2015 County Health Rankings Detail Health Inequities Among Vermonter

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BURLINGTON – Vermonter are not equally healthy, as detailed again this year in the 2015 County Health Rankings released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps shows, county-by-county across the nation, what makes people sick or healthy, and what can be done to create healthier places to live, learn, work and play.

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

“Despite Chittenden County’s number one ranking too many of our residents, especially those who are low income, experience poor health outcomes,” said Heather Danis, the Vermont Department of Health’s director of the Burlington district office, which covers Chittenden County. “We are partnering with town and regional planners to support their efforts to consider health when making planning and policy decisions.”

The Health Department is also conducting health impact assessments in Chittenden County to ensure all residents have the opportunity to make healthy choices.

Essex and Orleans are ranked the least healthy counties.

“The counties of Vermont are as unique as each individual Vermonter,” said James Biernat, director of the Newport district office, which covers Orleans County and northern Essex County. “There are economic and accessibility challenges particular to this region that make moving the needle of health outcomes more difficult.”

The Health Department continues to work to improve the health in the Northeast Kingdom. More employers than ever now support breastfeeding in the workplace, for example.

“Our local career center opened its doors to community indoor walking. A local store has taken down outside tobacco advertising. A community garden was built and continues to grow. This is public health in the making. These are the steps that lead to healthy Vermonters living in healthy communities,” Biernat said.

For the full report visit: [http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data/vt](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data/vt)

**Healthy Vermonter 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](http://www.healthvermont.gov/hv2020).

**Healthy Vermonter 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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**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](http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu).