



# County Health Rankings

Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health

2011

**Alaska**



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

**Population Health Institute**

*Translating Research into Policy and Practice*



## Introduction

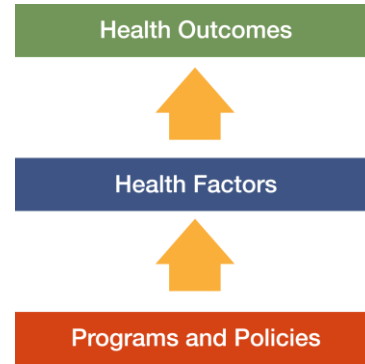
Where we live matters to our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors, including quality of health care, individual behavior, education and jobs, and the environment. We can improve a community's health through programs and policies. For example, people who live in communities with ample park and recreation space are more likely to exercise, which reduces heart disease risk. People who live in communities with smoke-free laws are less likely to smoke or to be exposed to second-hand smoke, which reduces lung cancer risk.

The problem is that there are big differences in health across communities, with some places being much healthier than others. And up to now, it has been hard to get a standard way to measure how healthy a county is and see where they can improve.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute are pleased to present the 2011 *County Health Rankings*, a collection of 50 reports that reflect the overall health of counties in every state across the country. For the second year in a row, counties can get a snapshot of how healthy their residents are by comparing their overall health and the factors that influence their health with other counties in their state. This allows communities to see county-to-county where they are doing well and where they need to improve.

Everyone has a stake in community health. We all need to work together to find solutions. The *County Health Rankings* serve as both a call to action and a needed tool in this effort.

All of the *County Health Rankings* are based upon this model of population health improvement:



In this model, health outcomes are measures that describe the current health status of a county. These health outcomes are influenced by a set of health factors. These health factors and their outcomes may also be affected by community-based programs and policies designed to alter their distribution in the community. Counties can improve health outcomes by addressing all health factors with effective, evidence-based programs and policies.

To compile the *Rankings*, we built on our prior work in Wisconsin, obtained input from a team of expert advisors, and worked closely with staff from the National Center for Health Statistics. Together we selected a number of population health measures based on scientific relevance, importance, and availability of data at the county level.

