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Frederick County Health Department

Media Advisory

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FREDERICK COUNTY RANKS 3RD BEST IN STATE FOR HEALTH FACTORS

FREDERICK, MD -- A new report released today examines the health and well-being of people living in nearly every county in the United States and finds that Frederick County ranks third best compared to other Maryland counties in multiple areas, such as health factors, health behaviors, length of life, and social & economic factors.

The 2017 *County Health Rankings* show us that where we live matters to our health and that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including housing, education, jobs, access to healthy foods, and more. The *Rankings* rely on a robust set of data and analysis that allows counties to see what it is that makes residents sick or healthy, and how they compare to other counties in the same state. This is the eighth year of the *Rankings*, published online at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org> by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The *Rankings* data lays the groundwork for health improvement efforts of elected officials, local health departments, health care providers, business leaders, and citizens across the country.

The *County Health Rankings* explores the factors beyond just access to medical care that impact how long and how well people live. It examines 35 indicators that influence health, including rates of childhood poverty, rates of smoking, obesity levels, access to physicians and dentists, rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and levels of physical inactivity.

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“Frederick County’s rank of 3rd best in health factors, health behaviors, length of life and social & economic factors in Maryland is a testimony to the quality of health services and public-private partnership engagement in addressing social determinants of health,” stated Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Frederick County Health Officer. “It reinforces the fact that Frederick County is a great place to live, work, and thrive,” she added.

The *County Health Rankings* report highlighted many areas of strength in Frederick County, such as food environment index, low physical inactivity, good access to exercise opportunities, low teen births, low percentage of uninsured residents, as well as social and economic factors such as high school graduation, college, children in poverty and income inequality. Alcohol-impaired driving deaths dropped from 29% to 21% and became a newly identified area of strength in this report. The percentage of Frederick County residents under age 65 without health insurance reached an all-time low at 7%. The ratio of primary care physicians to our population has improved to its best since tracking began and was also newly identified as an area of strength.

While Frederick County’s overall rank is very favorable, the report also identified adult smoking, adult obesity, and mammogram screening as areas to explore for improvement. [Free smoking cessation programs](#), including free nicotine replacement therapy, continue to be offered by the Behavioral Health Services Division of the Frederick County Health Department to assist Frederick County residents in their fight to quit tobacco use. The Preventive Health Program in the Community Health Services Division has been working with community providers to improve the county’s mammogram screening rates through their [Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Program](#). Improvement is being seen when looking at more age groups than are reported in the *Rankings*. The Preventive Health Program has also recently started the [PreventT2 Program](#) to work with individuals who are pre-diabetic. This yearlong lifestyle change program encourages participants to lose weight as an important part of reducing their risk of developing diabetes.

The [Frederick County Health Care Coalition](#) also monitors the *County Health Rankings* and uses the *County Health Rankings* annual update to inform the efforts of its work groups focused on addressing priorities for local health improvement.

For further information contact Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Health Officer, at the Frederick County Health Department at 301-600-1029 or via e-mail at Bbrookmyer@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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