

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What should I do in an emergency?

A: You should go to an emergency room or call 911. No other clinics are equipped to handle life-threatening conditions. Emergency rooms will treat you even if you don't have documents or cannot pay. They are always open. You can get safe, affordable care for a serious injury in Vermont without returning to your home country.

Q: Are there migrant-friendly clinics for non-emergency medical or dental care?

A: For medical and dental problems for uninsured adults, the Northern Tier Centers for Health (NoTCH) clinics in Franklin County may be a good option. All NoTCH clinics are very migrant-friendly. They will see workers regardless of documentation, and offer reduced-price care. The Georgia Walk-in clinic does not require appointments and will also see migrant workers. All the clinic phone numbers, hours, and directions are listed inside.

Q: What if I don't speak English?

A: The NoTCH clinics, the Hospital and Emergency Room in St Albans, and the Walk-in clinic in Georgia have Spanish translation available at all times. If you are not offered an interpreter when you arrive, you should ask for one. It is possible your visit may be translated over the telephone or a computer instead of by a live interpreter.

Q: Will my healthcare be affordable?

A: Low-cost medical and dental care is available for migrant workers in Franklin County. Most NoTCH clinics will only charge you \$5 for a medical consultation, and 25% of the total cost of your dental care. The Georgia Walk-in Clinic may cost as little as \$90. The St Albans hospital or emergency room may discount the entire cost of your care, but it is not certain and you may wait several weeks after your visit to learn the final cost.

Q: What is the best place to get medications?

A: If you're given a prescription, ask your doctor about the Community Health Pharmacy (802-893-1120), The CHP mails medications directly to your home. It is NOT necessary to have a credit card—you can pay by check, money order, or cash. Ask for them to print your instructions in Spanish. Most medications cost \$4 for a month's supply.

The Richford NoTCH clinic also has a pharmacy that offers low-cost medications. The pharmacy in the Price Chopper grocery store in St. Albans on Route 7 provides most antibiotics and diabetes medications for free. However, pharmacies other than the CHP and NoTCH may refuse to fill prescriptions brought in by employers unless the worker is present.

Q: Will I be asked for documentation?

A: Yes, most clinics will ask you for a social security number and identification. Don't worry if you don't have them! Just say you don't have identification with you. NoTCH clinics and the hospital are focused on your health, not on your documents. All of the places in this pamphlet will treat any patient, no matter what their documentation status or ability to pay is.

Q: Is it safe to visit a clinic or the hospital?

A: Clinics and hospitals are very safe places—people there only want to help you. They would never call immigration. You should be most careful while driving. For the most part, immigration will not stop anyone traveling, unless any laws are broken. We recommend you take a car with Vermont license plates and make sure to obey all traffic laws.

Q: How do I get transportation?

A: This may still be the most challenging part of getting health care. A network of volunteer drivers is being established in Franklin county. The number to call to inquire about the driving network is 802-524-6501 (x447). Spanish is spoken. Asking your employer to provide transportation may be still be your best bet.

Q: Where can I learn more?

A: For more information available on receiving medical and dental care in Franklin county, go to the Champlain Valley AHEC website at <http://www.cvahec.org> or call (802) 527-1474 to have information mailed to you.

The information available includes:

- Detailed description of the care, services and paperwork at the clinics listed in this pamphlet.
- Tips for having medical care for work-related injuries paid for.
- Resources available for pregnancy, childbirth, and healthcare for children. Any child born in the United States is eligible for US citizenship and Medicaid (a type of health insurance which covers the cost of delivery and the child's healthcare).

Champlain Valley Area Health Education Center

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A Quick Reference Guide: Healthcare Access for Latino Migrant Farm Workers in Franklin County, Vermont



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You can receive additional copies of this pamphlet by contacting the Champlain Valley AHEC office at (802) 527-1474, feedback@cvahec.org, or at www.cvahec.org. Photo credit: Naomi Walcott-MacCausland.

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How to make a medical appointment

You can call any of the NoTCH clinics listed below to make an appointment. It may be easier to have an English-speaker make the appointment. However, you may also say “Spanish” to the receptionist, and wait until a translator is put on the line. This may not work at every clinic. Many of the clinics also offer extended hours during the summer.

Alburg Health Center

802-796-4414, Mon-Thurs, 8-5
8 Industrial Park Rd, Alburg

Enosburg Health Center

802-933-5831, Mon-Fri, 8-5
44 Center Street, Enosburg Falls

Use the lower parking lot on the far side of the building. The clinic is on the ground floor.



