



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Vermont Named #1 Healthiest State Again

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BURLINGTON – Vermont was again named the healthiest state in the nation as the United Health Foundation today released its 2011 edition of *America's Health Rankings*™.

Vermont has been among the top five healthiest states for the past eight years, climbing steadily from 20th in 1990 to 12th in 2000, to become first in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

This year, Vermont ranked among the top 10 healthiest states in 15 of 23 public health measures relating to behaviors, community and environment, health policies, clinical care, and health outcomes.

“Public health is what we all do together to assure the conditions in which people can be their healthiest,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “Compared to other states, Vermonters are faring well. But not all of us are as healthy as we can be – especially those who are younger, have less education and lower incomes.”

Vermont is notable for its high rates of high school graduation, lower incidence of infectious disease, low violent crime rate, and high use of early prenatal care. Vermont also this year received the first and only ‘A’ on the March of Dimes *Premature Birth Report Card*.

“We can all take pride in Vermont’s standing as the healthiest state,” said Gov. Peter Shumlin. “This is a time to celebrate and learn from our successes to meet the great health challenges ahead. We still have much work to make health reform a reality for every Vermonter.”

Vermont faces many of the same challenges as other states: While smoking rates have dropped to 15 percent among adults, that still leaves an estimated 76,000 smokers who have not quit. With 17 percent of adults reporting that they binge drink, we continue to have an alcohol abuse problem. A growing percentage of Vermonters are overweight or obese, resulting in higher rates of serious chronic illnesses such as diabetes. More children are living in poverty than before. And, with only moderate childhood immunization coverage, there is greater risk for vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and pertussis (whooping cough) to spread through communities.

Last year the Health Department published *The Health Disparities of Vermonters 2010*, a comprehensive report that details the causes and consequences of differences in health status among Vermonters. This year the state is setting new *Healthy Vermonters 2020* goals and objectives to improve the public’s health.

“Our congratulations to Vermont for once again being the ‘healthiest’ state in the country,” said Reed Tuckson, M.D., United Health Foundation board member and executive vice president and chief of medical affairs, UnitedHealth Group. “This is clear evidence of the commitment that the individuals, communities, health care providers, the private sector, and Vermont’s government institutions to creating and sustaining conditions that promote health. Vermont, like all states, has an opportunity to further improve, particularly in the areas of binge drinking and immunization rates.”

*America's Health Rankings*™ published by the United Health Foundation, the American Public Health Association and Partnership for Prevention is the longest running annual assessment of the nation’s health. For 22 years, the *Rankings* has provided an analysis of national health on a state-by-state basis by evaluating a historical and comprehensive set of health, environmental and socio-economic data to determine national health benchmarks and state rankings.

For more information about the rankings, an interactive map, and information on actions that everyone can take to take to improve public health: [www.americashealthrankings.org](http://www.americashealthrankings.org)

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