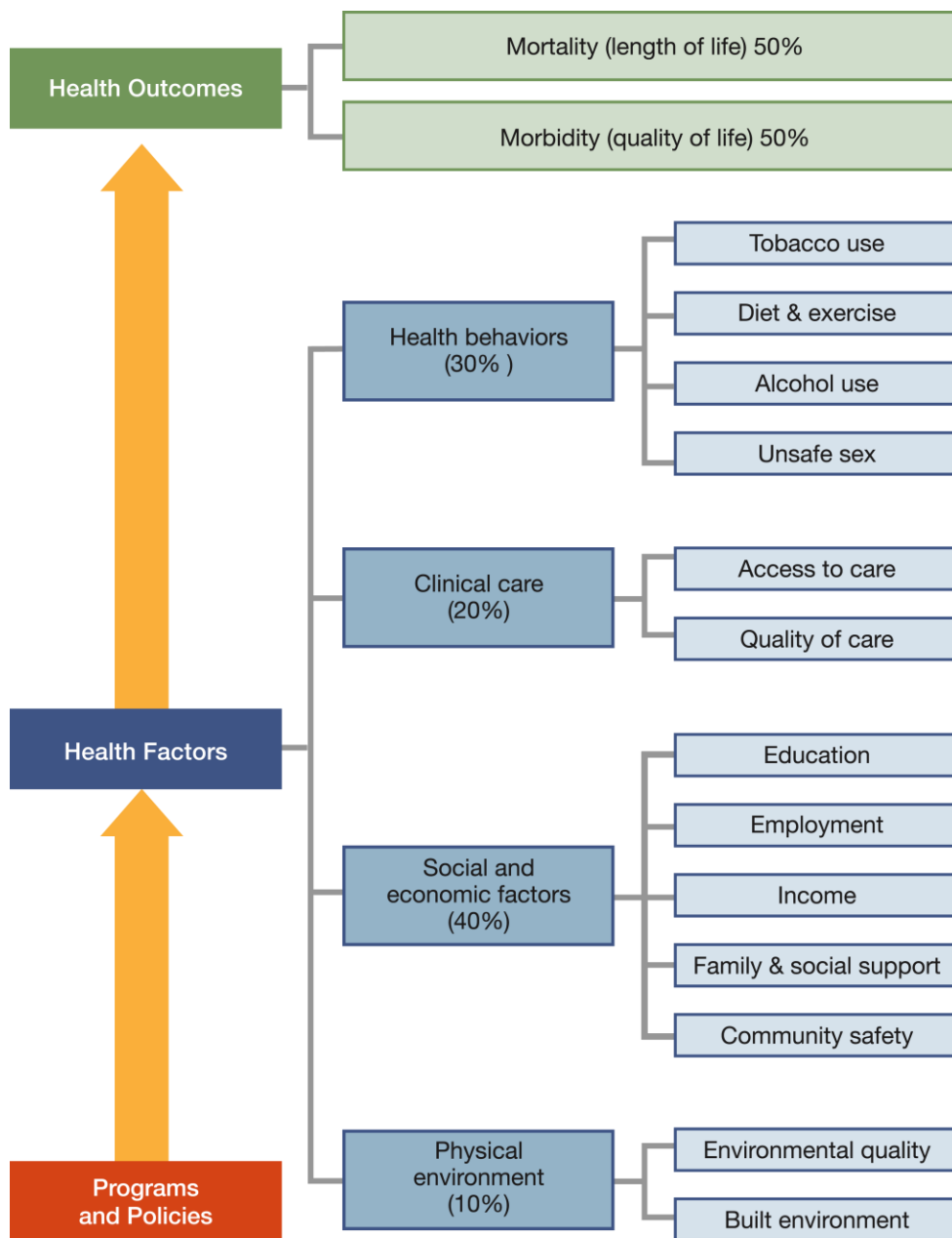
For a more detailed explanation of our approach, the methods used to compile the *Rankings*, information on the action steps communities can take to improve their health, and examples of communities in action, see [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)



## The Rankings

This report ranks Alaska counties according to their summary measures of **health outcomes** and **health factors**, as well as the components used to create each summary measure. The figure below depicts the structure of the *Rankings* model. Counties receive a rank for each population health component; those having high ranks (e.g., 1 or 2) are estimated to be the “healthiest.”

Our summary **health outcomes** rankings are based on an equal weighting of mortality and morbidity measures. The summary **health factors** rankings are based on weighted scores of four types of factors: behavioral, clinical, social and economic, and environmental. The weights for the factors (shown in parentheses in the figure) are based upon a review of the literature and expert input, but represent just one way of combining these factors.

