



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eau Claire County ranked 35th in Health Outcomes in the State

Eau Claire, WI, March 14, 2018– Eau Claire County ranked 35th out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 13th for health factors, according to the eighth 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 Key Findings from 2018 County Health Rankings:

Areas for Improvement:

- Premature deaths have increased for Eau Claire County (as well as for other Wisconsin counties). Causes of premature deaths may be related to the drug overdose epidemic, suicide and alcohol-impaired driving deaths.
- Eau Claire County continues to see high rates of adult smoking (15%), adult obesity (28%) and excessive drinking (25%).
- Eau Claire County ranks 69th out of 72 counties for income inequality.

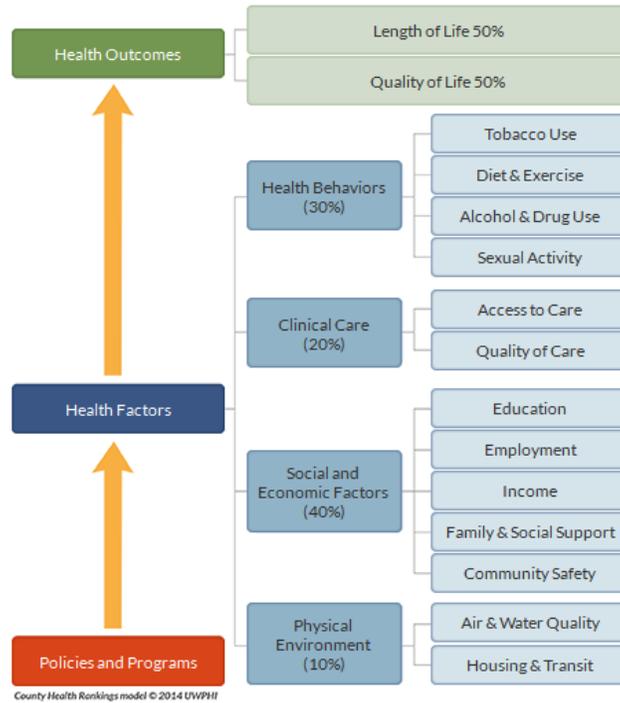
Areas of Strength:

- Eau Claire's ranking for clinical care has improved. In 2018, the county ranks 8th out of 72 counties in this area.
- Low rates of uninsured residents coupled with high numbers of healthcare providers per person as well as positive screening rates for diabetes and breast cancer indicate a strong healthcare system in our county.
- Teen birth rate has continued to decline.
- The percentage of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity has increased.

Ongoing community initiatives to address these factors:

The *Rankings* have become an important tool for communities that want to improve health for all. Eau Claire County has a number of initiatives underway to improve health opportunities for residents. To learn more about the current activities, please visit Eau Claire Healthy Communities' website: www.ehealthycommunities.org.

Please see the attached press release related to the 2018 *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 model below 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 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. – Eau Claire County ranked 35th out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 13th for health factors, according to the ninth 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.

“While we have taken important steps to improve the health of our community, there is more we can do to help our residents lead healthier lives. We can use this report to build on our successes and mobilize community leaders to take action and implement programs and policy changes in areas we need to improve here in Eau Claire County,” says Lieske Giese, Director/Health Officer of the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

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.

The new Rankings State Reports call attention to key drivers of health such as children in poverty. Poverty limits opportunity and increases the chance of poor health. Children in poverty are less likely to have access to well-resourced and quality schools, and have fewer chances to be prepared for living wage jobs. The Wisconsin State Report reveals that in Wisconsin, 16 percent of children live in poverty, compared to the U.S. rate of 20 percent. Among racial and ethnic groups in Wisconsin, rates of children in poverty range from 11 percent to 44 percent with American Indian/Alaskan Native children faring the worst and White children faring the best.

“Children as our future is not a cliché. They are our future workforce, caretakers and leaders. The County Health Rankings underscore the need to make children’s health a priority and invest in what we know works,” said Karen Ordinans, executive director of the Children’s Health Alliance of Wisconsin. “The Rankings allow us to tell the story about our strengths and opportunities for improvement as a state. They confirm overall health is driven by various social and economic factors that cannot be



ignored any longer. We need to come together and collectively address child poverty and health, at the state level and in each county, if we want Wisconsin to proudly be one of the healthiest states in the country.”

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.

“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.”

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.

“The time is now to address long-standing challenges like child poverty and we all have a role to play in shifting the culture to adopt meaningful change,” said Sheri Johnson, PhD, RN, director, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. “This year’s Rankings are a call to action to see how these persistent health gaps play out locally, take an honest look at their root causes, and work to give everyone a fair shot at a healthier life.”

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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>.