

Henderson Ranks High on Healthiest County List February 17, 2010

The *County Health Rankings* were released today and Henderson County has reason to celebrate. Henderson County ranked 5th in the state in health factors, including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. Although not as high, the county ranked 33rd in the state in health outcomes, which measures length of life and quality of life. “While there is room for improvement, we are pleased to see that our county is rated so high,” stated Tom Bridges, Director of the Henderson County Department of Public Health. “The rankings show us that where we live matters to our health.”

This first-of-its-kind collection of 50 reports – one per state – will help community leaders see that where we live, learn, work, and play influences how healthy we are and how long we live. Each state’s counties are ranked on both health outcomes (how healthy we are) and health factors (how healthy we can be). North Carolina counties are ranked on a scale of 1-100, with one being the healthiest. “For the first time, every county will have a snapshot of how healthy their residents are so they can see where they are doing well and where they need to improve,” said Bridges.

The health of a community depends on many different factors – ranging from individual health behaviors, education and jobs, to quality of health care, to the environment. The health rankings look at a wide variety of data including low birth weight, years of potential life lost, smoking, alcohol use, obesity, diet, teen births, graduation rates, crime, poverty, and air quality.

“In the weeks ahead, we’ll be looking over the report to see how we can improve,” stated Bridges. “We want to engage the community and see how we can work in partnership with others. Health is strongly linked to education and income so it’s not just about medical care. Health is everyone’s business.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation collaborated with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to develop the *County Health Rankings: Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH)* for each state’s counties. For more information, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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