



**Healthier
Together**
Pierce County
St. Croix County

Creating and
maintaining healthy
communities

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Rankings Show Healthiest and Least Healthy Counties in Wisconsin

New State Report Shows Differences in Health by Place and by Race

Princeton, N.J. and Madison, Wis. – Pierce County ranked 7th out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 20th for health factors, while St. Croix County ranked 6th for health outcomes and 5th for health factors, according to the ninth annual *County Health Rankings*, released last week by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

“The *Rankings* confirm the results of our last community health needs assessment that identified mental health, obesity and alcohol as the top priorities for Healthier Together to address” said Dianne H-Robinson, Interim Health Officer, Pierce County Health Department. Deb Lindemann, Health Officer St. Croix County said, “We are pleased to have Pierce and St. Croix Counties rank consistently among the top twenty counties but we recognize that there is still much that can be done to impact health factors and improve health outcomes for all people who live in our communities.”

An easy-to-use snapshot that compares counties within states, the *Rankings* show that where you live influences how well and how long you live. The local-level data make it clear that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including housing, education, and jobs. This year’s new *Rankings State Reports* show meaningful gaps in health persist not only by place, but also by race and ethnicity. Looking at differences by place and race offers a more complete picture of health. This year’s analyses show that lack of opportunity, such as education, jobs, and affordable housing, disproportionately affects people of color across the nation and within Wisconsin.

According to the 2018 *Rankings*, the five healthiest counties in Wisconsin, starting with most healthy, are Ozaukee County, followed by Taylor County, Pepin County, Washington County, and Waukesha County. The five counties in the poorest health, starting with least healthy, are Menominee County, Milwaukee County, Sawyer County, Adams County, and Langlade County.

“We can’t be a healthy, thriving nation if we continue to leave entire communities and populations behind,” said Richard Besser, MD, RWJF president and CEO. “Every community should use their County Health Rankings data, work together, and find solutions so that all babies, kids, and adults – regardless of their race or ethnicity – have the same opportunities to be healthy.”

Our children will become more resilient, and grow into stronger, healthier adults with greater economic opportunities if we build communities with quality education, emotional and social support, access to quality health care, and safe, affordable, and stable housing.

The *Rankings* have become an important tool for communities that want to improve health for all. In Pierce and St. Croix Counties, the two health departments, Hudson Hospital and Clinic, River Falls Area Hospital, Western Wisconsin Health, Westfields Hospital and Clinic, and United Way St. Croix Valley, lead Healthier Together – Pierce & St. Croix Counties, a community coalition working to create and maintain healthy communities and provide a strategic framework for local health improvement activities. The coalition uses data and resources from the county health rankings, data from other sources, and community input to identify and address health priorities. The top priorities currently being addressed are mental health, obesity/overweight, and alcohol abuse. For more information on Healthier Together, visit www.healthier2gether.org or check us out on Facebook

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About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working with others to build a national Culture of Health enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org. Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook.

About the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

The [University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute](http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu) advances health and well-being for all by developing and evaluating interventions and promoting evidence-based approaches to policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels. The Institute works across the full spectrum of factors that contribute to health. A focal point for health and health care dialogue within the University of Wisconsin-Madison and beyond, and a convener of stakeholders, the Institute promotes an exchange of expertise between those in academia and those in the policy and practice arena. The Institute leads the work on the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps and the RWJF Culture of Health Prize. For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.