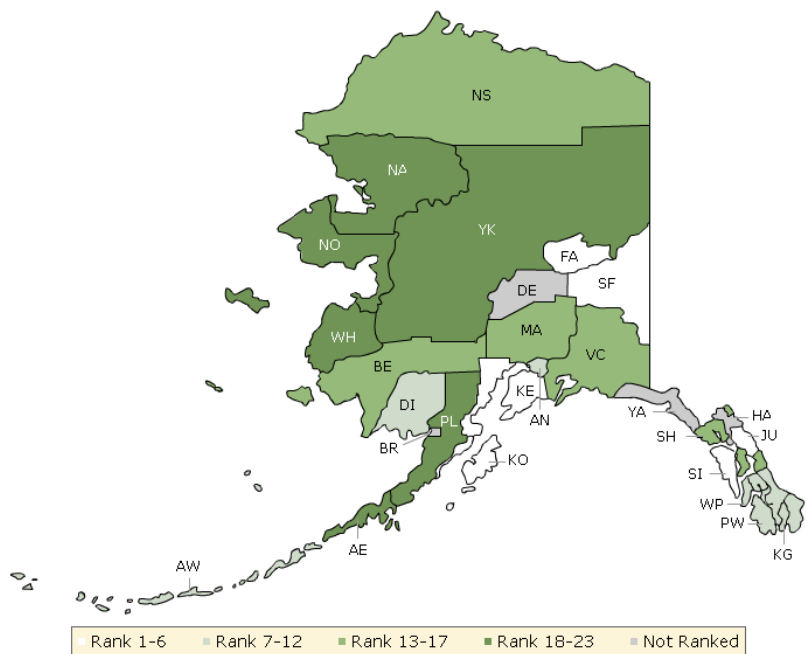


County Health Rankings model ©2010 UWPHI

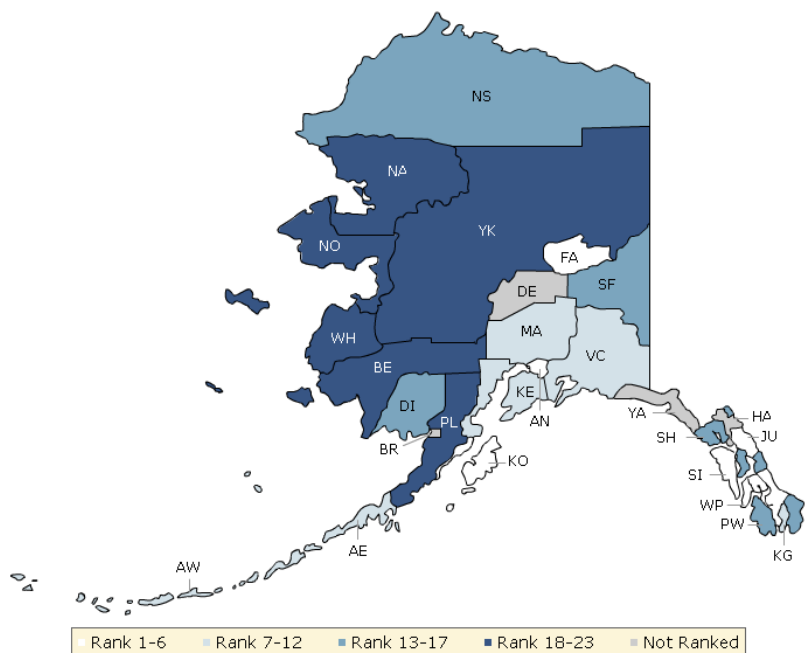
The maps on this page display Alaska's counties divided into groups by health rank. The lighter colors indicate better performance in the respective summary rankings. The green map shows the distribution of summary health outcomes. The blue displays the distribution of the summary rank for health factors.

Maps help locate the healthiest and least healthy counties in the state. The health factors map appears similar to the health outcomes map, showing how health factors and health outcomes are closely related.

### HEALTH OUTCOMES



### HEALTH FACTORS



## Summary Health Outcomes & Health Factors Rankings

Counties receive two summary ranks:

- Health Outcomes
- Health Factors

Each of these ranks represents a weighted summary of a number of measures.

Health outcomes represent how healthy a county is while health factors are what influences the health of the county.

