
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



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Kent County Health Rankings Continue to Improve

GRAND RAPIDS – The national **County Health Rankings** were released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Kent County ranked 15th in Health Outcomes, which consisted of measures relating to how long people live, how healthy people feel, and emotional well-being. The ranking is a major improvement over 2010, the first year of the report, when we ranked 22nd in the state.

The Health Outcomes measure put Kent County 15th out of 82 Michigan counties. The second measure, Health Factors, ranked Kent County 19th in the state; up from 25th in 2010. That part of the study looks at measures that affect health, such as access to healthy foods, air pollution levels, education, income, smoking, and obesity. Some of the findings the rankings have determined nationally:

- People are nearly twice as likely to be in fair or poor health in the unhealthiest counties;
- Unhealthy counties have significantly lower high school graduation rates;
- Unhealthy counties have more than twice as many children in poverty;
- Unhealthy counties have much fewer grocery stores or farmer's markets; and
- Unhealthy counties have much higher rates of unemployment.

**courtesy www.countyhealthrankings.org*

More than 80 hospitals, care providers and community groups in Kent County, including the Health Department, just completed a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) to determine health concerns that need addressing. "These rankings, along with the CHNA, are critical in helping us determine where to focus our efforts, to make Kent County a healthier place," said Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "The improvement in our Health Outcomes ranking in 2012 is welcome news, and we continue to work towards improving factors that impact health, especially in the areas of education, healthy eating and children living in poverty."

The annual rankings help health care providers better understand the health problems in our communities. For more information, go to www.countyhealthrankings.org.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.