



## *DOUGLAS COUNTY* HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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### COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS SHOW HOW MULTIPLE FACTORS INFLUENCE HEALTH

A new report released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides a snapshot of counties throughout the U.S. on various health indicators. The *County Health Rankings* are the first to rank the overall health of counties in all 50 states – more than 3,000 counties in total – by using a standard formula to measure how healthy people are and how long they live. The Rankings are based on a variety of national data sources, including vital statistics data, rates of reportable diseases, and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, Census data, and publicly available data on crime, education, and environmental measures.

The report, which provides rankings for 33 of Oregon's 36 counties, ranks counties according to their summary measures of *health outcomes* and *health factors*, as well as the components used to create each summary measure. Rankings were unavailable for 3 Oregon counties due to insufficient data.

The overall *health outcomes* ranking is based on standard measures of mortality and morbidity. Researchers used a variety of measures to assess the level of overall health or *health outcomes*: the rate of people dying before age 75, self-reported fair or poor health, poor physical health days, poor mental health days, and the percent of births with low-birthweight. As compared to other counties in Oregon, Douglas County is ranked very low on overall *health outcomes*—a ranking of 30 out of 33 Oregon counties included in the report.

The overall *health factors* ranking is based on various factors that influence the health of communities, such as health behaviors (e.g., tobacco use, physical activity, obesity, teen pregnancy), clinical care (e.g., uninsured adults, access to health care providers, diabetic screening, social and economic factors (e.g., education, children in poverty, unemployment, income, crime), and the physical environment (e.g., air quality, access to healthy foods, liquor store density).

Although Douglas County's overall *health factors* ranking is very low as compared to other Oregon counties (32 out of 33), Douglas County ranked in the top ten on physical environment measures (10

out of 33) and about average on clinical care measures (18 out of 33). Douglas County ranked low on social and economic measures (29 out of 33) and health behaviors (33 out of 33).

“We know that Douglas County faces many challenges that contribute to our overall health outcomes and health factors rankings. Although the findings of the County Health Rankings report highlights areas of concern, the report also provides information to help our community focus its attention and resources on the issues that stand as barriers to good health,” said Peggy Kennerly, Douglas County Health and Social Services Administrator.

It is hoped that the *County Health Rankings* report will spur all sectors – government, business, community and faith-based groups, education, and public health – to work together on solutions that address barriers to good health and help all Americans to make decisions to lead healthier lives.

A link to the full County Health Rankings report and a map comparing the overall health rankings for each county in Oregon is available online at [www.co.douglas.or.us/health](http://www.co.douglas.or.us/health).

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