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Frederick County Health Department

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Frederick County Ranks Among the Healthiest Counties in Maryland**

**FREDERICK, MD** – The 2021 *County Health Rankings* released today examines multiple factors that impact the health of people living in nearly every county in the United States. The new report shows that Frederick County is consistently ranked among the healthiest counties in Maryland, in the highest 75%-100%. Frederick County has improved in rank in health outcomes, quality of life, health factors, clinical care, and physical environment.

The new *Rankings* report shows us that where we live matters to our health. Good health allows people to fulfill their potential and thrive, and the *Rankings* make it clear that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including housing, education, jobs, access to healthy foods, and more. The annual report provides a snapshot of our community's health compared to other counties in Maryland, and can serve to spark conversation with leaders at all levels and sectors to help our community take action with data. The data used to calculate ranks for the 2021 *Rankings* are from 2019 and earlier and do not yet reflect the impact that COVID-19 has had on counties.

“We are proud that Frederick County continues to rank well in Maryland according to the *County Health Rankings*. Good health is about more than not being sick. We know that many in our community experience high levels of wellbeing. We are continuing to look at our local data to see where opportunities for improvement exist so that we can address disparities,” stated Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Frederick County Health Officer. “Our goal is to identify and remove barriers so that everyone in our community can achieve the best health outcome possible,” she added.

The *County Health Rankings* report highlighted many areas of strength in Frederick County, such as the health behavior areas of low physical inactivity and low teen births. In the clinical care area, our strengths were identified as low percentage of uninsured residents, a good ratio of primary care physicians, low preventable hospital stays, good flu vaccination rates.

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Additionally, social and economic factors such as high rates of high school graduation, adults having some college, low rates of children in poverty, and low rates of income inequality were identified as strengths. Frederick County was pleased to score in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile among the top U.S. Performers in several categories such as poor or fair health, poor physical health days, poor mental health days, adult smoking, access to exercise opportunities, teen births, uninsured adults, and children in poverty.

The *Rankings* identified adult smoking as an area to explore. Although Frederick County is tied for the fourth lowest percent of adult smoking among Maryland counties, this is still an area of focus because smoking increases the risk of many other health issues. Frederick County Health Department continues to offer free one-on-one tobacco counseling cessation services to help individuals through their tobacco quitting journey. Free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) including patches, gum, and lozenges is available to individuals over 18 with physician approval. Quitting isn't easy and tobacco cessation programs like ours with cessation counseling in combination with NRT can be a great help for support.

The *Rankings* also identified adult obesity as an area to explore. Obesity increases the risk for health conditions and serves as a proxy for poor diet and limited physical activity. Obesity rates continue to increase in Frederick County, although Frederick is tied for the fifth lowest percent among Maryland counties. Frederick County Health Department continues to offer programs such as the [PreventT2 Program](#) to work with individuals who have prediabetes. The Diabetes Prevention Program 'PreventT2' is a year-long lifestyle change program that focuses on losing weight, increasing physical activity, healthy eating habits, and reducing stress to help individuals prevent type 2 diabetes.

The third area the *Rankings* identified as an area to explore was excessive drinking. Frederick County reported a higher rate of binge or heavy drinking than Maryland. Frederick County Health Department's Alcohol Misuse Prevention Initiative is working to reduce harmful alcohol use by training staff in stores and restaurants on local and state alcohol laws, reducing alcohol sales to customers who are intoxicated, and preventing sales to youth under 21 years. The Alcohol Misuse Prevention Initiative has also launched a "[Think Before You Drink](#)" prevention campaign, and hosts [community coalition meetings](#) that are open to any Frederick County resident.

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. The *Rankings* are published online at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org> by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI).

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