Richford Health Center

802-255-5500, Mon-Fri, 8-5
53 Main street, Richford

The clinic is on the second floor above Mac's Market in a large, four-story gray building.

St Albans Health Center

802-524-4554, Mon, Wed-Fri, 8-5, Tues 10-7
48 Lower Newton Rd, St Albans

Swanton Health Center

802-868-2454, Mon-Fri, 8-5
45 Church St, Swanton, *in the basement.*

How to get low-cost care at NoTCH

NoTCH clinics offer a “sliding scale” pricing system that may give you a discount on your bill depending on your income and family size. If you qualify for the discount, you may pay as little as \$5 for each consultation. It may take NoTCH medical clinics up to a week after your consultation to determine your sliding scale level and the final cost of your visit. If you'd like to know the cost in advance, you should complete the sliding scale paperwork in advance. Otherwise, you will receive your bill in the mail.

What to bring to an appointment

To apply for the sliding scale, you need to verify your income. You can do this by bringing two or three paycheck stubs or your employer can write a letter

stating how much you earn. If you can't get either of those, the clinic may let you write your income and sign a form. It is also important to know the physical address of your home in Franklin county (not a PO box). You should also bring any medical information you have about yourself. If you take any medications, bring along your pill bottles.

What to expect at your appointment

You should show up 15-20 minutes before your scheduled appointment. Check in at the reception window, where you'll be given paperwork to fill out. You should have access to an interpreter at this point. Some forms are also available in Spanish. You will then sit in the waiting room until you are called for your consultation. You will first be seen by a nurse who will ask you questions. You will then be seen by a doctor, who may ask the same questions. Make sure to tell your doctor everything that's bothering you—they can help you with many issues in one visit. Everything you write or tell your doctor is confidential.

Follow-up care and referrals

Before you leave the clinic, make sure you understand what you need to do next. Depending on your illness, the clinic may schedule you for another visit. They will usually give you a card with the date and time of your next appointment. You may be prescribed a medication. Make sure you understand what pharmacy you'll be getting the medication from.

If you need x-rays or lab tests that are not available at a NoTCH clinic, you may decide to go to the **Georgia Walk-in Clinic**. The walk-in clinic is also a good option if you want medical attention for a non-emergency without waiting for an appointment. You can arrive at any time during business hours and wait to be seen—similar to what you may be familiar with in Latin America. In order to get an appointment at the walk-in clinic, you must pay \$90 up-front. If there are additional charges, you will be billed later. The final cost is usually much cheaper than the Emergency Room, and the wait to see a doctor is also usually shorter. The walk-in clinic is only for minor conditions—they cannot treat emergencies.

Georgia Walk-in Clinic

802-524-8911, Mon- Fri 8-7, Sat 8-2
927 Ethan Allen Highway, Suite 2, Georgia
Just off Exit 18 of I-89

If you are very sick, your doctor may refer you to the St. Albans Hospital (also called **Northwestern Medical Center or NMC**). The hospital is much larger than a clinic, but is also migrant worker-friendly. Spanish interpretation is always available. You may first be offered a small computer (iPad) that requires you to type in Spanish. If you are not comfortable with that, you should request to use the video interpretation service.

The hospital does not have a sliding scale. You will not be told the cost of your visit until after you've left. If your bill is more than you can afford, you can apply to have the cost reduced (known as indigent care). You may need to fill out more paperwork and wait several weeks to learn if they reduce your bill.

How to make a dental appointment

There are two NoTCH dental clinics. If you have severe pain, they will usually see you within a few days. Appointments for less urgent care may only be available many months into the future. If you would like see a dentist before the next available appointment, ask to be added to their “call list”. Patients on the call list will be notified by phone if an earlier appointment becomes available.

Richford Dental Clinic

802-255-5520; Mon-Fri, 8-5
53 Main Street, Richford

The dental clinic is on the floor above the Richford NoTCH medical clinic.

Swanton Dental Clinic

802-868-5551; Tues-Wed, 7-5
100 Thunderbird Drive, Swanton

Take the Missisquoi Valley Union High School access road off of Route 78, and drive through the parking lot to the white trailer in the back.

During your first visit, the dentist will take x-rays and examine your teeth to determine what work needs to be done. You will usually need to make a second appointment for any procedures.

NoTCH dental clinics have their own sliding scale paperwork. You should bring in paycheck stubs or a letter from your employer. Unlike the medical clinic, the dentist can determine your sliding scale and final bill at the time of your appointment. Usually, migrant workers will only pay 25% of full cost.