| Rank | Health Outcomes                 | Rank | Health Factors                  |
|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1    | Southeast Fairbanks             | 1    | Juneau                          |
| 2    | Juneau                          | 2    | Kodiak Island                   |
| 3    | Sitka                           | 3    | Anchorage                       |
| 4    | Fairbanks North Star            | 4    | Sitka                           |
| 5    | Kodiak Island                   | 5    | Fairbanks North Star            |
| 6    | Kenai Peninsula                 | 6    | Wrangell-Petersburg             |
| 7    | Wrangell-Petersburg             | 7    | Kenai Peninsula                 |
| 8    | Anchorage                       | 8    | Matanuska-Susitna               |
| 9    | Aleutians West                  | 9    | Ketchikan Gateway               |
| 10   | Ketchikan Gateway               | 10   | Valdez-Cordova                  |
| 11   | Dillingham                      | 11   | Aleutians West                  |
| 12   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan | 12   | Aleutians East                  |
| 13   | Matanuska-Susitna               | 13   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           |
| 14   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           | 14   | Southeast Fairbanks             |
| 15   | North Slope                     | 15   | Dillingham                      |
| 16   | Valdez-Cordova                  | 16   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan |
| 17   | Bethel                          | 17   | North Slope                     |
| 18   | Aleutians East                  | 18   | Lake and Peninsula              |
| 19   | Northwest Arctic                | 19   | Bethel                          |
| 20   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   | 20   | Northwest Arctic                |
| 21   | Nome                            | 21   | Nome                            |
| 22   | Lake and Peninsula              | 22   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   |
| 23   | Wade Hampton                    | 23   | Wade Hampton                    |

**Not Ranked:** Bristol Bay, Denali, Haines, Yakutat

## Health Outcomes Rankings

The summary health outcomes ranking is based on measures of mortality and morbidity. Each county's ranks for mortality and morbidity are displayed here. The mortality rank, representing length of life, is based on a measure of premature death: the years of potential life lost prior to age 75.

The morbidity rank is based on measures that represent health-related quality of life and birth outcomes. We combine four morbidity measures: self-reported fair or poor health, poor physical health days, poor mental health days, and the percent of births with low birthweight.

| Rank | Mortality                       | Rank | Morbidity                       |
|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1    | Southeast Fairbanks             | 1    | Lake and Peninsula              |
| 2    | Juneau                          | 2    | Sitka                           |
| 3    | Fairbanks North Star            | 3    | Dillingham                      |
| 4    | Kodiak Island                   | 4    | Juneau                          |
| 5    | Anchorage                       | 5    | Aleutians West                  |
| 6    | Ketchikan Gateway               | 6    | Southeast Fairbanks             |
| 7    | Kenai Peninsula                 | 7    | Yukon-Koyukuk                   |
| 8    | Sitka                           | 8    | Wrangell-Petersburg             |
| 9    | Matanuska-Susitna               | 9    | Kenai Peninsula                 |
| 10   | Wrangell-Petersburg             | 10   | Kodiak Island                   |
| 11   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan | 11   | Fairbanks North Star            |
| 12   | Valdez-Cordova                  | 12   | North Slope                     |
| 13   | Aleutians East                  | 13   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           |
| 13   | Aleutians West                  | 14   | Bethel                          |
| 13   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           | 15   | Northwest Arctic                |
| 16   | Dillingham                      | 16   | Anchorage                       |
| 17   | North Slope                     | 17   | Ketchikan Gateway               |
| 18   | Bethel                          | 18   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan |
| 19   | Nome                            | 19   | Valdez-Cordova                  |
| 20   | Northwest Arctic                | 20   | Nome                            |
| 21   | Wade Hampton                    | 21   | Matanuska-Susitna               |
| 22   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   | 22   | Aleutians East                  |
| 23   | Lake and Peninsula              | 23   | Wade Hampton                    |

## Health Factors Rankings

The summary health factors ranking is based on four factors: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors. In turn, each of these factors is based on several measures. Health behaviors include measures of smoking, diet and exercise, alcohol use, and risky sex behavior. Clinical

care includes measures of access to care and quality of care. Social and economic factors include measures of education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety. The physical environment includes measures of environmental quality and the built environment.

