

## Residents are healthy; insurance coverage is broad but declining

Vermont is one of the nation's healthiest states, perhaps reflecting a statewide love for outdoor activity and the availability of fresh, local food. Vermont ranks seventh highest among other states for the number of its residents covered by health insurance.<sup>1</sup> While a comparatively high percentage of Vermont's children (95%) are covered by health insurance, the overall number of uninsured is increasing at a rate that exceeds 44 other states.<sup>2</sup> Factors contributing to this phenomenon may include Vermont's high cost of living and significant number of residents who are either self-employed or employed through microenterprise.



**Vermont ranks seventh highest among other states for the number of its residents covered by health insurance.**

### *the* FACTS

- Adult Vermonters get more exercise and report better health on average than others in the U.S. Students weigh in lighter and demonstrate less risk for obesity than their peers in other states.<sup>3</sup>
- Vermont ranks second highest in the nation for number of women, as a proportion of state population, receiving adequate prenatal care. The state ranks fourth lowest in the nation for low-birth-weight babies. Vermont has the lowest state birthrate in the U.S., including the lowest birthrate among our teens.<sup>4</sup>
- A movement toward home- and community-based care has earned Vermont a ranking of fourth lowest in the country for the institutionalization of people with mental disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- In a 2006 poll, Vermonters identified healthcare as a first-priority issue. Following healthcare, top issues included jobs, government, economy, sprawl, taxes and environment.<sup>6</sup>
- Vermonters without health insurance account for 11.4% of the state population.<sup>7</sup>
- Nationwide, the working poor don't often qualify for federal coverage through Medicaid and Medicare, and they are more than twice as likely as the general population to go without coverage. Healthcare costs are rising more than 10% per year in Vermont, amounting to approximately \$1 million per day. Fifteen percent of Vermont residents have so little insurance that a serious illness would bankrupt them.<sup>8</sup>