

VTAAC Member Survey Results

June 2023



The **Vermonters Taking Action Against Cancer** (VTAAC) member survey was used to gauge members' satisfaction with the coalition, understand ways they are currently engaged and want to be engaged in the coalition, learn about work being done to advance the 2025 Vermont Cancer Plan goals, and collect background information. The survey was administered online in April 2023, and all members were encouraged to respond regardless of their current level of involvement. The survey was sent to 548 emails, opened by 32%, and 72 responses were received. The information provided in this summary are based on the sample of VTAAC members who responded to the survey and *may not be representative* of the entire coalition membership.

Who responded to the member survey?

The background information on respondents tells us which perspectives were included in the responses, as well as sense of which ones might be missing or less prominent.

 **32%** reported being personally impacted by cancer

 **49%** identified as a caregiver or loved one of someone personally impacted by cancer

 **19%** reported being a physical or mental health care clinician

“[VTAAC brings] organizations together that support reducing the burden of cancer in Vermont. **Together we can achieve a lot more** than one sole entity or organization.”
–VTAAC Member

Sector representation

Many respondents work within an academic/research institution, public health, or non-profit/community-based organization.

n = 46*

Academic/research institution	17 respondents
Public health	16
Non-profit/community-based organization	16
Government agency	13
Medical institution/clinic	11
I joined VTAAC as a community member.	8
Other	3
Legislature/policy	1
Business/Industry	1
Retired	1
Health insurance/payer	0

*25 respondents selected more than one answer.

Length of involvement

Nearly half of respondents have been VTAAC members for 2 or less years, while there is also representation from long-standing members with historical knowledge.

n = 45

Less than 1 year	12
1-2 years	10
3-5 years	9
6-10 years	9
Greater than 10 years	5

How are VTAAC members involved in the coalition?

Members have an opportunity to engage with VTAAC in various ways. The most common ways respondents report being involved in VTAAC are:

- 64%** Read VTAAC emails
- 53%** Read the VTAAC newsletter
- 36%** Member of a workgroup, taskforce, and/or project
- 32%** Share information about VTAAC with people in their organization

Newer members are as likely as members involved for more than 2 years to be engaged in a workgroup, taskforce, and/or project. However, only 36% overall reported this type of engagement, suggesting there may be **opportunities to increase the number of VTAAC members overall who are a part of these groups.**

