

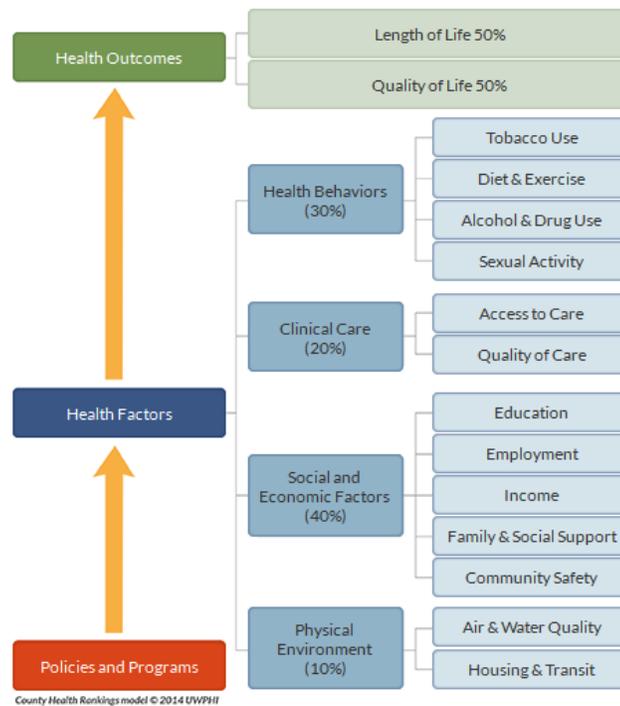
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Eau Claire, WI - Please see the attached press release related to the 2016 *County Health* Rankings released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The *Rankings* are based on the below model and emphasize that many factors, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, learn, work and play.



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New Rankings shed light on where Eau Claire County could improve health

PRINCETON, N.J. and MADISON, Wis. — Eau Claire County ranked 20th out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 20th for health factors, according to the seventh annual *County Health Rankings*, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

“Eau Claire County continues to do well in the *Rankings* but we recognize that ongoing collaborative efforts are essential to build a community where the healthy choice is the easy choice,” said Lieske Giese, Eau Claire City-County Health Department director/health officer.

The *Rankings* are an easy-to-use snapshot comparing the health of nearly every county in the nation. The local-level data allows each state to see how its counties compare on more than 30 factors that influence health including education, housing, jobs, smoking, access to healthy food, and more.

According to the 2016 *Rankings*, the five healthiest counties in Wisconsin, starting with most healthy, are Ozaukee, Calumet, St. Croix, Pierce, and Pepin. The five counties in the poorest health, starting with least healthy, are Menominee, Milwaukee, Washburn, Forest, and Sawyer.

Eau Claire County ranks in the top half for health outcomes (20) and health factors (20). Eau Claire ranks in the top quarter of Wisconsin counties for clinical care (11) and in the top half for social and economic factors (20) and physical environment (28). Eau Claire County ranks in the bottom quarter for health behaviors (55).

The *Rankings* have become an important tool for communities that want to improve health. Eau Claire County, through the work of Eau Claire Healthy Communities, has a number of initiatives

underway to expand health opportunities for residents, including addressing the way we build and redevelop our neighborhoods to assure health and increasing access to early interventions for mental health. More information on EC Healthy Communities is available at ehealthycommunities.org.

“The *County Health Rankings* show how important it is to examine all the conditions that impact well-being and can help families thrive,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, MD, RWJF president and CEO. “Communities around the nation are using the *County Health Rankings* to drive improvements in education, housing, job training, healthy food options, and more, as they work to build a Culture of Health.”

This year, the *Rankings* took a closer look at the differences in health between urban, rural, suburban, and smaller metro counties and found that:

- Rural counties not only have higher rates of premature death, but also nearly one in five rural counties saw rises in premature death rates over the past decade, while most urban counties have experienced consistent improvement.
- Rural counties have higher rates of smoking, obesity, child poverty, teen births, and higher numbers of uninsured adults than their urban counterparts.
- Large urban counties have lower smoking and obesity rates, fewer injury deaths, and more residents who attended some college.
- Large suburban counties have the lowest rates of childhood poverty and teen births.

The 2016 *Rankings* Key Findings Report highlights some new measures including residential segregation among blacks and whites, drug overdose deaths, and insufficient sleep and how they contribute to health. Learn more about those findings at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

“The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* highlight strengths and opportunities for improvement in the many factors that influence health, all across our state,” said Karen Timberlake, director of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. “There is no one solution to achieve our goal of longer, healthier lives for everyone. The annual *Rankings* release creates an opportunity for community leaders and residents to reflect on their progress, learn from those working on similar challenges in other communities, and recommit to focusing not just on health insurance coverage,

healthy eating, and active living, but also, the social and economic drivers of health such as kindergarten readiness, family-supporting jobs, safe and affordable housing, and community connectedness.”

The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* tools, which include a database of evidence-informed approaches, personalized coaching, and a range of other resources, can assist communities in their efforts to improve health.

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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 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 manages the *RWJF Culture of Health Prize*. For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.