

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Sue Galoff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Email: sgaloff@co.pierce.wi.us

Phone: 715-273-6782

Pierce among Wisconsin's Healthiest Counties *County Health Rankings provide nationwide snapshot of varying health*

Princeton, N.J. and Madison, Wis. – Pierce County ranks among the healthiest in the state, according to the annual *County Health Rankings* released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how well they are doing on 29 factors that influence health, including smoking, high school graduation rates, employment, physical inactivity, and access to healthy foods.

According to the 2014 *Rankings*, the five healthiest counties in Wisconsin, starting with the most healthy, are Ozaukee, followed by Kewaunee, Portage, Taylor, and Door. The five counties in the poorest health, starting with the least healthy, are Menominee, Milwaukee, Adams, Marquette, and Forest.

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s vision for a culture of health is one where everyone has the opportunity to be healthy,” said Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, RWJF president and CEO. “The *County Health Rankings* are a starting point for change, helping communities come together, identify priorities, and create solutions that will help all in our diverse society live healthier lives, now and for generations to come.”

The *Rankings* provide county-to-county comparisons within a state. Nationally, this year’s *Rankings* show that people living in the least healthy counties are twice as likely to have shorter lives as people living in the healthiest counties. Unhealthy counties also have twice as many children living in poverty and twice as many teen births as the healthiest counties. This year’s

Our mission is to assure the health of the public, prevent disease and injury, promote health behaviors, and protect against environmental hazards.

Rankings also feature several new measures including housing, transportation, and access to mental health providers.

Pierce County ranks in the top quarter for health outcomes (9) and health factors (10). Pierce ranks in the top quarter of Wisconsin counties for health behaviors (17) and social and economic factors (4). Pierce County ranks near the middle for clinical care (34) and in the bottom quarter for physical environment (56).

“Although it’s positive that Pierce County continues to be one of the healthiest counties, the *Rankings* point out areas of ongoing concern such as obesity rates and alcohol issues said Pierce County Health Officer, Sue Galoff. “The Healthy Eating Active Living Coalition and the Pierce County Partnership for Youth are implementing strategies to address these issues in our community.”

The *County Health Rankings* are part of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. The program includes the *Roadmaps to Health* Action Center which provides local leaders with tools, step-by-step guides, and stories to help communities identify and implement solutions that make it easier for people to live healthy lives. The program also includes the annual *RWJF Culture of Health Prize*, which celebrates communities that are harnessing the collective power of leaders, partners, and stakeholders to build a culture of health. This year’s prize winners and the call for 2014-2015 prize applications will be announced in June at the Aspen Ideas Festival, Spotlight: Health.

“The *County Health Rankings* show us how health is influenced by our everyday surroundings—where we live, learn, work, and play,” said Bridget Catlin, PhD, MHSA, director of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. “The *County Health Rankings* often provide the spark for businesses, community planners, policymakers, public health, parents, and others to work together for better health.”

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute is part of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

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