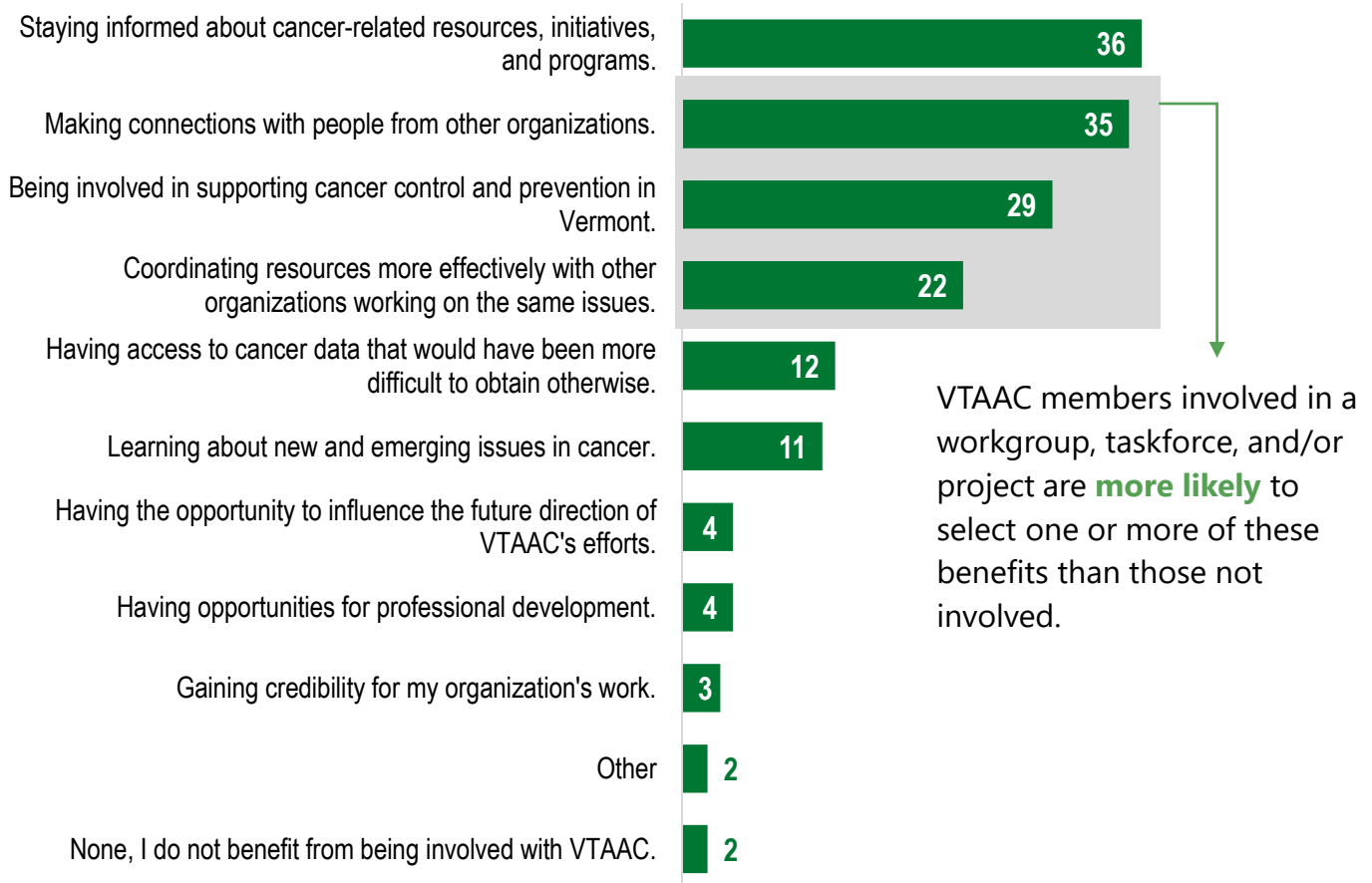
Respondents communicated the need for clearer expectations for participation, and more information on how to get involved.

In addition, **75%** of respondents agree that they feel **well-informed** about coalition activities and **88%** agree that they **understand the purpose** of VTAAC.

How do VTAAC members benefit from being involved in the coalition?

Many members find value in opportunities to connect with others outside of their organization and help staying up-to-date on cancer resources and services. While members often benefit in more than one way from being involved in VTAAC, what they view as the most important benefits vary depending on their engagement.

n = 60



*53 respondents selected more than one answer.

Note: Respondents were asked to select up to three most important benefits of involvement in VTAAC.

Opportunities for improvement within VTAAC

Respondents shared a variety of ways that VTAAC could increase engagement among members and better support its mission to reduce the burden of cancer in Vermont, including:

- continue to **provide educational and networking virtual opportunities**,
- demonstrate the coalition’s **impact**,
- continue to work towards **tangible work plans and measurable activities**,
- increase communications about **current workgroups and projects**, and
- ensure every task force has one or more **patient/caregiver representatives** on it.

There are already activities underway to address many of these suggestions for improvement.

Integrating perspectives of those most affected by cancer

As VTAAC works toward improving cancer outcomes for all Vermonters, integrating the voices of those who are more likely to be affected by cancer than others due to social, environmental and economic disadvantages into the coalition **is essential to ensure the coalition’s efforts reach and are responsive to the needs of those most impacted**. The 2025 Vermont Cancer Plan identifies four populations of focus:

- Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) Vermonters
- Vermonters living with disabilities
- Low-income Vermonters

To further understand how to engage these populations, VTAAC members were asked, “How could VTAAC further integrate the perspectives of community members most affected by cancer into the coalition?” Themes from the responses, along with select quotes are:

“In supporting VTAAC’s goal of health equity, **engage more members from the populations we look to support.**”
–VTAAC Member

Gather important perspectives	“Community forums, possibly survey outreach to those who have cancer or their family/supports including healthcare professionals who care for them.”
Build greater representation	“Invite key stakeholders to have a position on each task force.” “Compensation for time” “More LGBTQIA+ focused materials.” “Recruit more members especially in the geographic areas in the mid and southern regions.”
Enhance coordination & collaboration	“Work with community organizations that support community members and caregivers.”

