



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



2014 County Health Rankings Measure Health Inequalities Among Vermonters



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BURLINGTON – Vermont is consistently ranked among the healthiest states in the nation. But Vermonters are not equally healthy, as detailed again this year in the 2014 *County Health Rankings* released today.

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program. The newest report, *County Health Rankings*, illustrates what we know when it comes to what is making people sick or healthy. The *Roadmaps* show what we can do to create healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation collaborates with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to bring this program to cities, counties and states across the nation. The newest reports and tools are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

Chittenden County is ranked the healthiest, as measured by length of life, quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care and the physical environment.

“Even in Chittenden County, the bounty of good health is not shared equally,” said Heather Danis, the Vermont Department of Health’s director of the Burlington district office, which covers Chittenden County. “Too many residents, especially those with lower incomes and education levels, and those identifying as a racial or ethnic minority, experience poorer health outcomes that are largely preventable.”

Essex and Orleans are ranked the least healthy counties.

“The county report underscores the scope of the challenges that face the Northeast Kingdom,” said James Biernat, director of the Newport district office, which covers Orleans County and northern Essex County. “Unemployment and underemployment continue to serve as key drivers behind the results. But the county health rankings snapshot does not capture the evolving story of the Kingdom. We are a community in transition, inviting economic development while preserving our natural beauty and cultivating our innate resilience. From a public health perspective we are fully devoted to advancing our community’s health. We may have a ways to go compared to other counties, but we are definitely moving forward.”

Healthy Vermonters 2020 Toolkit offered at healthvermont.gov

The Health Department works to improve the health of Vermonters by regularly reporting on and applying data to make decisions – and offers three tools designed to track and improve the health of Vermonters at www.healthvermont.gov/hv2020.

Healthy Vermonters 2020 documents the health status of Vermonters at the start of the decade, and sets population health indicators and goals to guide the work of public health through 2020.

The **State Health Improvement Plan 2013-2017** sets the public health priorities for the next five years and proven strategies for reducing the prevalence of chronic disease, substance abuse and mental illness, and improving childhood immunization rates.

The **Performance Dashboard/Maps & Trends** tracks our progress in real time for improving population health indicators (such as smoking rates) and program performance measures (such as the number of registrants with 802Quits Network). Here you can find data by county, by hospital service area, and by Health Department district office.

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