



COMMUNITY HEALTH  
& THE ENVIRONMENT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **STUDY RANKS ST. CHARLES COUNTY AMONG MISSOURI'S HEALTHIEST FOR 6<sup>th</sup> STRAIGHT YEAR**

*"County Health Rankings" Places St. Charles County 2<sup>nd</sup> in State for Health Outcomes, Health Factors*

*St. Charles County, Missouri* – In addition to healthy behaviors and access to medical care, a community's character and physical environment influence its well-being. St. Charles County residents, businesses and support organizations place high importance on these influencing factors, which is reflected in today's announcement that the county ranked among the top of Missouri's *County Health Rankings* for the sixth consecutive year. Compiled annually by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute, the rankings placed St. Charles County second for both its "Health Outcomes" and "Health Factors" categories.

"As individuals and as a collective unit, our community has traditionally put great emphasis on being healthy," *Hope Woodson, director of the Department of Community Health and the Environment, said.* "Building upon a strong economy, active citizenry and diverse support network, we are able to proactively overcome potential risks and educate individuals on ways to further their quality of life."

The annual rankings are based upon public data collected from vital statistics and government health surveys. Health Outcomes are a representation of the current health of a community, with rankings determined by how long people live (mortality) and how healthy they feel (morbidity). Health Factors allude to the population's health in the future and the items that influence overall well-being. Categories including community behaviors, clinical care, social and economic conditions, and the physical environment determine these rankings. The complete nationwide and Missouri-specific rankings may be viewed at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

Along with the continued population growth and improved economic conditions, these rankings further the notion that St. Charles County is an excellent location to raise a family and to start, grow or move a business. Our premature death rate and low percentage of those reporting to be in poor or fair health — that are below both Missouri and national benchmarks — contributed to the county's second-place ranking in Health Outcomes. Topping the state for the third consecutive year for "Social and Economic Factors," as well as high marks for "Clinical Care" and "Health Behaviors," led to the high placement in Health Factors.

The County also ranked highly in the recently released Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Community Health Status Indicators listing (<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/communityhealth>). The methodology for the CHSI listing compares a county with others of similar population size and growth, demographics and economic levels. St. Charles County placed in upper quartile for many categories in this comparison, including life expectancy, preventative care, access to parks, and economic influences.

**(MORE)**

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Coupled with the overall healthy lifestyle of area residents, Department of Community Health and the Environment programs enhance the well-being of our community. Department staff actively networks with medical professionals and care providers to monitor disease threats, reduce incidences of disease and assess the health needs of residents. Last year, this system investigated and managed more than 2,600 potentially threatening illness cases in our community. Other programs with direct impact on the health of the community include free immunizations for children through the Vaccines For Children program (VFC), low-cost vaccinations for uninsured or under-insured children participating in the Children’s Immunization Program (ChIP) and adults in the Adult Immunization Program (AIP), as well as low-cost treatment and prevention services through the STD Clinic. Additionally, the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) counsels more than 1,900 participants each month on the importance of proper nutrition for families and provides supplemental, nutritious foods that give pregnant women and young children enhanced opportunities for growth and development — saving money and lives in what otherwise could result in pre-term births or birth defects.

In addition to medical support programs, the department guides residents and organizations on health and well-being through outreach and education. One example of this outreach was a regional collaboration of Emergency Preparedness Workshops designed to help area faith organizations develop response plans to aid congregations in times of need. The department’s Health Education staff also presented more than 300 nutrition and fitness, alcohol abuse prevention, hygiene and other programs to day care centers, schools, businesses and senior centers in the last year.

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The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to the protection and enhancement of health and the quality of life for all members of our community. Through three divisions — Public Health, Environmental Health and Protection, and Humane Services — the department coordinates with federal, state, and local organizations to provide a wide range of services that have a profound impact on the lives of St. Charles County’s residents and visitors. To discover ways that the department assists this region or to learn about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, please visit <http://www.sccmo.org/394/Community-Health-the-Environment> or call (636) 949-7400.

Issued since 2010, the *County Health Rankings* are a joint effort by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute that is designed to lay groundwork for health improvement efforts by government officials, organizations and citizens throughout the United States. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable, and timely change. For information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute is the focal point within the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health for translating public health and health policy research into practice. For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.