| Rank | Health Behaviors                | Rank | Clinical Care                   | Rank | Social & Economic Factors       | Rank | Physical Environment            |
|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1    | Juneau                          | 1    | Juneau                          | 1    | Juneau                          | 1    | Ketchikan Gateway               |
| 2    | Wrangell-Petersburg             | 2    | Dillingham                      | 2    | Kodiak Island                   | 2    | Yukon-Koyukuk                   |
| 3    | Anchorage                       | 3    | Ketchikan Gateway               | 3    | Sitka                           | 3    | Valdez-Cordova                  |
| 4    | Fairbanks North Star            | 4    | Wrangell-Petersburg             | 4    | Anchorage                       | 4    | Sitka                           |
| 5    | Kodiak Island                   | 5    | Anchorage                       | 5    | Aleutians West                  | 5    | Matanuska-Susitna               |
| 6    | Matanuska-Susitna               | 6    | Kenai Peninsula                 | 6    | Fairbanks North Star            | 6    | Kodiak Island                   |
| 7    | Kenai Peninsula                 | 7    | Fairbanks North Star            | 7    | Valdez-Cordova                  | 7    | North Slope                     |
| 8    | Sitka                           | 8    | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           | 8    | Kenai Peninsula                 | 8    | Juneau                          |
| 9    | Aleutians East                  | 9    | Sitka                           | 9    | Matanuska-Susitna               | 8    | Kenai Peninsula                 |
| 10   | Southeast Fairbanks             | 10   | Nome                            | 10   | Ketchikan Gateway               | 10   | Bethel                          |
| 11   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           | 11   | Kodiak Island                   | 11   | Aleutians East                  | 11   | Anchorage                       |
| 12   | Valdez-Cordova                  | 12   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan | 12   | Wrangell-Petersburg             | 12   | Aleutians East                  |
| 13   | Aleutians West                  | 13   | Matanuska-Susitna               | 13   | North Slope                     | 12   | Aleutians West                  |
| 14   | Ketchikan Gateway               | 14   | Bethel                          | 14   | Southeast Fairbanks             | 12   | Dillingham                      |
| 15   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan | 15   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   | 15   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           | 12   | Lake and Peninsula              |
| 16   | Bethel                          | 16   | North Slope                     | 16   | Dillingham                      | 12   | Nome                            |
| 17   | Wade Hampton                    | 17   | Valdez-Cordova                  | 17   | Lake and Peninsula              | 12   | Northwest Arctic                |
| 18   | Lake and Peninsula              | 18   | Northwest Arctic                | 18   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan | 12   | Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan |
| 19   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   | 19   | Southeast Fairbanks             | 19   | Northwest Arctic                | 12   | Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon           |
| 20   | Northwest Arctic                | 20   | Aleutians West                  | 20   | Nome                            | 12   | Wade Hampton                    |
| 21   | Dillingham                      | 21   | Lake and Peninsula              | 21   | Bethel                          | 12   | Wrangell-Petersburg             |
| 22   | Nome                            | 22   | Aleutians East                  | 22   | Yukon-Koyukuk                   | 22   | Southeast Fairbanks             |
| 23   | North Slope                     | 23   | Wade Hampton                    | 23   | Wade Hampton                    | 23   | Fairbanks North Star            |



