



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## 2012 County Health Rankings Detail Health Inequities Among Vermonters

*Celebrate National Public Health Week April 2 - 8, 2012*

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BURLINGTON – Vermont is consistently ranked among the healthiest states in the nation. But Vermonters are not equally healthy, as detailed in the 2012 County Health Rankings released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org), the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps shows, county-by-county across the nation, that where we live matters to our health and quality of life.

“Too many of us, especially the young, the less educated, and lower income Vermonters suffer the consequences of health problems that are largely preventable,” said Deputy Health Commissioner Tracy Dolan. “Where you live matters too if the healthiest choice is not the easiest choice to make, or if healthy foods, a place to be physically active, or quality health care is far from home.”

Chittenden County is ranked healthiest as measured by a number of health factors such as income and education, diet and exercise, tobacco and alcohol use, access to quality healthcare, the environment – and by health outcomes such as quality of life and premature death.

“Income and education are strong predictors of health, and Chittenden County has high median income and higher education levels compared to the rest of the state,” said Heather Danis, the Health Department’s director of the Burlington district office, which covers Chittenden County. “But we also have a diverse population, especially in Burlington, and we’re working to correct health disparities within the county. Our focus is on improving behaviors that are the real causes of early death: smoking, poor nutrition and inactivity, and alcohol abuse.”

Essex County is ranked the least healthy. “Social and economic factors play a big role in the health of people in the Northeast Kingdom, and that’s apparent in these rankings,” said Ann Creaven, director of the Newport district office, which covers Orleans County and northern Essex County. “Rural communities here are working hard to improve access to health services and healthier choices.”

A 2010 report by the Vermont Department of Health analyzes the effects on health of income, education and occupation, housing and the built environment, access to care, race, ethnicity and cultural identity, and stress, disability and depression. The Health Disparities of Vermonters is available at Health Department district offices or online at: <http://healthvermont.gov/research/healthdisparities.aspx>

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