

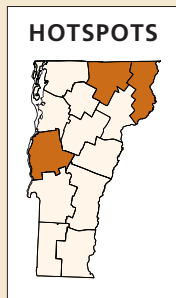
## Aging population presents new challenges

Due largely to the aging of baby boomers, Vermont's elders will represent one fifth of the state population by 2025. Across the nation, this demographic shift is expected to place high demands on healthcare, assisted living and other systems.<sup>46</sup> Basic needs are of critical concern for Vermont seniors. This group is particularly vulnerable to poverty, hunger, lack of transportation, and suicide.

This growing community also represents a force for good: Many older residents volunteer their time and experience to improve the quality of life for everyone.

### the FACTS

- By 2013 the number of seniors in Vermont requiring assisted living care will rise by 42%.
- Among today's Vermonters age 75 and older who require daily assistance, 43% live on incomes below \$20,000 per year.
- Research confirms that the vast majority of seniors prefer to live almost anywhere but a nursing home. As a result of Act 160, the percentage of elderly Vermonters living in nursing homes has



dropped dramatically. As a more personal and economical alternative, many of the state's elders have entered home-based or community-based care environments.<sup>47</sup>

- Based on recent surveys, about 6% of Vermont elders are at risk for depression. Elder depression is most evident in Essex, Orleans and Addison counties, where it surpasses the state average.<sup>48</sup> Risk factors for depression include mental illness, physical illness and poor sleep patterns, isolation and lack of social support, and substance abuse.<sup>49</sup>

