

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Health Rankings National Comparisons
February 17, 2010

The *County Health Rankings* identify the healthiest and least healthy counties in every state in the nation. Though the *Rankings* do not identify the healthiest and least healthy counties in the *nation*, when you compare the 50 healthiest counties (one from every state), with the 50 least healthy counties, you see some striking differences (see table on page 2):

Population size: Healthier counties are urban/suburban, whereas least health counties are mostly rural. About half (48%) of the 50 healthiest counties are urban or suburban counties, whereas most (84%) of the 50 least healthy counties are rural.

Premature death rates: The least healthy counties have significantly higher rates of premature death—2.5 times higher than the healthiest counties.

Self-reported health: People living in the least healthy counties reporting being in significantly poorer health—2.1 times higher rates of people who report being in fair or poor health, compared with the healthiest counties.

Smoking rates: People living in the least healthy counties are much more likely to smoke—over 26%, compared to only 16% in the healthiest counties.

Preventable hospitalizations: People living in the least healthy counties are 60% more likely to be admitted to the hospital for preventable conditions—a sign of poor outpatient and primary care.

Children living in poverty: The least healthy counties have higher rates of poverty, with 30% of children living in poverty—over **three** times higher than the rate in the healthiest counties (9%).

Access to healthy foods: The 50 least healthy counties have fewer places where people can find healthy food—only 33% of zip codes have at least one grocery store, compared to almost half (47%) of zip codes in the healthiest counties.

	Least Healthy	Healthiest	Ratio
Premature death rate (# of years/100,000 population)	12,368	4,904	2.5
Self-reported health (fair or poor)	20%	9.5%	2.1
Adult smoking	26%	16%	1.6
Preventable hospital stays (per 1,000 Medicare enrollees)	95	61	1.6
Children in poverty	30%	9%	3.5
Access to healthy foods (% of zip codes with a grocery store)	33%	47%	0.7