data are solely those of the study authors and are not necessarily those of the GMCB. The GMCB had no input into the study design, implementation, or interpretation of the findings.

Mental Health Diagnoses Higher Among Adolescents (Figure 2)

- Adolescents (12-17 years old) had a higher prevalence of anxiety, depression and trauma/stress diagnoses each year compared to children (6-11 years old).
- Diagnoses of anxiety among children were 40% higher in 2024 than in 2018, and among adolescents diagnoses of anxiety were 30% higher in 2024 compared to 2018.

Figure 2

Percent of Children and Adolescents Aged 6-17 with One or More Diagnosis of **Anxiety**, **Depression**, or **Trauma/Stress** Disorder by Age Group, 2018 & 2024



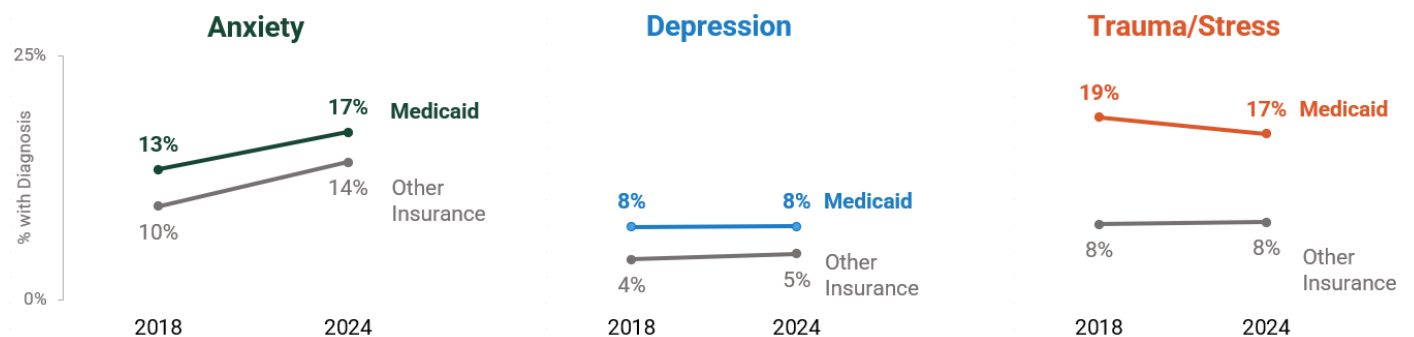
SOURCE: VHCURES Extract #3007 (2018-2021), #3008 (2022), #3011 (2023), and #3015 (2024). Analysis by VCHIP.

Mental Health Diagnoses Higher Among Children and Adolescents with Medicaid (Figure 3)

- Children and adolescents with Medicaid insurance coverage had a higher prevalence of depression, anxiety and trauma/stress diagnoses each year compared to children with other insurance coverage.
- Both those with Medicaid coverage and other insurance coverage had an increase in anxiety diagnoses between 2018 and 2024.

Figure 3

Percent of Children and Adolescents Aged 6-17 with One or More Diagnosis of **Anxiety**, **Depression**, or **Trauma/Stress** Disorder by Insurance, 2018 & 2024



SOURCE: VHCURES Extract #3007 (2018-2021), #3008 (2022), #3011 (2023), and #3015 (2024). Analysis by VCHIP.

Improving Systems in Vermont

Supporting child and adolescent mental health happens at home with families, at school, and in the medical home.

- The Vermont Department of Health collects data from principals on school health policies, including mental health. [Between 2022 and 2024 there was an increase in universal mental health promotion programs](#), such as social-emotional learning programs.
- The [Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program](#) supports providers across Vermont with mental health screening, diagnosis, treatment plans, and referrals for children through the [Vermont Consultation and Psychiatry Access Program](#).
- [Project AWARE \(Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education\)](#) is a joint effort between the Agency of Education and the Department of Mental Health to support local education and mental health professionals understand the mental health landscape for children and adolescents in their communities. The program promotes mental health awareness, mental health screening, early interventions, and building children and adolescent's resiliency.
- The [Vermont Child Health Improvement Program](#) is engaged in several efforts to improve [child, adolescent, and young adult mental health](#).
 - [Child Health Advances Measured in Practice Network](#) works with practices to improve depression screening, treatment, and referrals among adolescents and young adults.
 - The [Every Day Counts](#) initiative focuses on reducing chronic absenteeism. Children's mental health is among the top reasons that children miss school.

Data Notes

- Chi-squared statistical tests were used to compare the proportion of children and adolescents with each diagnosis between years overall, and within insurance groups and age groups. For all statistical tests, we used an alpha level of .05 to indicate statistical significance.
- Diagnoses used for inclusion are part of the Clinical Classification Software Refined version 2023.1 (2018-2023) and version 2025.1 (2024) in the following categories: depressive diagnoses, anxiety/fear-related diagnoses, and trauma-/stressor-related diagnoses, which can be found on [H-CUP website](#).

References

- 1 American Academy of Pediatrics. AAP-AACAP-CHA declaration of a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. October 19, 2021.
- 2 Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2023-2024 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved 5/29/26 from [\[www.childhealthdata.org\]](https://www.childhealthdata.org).
- 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About adverse childhood experiences. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published October 8, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/aces/about/index.html>
- 4 Cummings, J. R., Hu, X., Marchak, J., Ramos, C., Graetz, I., & Ji, X. (2025). Trends in Mental Health Diagnoses Among Publicly Insured Children. *JAMA*, 333(22), 1988–1997. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2025.4605>
- 5 Ramin Mojtabai, Olfson M. Trends in Mental Disorders in Children and Adolescents Receiving Treatment in the State Mental Health System. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 2024;64(8). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2024.08.008>