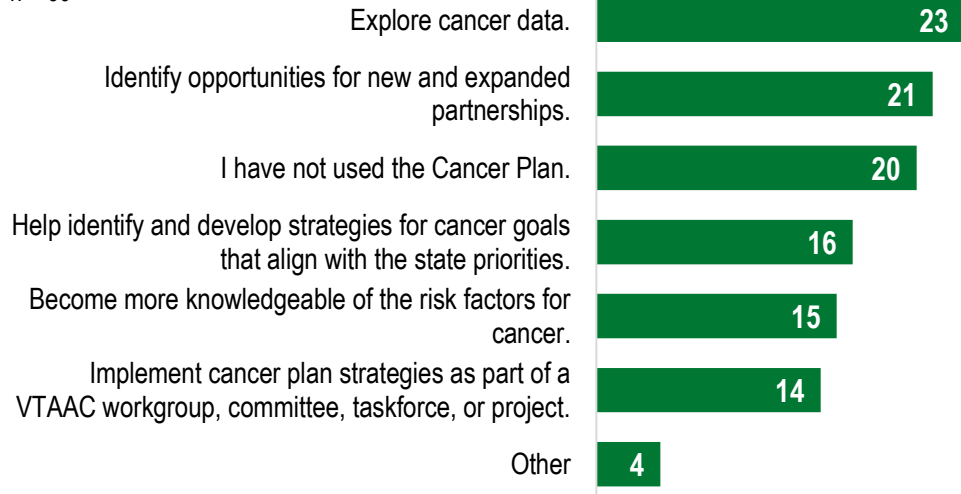
Among respondents, **78% reported that they are not a part of any of the cancer plan populations of focus**. Of those that are, there was the most representation from the LGBTQ+ community. The survey results indicate that there is opportunity for intentional recruitment of members from populations of focus.

The responses related to integrating perspectives of those most affected should be acted upon with caution given the lack of representation from these communities in the survey and the critical need to work in partnership and reciprocity with communities most impacted by cancer.

How is the Vermont Cancer Plan being used and what are the barriers to use?

Of the 66% respondents (40 out of 60) who have used the cancer plan, many use the plan to explore cancer data and identify opportunities for partnerships. Survey results showed opportunities for expanded use of the plan by members.

n = 60*



Learn more about the [2025 Cancer Plan](#) and explore the [Year 1 Status Report](#).

*25 respondents selected more than one answer.

Most respondents (43%) shared that nothing prevents them or their organization from using the cancer plan, while others reported barriers to use including **lack of time** (23%) and **competing organizational priorities** (12%). Half of those who have not used the plan were also not familiar with the plan.

Respondents identified tangible ways to ensure the continued use and implementation of the cancer plan:



"...identifying gaps in the strategies of the cancer plan that aren't currently being implemented by any organization and develop task forces to fill those gaps."



"Continue reinforcing collaborations and disseminate the cancer plan as widely as possible."



"Create systems to support the VT Cancer Plan (e.g., screening tool for cancer types, data dashboard, member communications tools, etc.)."

Actionable ways to use the findings of this report:

- Inform recruitment efforts, particularly from populations of focus and other groups with less representation within VTAAC.
- Build upon efforts to engage cancer partners across Vermont by focusing on the benefits of being involved in a statewide coalition.
- Ensure that VTAAC continues to create multiple ways for members to engage that fit their availability and interest, such as a structured group or committee or ad hoc meetings for brainstorming and sharing.
- Continue to disseminate the 2025 Vermont Cancer Plan widely, promote its use, and communicate progress toward reducing the cancer burden across the state.

This survey was conducted in partnership between Vermont Department of Health's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and their external evaluator, Professional Data Analysts. Learn more about VTAAC's efforts at vtaac.org. Contact coordinator@vtaac.org with questions about the member survey.

"I love meeting other people doing this very important work throughout the state! Thanks for bringing us together and I look forward to all the collaboration in the next year +." – VTAAC member