



For Immediate Release
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County Health Rankings Released Today

The rankings are the result of an effort conducted by the Population Health Institute of the University of Wisconsin and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Each county is ranked in comparison to the other counties of its respective state. The higher rankings indicate better health status.

Forsyth County ranked 20th among the 100 counties of N.C. with regard to Health Outcome status and also 20th with regard to Health Factors. Forsyth County ranked 5th among the largest 5 counties* with regard to Health Outcomes (*mortality and morbidity*). Forsyth County ranked 5th among the largest 5 counties with respect to all Health Factors (*health behaviors, clinical care, socioeconomic factors and the physical environment*). Forsyth County ranked as follows with respect to the individual Health Factors:

- Health Behavior: 18th in the state and 3rd among the large 5 counties
- Clinical Care: 7th in the state and 2nd among the large five counties
- Socioeconomic Factors: 30th in the state and 5th among the large five counties and
- Physical Environment: 97th in the state and 3rd among the large 5 counties

When the rankings of all the counties are analyzed, the strongest cause of poor health status seems to be poor socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic factors that were measured in the study include children in poverty, income inequality, unemployment rate, high school graduation rate, single parent households, and others.

Data from the N.C Budget and Tax Center indicate that, of the five large counties, Forsyth County had the lowest median household income and the highest percentage of residents living in poverty in 2008 and 2009. The statewide rankings and the example of Forsyth County are highly consistent with what we already know in public health; specifically, the single strongest cause of poor health in any population is poverty and the harmful and stressful conditions associated with life in poverty.

The County Health Rankings are a “call to action” for communities to work together to develop programs and policies that address the multiple influences on health. For the first time, every county will have a snapshot of how healthy their residents are so they can see where they are doing well and where they need to improve.

For a more detailed explanation of the choice of measures, see www.countyhealthrankings.org. See attached report for the County Health Rankings: 2010 North Carolina.

* *Counties without military bases - Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Wake*