## 2011 County Health Rankings: Measures, Data Sources, and Years of Data

|                                  | Measure                               | Data Source                                                                       | Years of Data |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>HEALTH OUTCOMES</b>           |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>Mortality</b>                 | Premature death                       | National Center for Health Statistics                                             | 2005-2007     |
| <b>Morbidity</b>                 | Poor or fair health                   | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2003-2009     |
|                                  | Poor physical health days             | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2003-2009     |
|                                  | Poor mental health days               | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2003-2009     |
|                                  | Low birthweight                       | National Center for Health Statistics                                             | 2001-2007     |
| <b>HEALTH FACTORS</b>            |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>HEALTH BEHAVIORS</b>          |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>Tobacco</b>                   | Adult smoking                         | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2003-2009     |
| <b>Diet and Exercise</b>         | Adult obesity                         | National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion               | 2008          |
| <b>Alcohol Use</b>               | Excessive drinking                    | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2003-2009     |
|                                  | Motor vehicle crash death rate        | National Center for Health Statistics                                             | 2001-2007     |
| <b>High Risk Sexual Behavior</b> | Sexually transmitted infections       | National Center for Hepatitis, HIV, STD and TB Prevention                         | 2008          |
|                                  | Teen birth rate                       | National Center for Health Statistics                                             | 2001-2007     |
| <b>CLINICAL CARE</b>             |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>Access to Care</b>            | Uninsured adults                      | Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, U.S. Census                                | 2007          |
|                                  | Primary care providers                | Health Resources & Services Administration                                        | 2008          |
| <b>Quality of Care</b>           | Preventable hospital stays            | Medicare/Dartmouth Institute                                                      | 2006-2007     |
|                                  | Diabetic screening                    | Medicare/Dartmouth Institute                                                      | 2006-2007     |
|                                  | Mammography screening                 | Medicare/Dartmouth Institute                                                      | 2006-2007     |
| <b>SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS</b>     |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>Education</b>                 | High school graduation                | National Center for Education Statistics <sup>1</sup>                             | 2006-2007     |
|                                  | Some college                          | American Community Survey                                                         | 2005-2009     |
| <b>Employment</b>                | Unemployment                          | Bureau of Labor Statistics                                                        | 2009          |
| <b>Income</b>                    | Children in poverty                   | Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, U.S. Census                              | 2008          |
| <b>Family and Social Support</b> | Inadequate social support             | Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System                                        | 2005-2009     |
|                                  | Single-parent households              | American Community Survey                                                         | 2005-2009     |
| <b>Community Safety</b>          | Violent crime <sup>2</sup>            | Uniform Crime Reporting, Federal Bureau of Investigation                          | 2006-2008     |
| <b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>      |                                       |                                                                                   |               |
| <b>Air Quality</b> <sup>3</sup>  | Air pollution-particulate matter days | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2006          |
|                                  | Air pollution-ozone days              | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | 2006          |
| <b>Built Environment</b>         | Access to healthy foods               | Census Zip Code Business Patterns                                                 | 2008          |
|                                  | Access to recreational facilities     | Census County Business Patterns                                                   | 2008          |

<sup>1</sup> State data sources for KY, NH, NC, PA, SC, and UT (2008-2009).

<sup>2</sup> Homicide rate (2001-2007) from National Center for Health Statistics for AK, AZ, AR, CO, CT, GA, ID, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MN, MS, MT, NE, NH, NM, NC, ND, OH, SD, UT, and WV. State data source for IL.

<sup>3</sup> Not available for AK and HI.

## CREDITS

### **Report Authors**

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
School of Medicine and Public Health  
Department of Population Health Sciences  
Population Health Institute

Bridget Booske, PhD, MHSA  
Jessica Athens, MS  
Patrick Remington, MD, MPH

This publication would not have been possible without the following contributions:

### **Technical Advisors**

Amy Bernstein, ScD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Michele Bohm, MPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### **Research Assistance**

Jennifer Buechner  
Hyojun Park, MA  
Seth Prins, MPH  
Jennifer Robinson  
Matthew Rodock  
Anne Roubal

### **Communications and Outreach**

Burness Communications  
Ivan Cherniack  
Nathan Jones, PhD  
Kate Konkle, MPH  
Angela Russell  
Julie Willems Van Dijk, PhD, RN

### **Design**

Forum One, Alexandria, VA  
Media Solutions, UW School of Medicine and Public Health

### **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

Brenda L. Henry, PhD, MPH – Program Officer  
Michelle Larkin, JD, MS, RN – Team Director and Senior Program Officer  
James S. Marks, MD, MPH – Senior Vice President and Group Director, Health Group  
Joe Marx – Senior Communications Officer

Suggested citation: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. *County Health Rankings 2011*.





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**University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute**  
610 Walnut St, #524, Madison, WI 53726  
(608) 265-6370 / [info@countyhealthrankings.org](mailto:info@countyhealthrankings.org)