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Media contact: Christine Stone, Oregon Public Health Division Communications, 971-673-1282, desk; 503-602-8027, cell; Christine.I.stone@state.or.us

Oregon gets report card on counties' health *Rankings can help improve the health of Oregonians*

Benton County for the second year in a row has the healthiest residents in Oregon, according to a new national report released March 30 that ranks each county in every state.

This is the second year of the *County Health Rankings*, the most comprehensive report of its kind to rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states by using a standard way to measure how healthy people are and how long they live.

The report by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the first annual "health checkup" ranking counties using such criteria as the length and quality of life of county residents as well as health-related behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment.

"These rankings show that good health happens where we live, work and play, and in the choices we make as a community," said Katrina Hedberg, M.D., M.P.H., state epidemiologist, Oregon Public Health Division. "The rankings help counties see what they are doing well, where they need to improve, and what steps they can take as a community to improve overall health. This information can help communities prevent disease and illness and have better health outcomes."

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According to this year's rankings, the 10 healthiest counties in Oregon, starting with most healthy, are Benton, Hood River, Washington, Clackamas, Wallowa, Grant, Deschutes, Polk, Wasco, Marion. The 10 counties in the poorest health, starting with least healthy, are Jefferson, Klamath, Douglas, Josephine, Baker, Linn, Lincoln, Coos, Curry, and Tillamook.

Many counties have used this report in various ways, including:

- In Douglas County public health officials used the rankings to advance changes to policies and systems. They formed a diverse community coalition called Healthy Active Douglas County, which adopted a tobacco-free park system policy and increased access to chronic disease management programs with multiple community partners.
- In Jefferson County the rankings reinvigorated many projects in health, education and human services. The report energized efforts and supported activities to improve walking paths and safe routes to schools, nutritional school lunches, workplace wellness, and tobacco free campuses.

The rankings include a snapshot of each county in Oregon with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. Researchers used five measures to assess the level of overall health for Oregon by county: the rate of people dying before age 75, the percent of people who report being in fair or poor health, the numbers of days people report being in poor physical and poor mental health, and the rate of low-birth-weight infants.

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The report also looks at factors that affect people's health in four categories: health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. Among the many health factors they looked at: rates of adult smoking, adult obesity, adult excessive drinking, and births to teenagers; the number of uninsured adults, availability of primary care providers, and preventable hospital stays; high school graduation rates, adults who have attended college, children in poverty; and community safety, access to healthy foods, and air pollution levels.

For more information, please visit the [County Health Rankings website](#).

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The Oregon Health Authority is at the forefront of lowering and containing costs, improving quality and increasing access to health care in order to improve the lifelong health of Oregonians.