

Introduction and Overview

Vermont Department of Health

Commissioner Rick Hildebrant

January 7, 2026

VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Leading the Vermont Department of Health



Vision

All people and communities in Vermont have equitable opportunities to achieve their highest level of health and well-being.



Mission

Promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of people in Vermont by advancing equity, protecting against disease and injury, and preparing for health emergencies.



Values

Equity • Collaboration • Inclusion • Harmony • Data



How the Health Department advances public health.



Detect

We use data to understand what works and what can be improved, so everyone has an equal chance at good health and well-being.



Connect

We listen to and work with local organizations, like schools, businesses, and health centers, to support the community's whole health.



Prevent

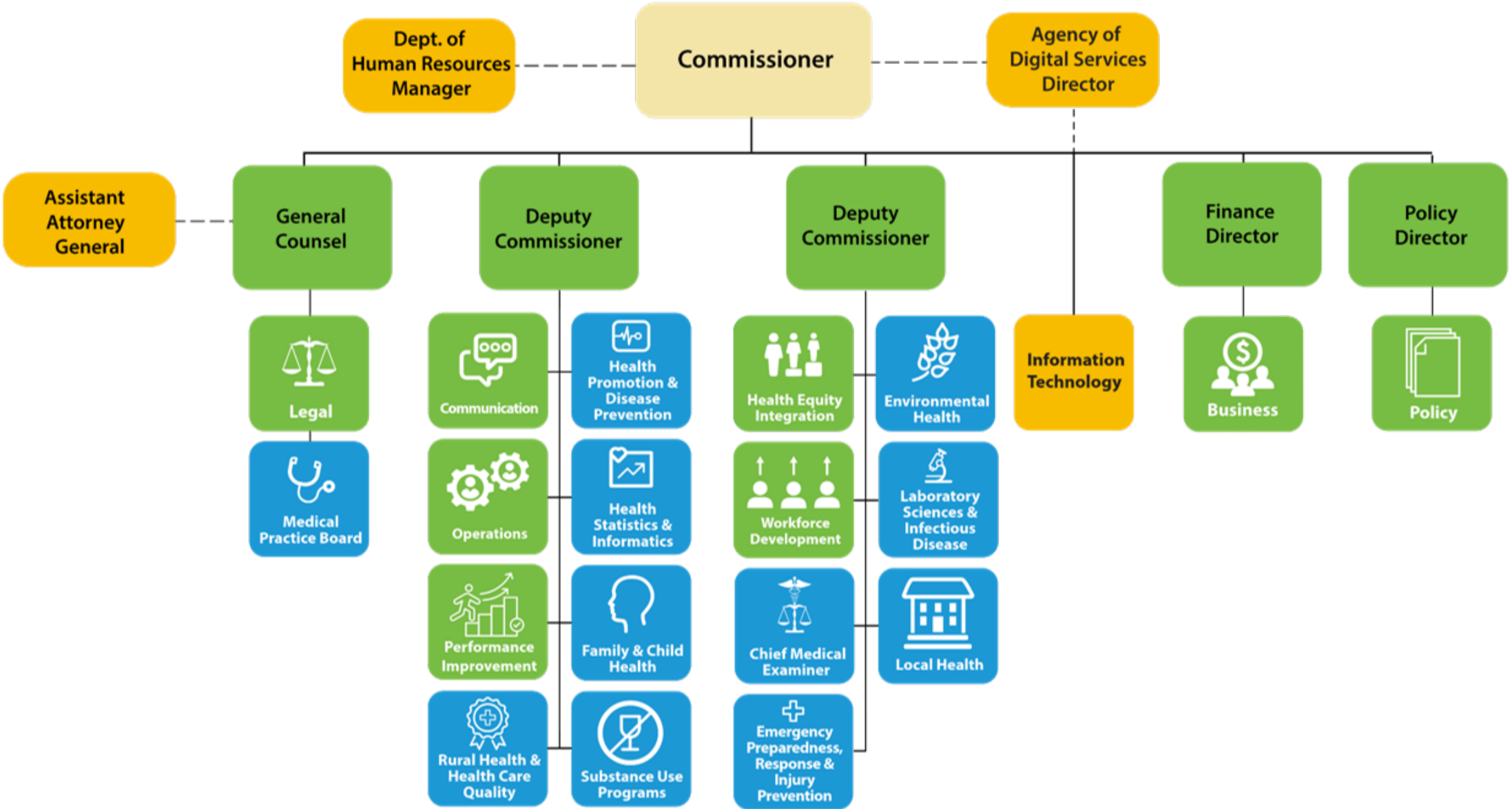
We provide information and resources to prevent illness and injury before they happen and to promote overall health and well-being.



Respond

We are ready to take quick action when public health threats happen, like after a disaster or to stop the spread of infectious diseases.

Health Department Organizational Structure



Preserve Trust in Public Health







Photos from left:

Staff from Newport Local Health Office in their community garden.

Staff from the St. Albans Office of Local Health set up for a dental clinic.

Rutland Local Health Office brought a nutrition activity to Wonderfeet Children's Museum.

Immunizations



Changes at the federal level have caused confusion and disruption.



We have committed to Vermonters to preserve access to and coverage of routine, preventive vaccines.



This will require legislative changes.

Access to care



Health Care Transformation

Public health will work with health care reform to support health care transformation in Vermont.



Areas of current attention:

Obstetric access

Transportation between care sites (EMS)

Reproductive health care

Substance Use Disorder

Vermont is a leader in prevention, treatment and recovery for substance use disorder. However, we must continue to adapt to the changing landscape. That means:



Respond to an increase in stimulant use/harm



Prioritize Recovery Housing



Prevention Works

Substance Use Continuum - Recent Highlights

- Community Driven Planning
- Enhanced Prevention Work in Schools
- Improved Access to Help
- Expanded Treatment Options
- Stronger Crisis Response
- Support for Long-Term Recovery

Key takeaways

1. We must preserve trust in public health to keep Vermonters safe and healthy.

2. The Health Department will prioritize access to immunizations, support health care transformation efforts, and adapt to changes in substance use.

3. Vermont is strengthening its substance use prevention, treatment, crisis response, and recovery system through coordinated, statewide investments guided by a 2024 needs assessment and a 2025 strategic plan.

Thank you!

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