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Contact:

Ericka Klingner

Putnam County Health Department

660-947-2429

klinge@lpha.mopublic.org

Putnam County ranked 74 out of 115 in health outcomes and 49 out of 115 in health factors compared to other counties in the state of Missouri.

The *County Health Rankings*—the first set of reports to rank the overall health of every county in all 50 states—were released last week by the University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The 50 state reports help public health and community leaders, policy-makers, consumers and others to see how healthy their county is, compare it with others within their state and find ways to improve the health of their community.

Each county is ranked within the state on how healthy people are and how long they live. They also are ranked on key factors that affect health such as: smoking, obesity, binge drinking, access to primary care providers, rates of high school graduation, rates of violent crime, air pollution levels, liquor store density, unemployment rates and number of children living in poverty.

The online *Rankings*, available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, include snapshots of U.S. counties with a color-coded map that compares each county’s overall health with other counties in each of the 50 states. Researchers used the latest data available for each county, ranging from 2000 to 2008, to develop the *Rankings*.

The *Rankings* show that people who live in healthier counties tend to have higher education levels, are more likely to be employed, have access to more health care providers, and have more access to healthier foods, parks and recreational facilities.

Putnam County Health Department Administrator Ericka Klingner explained, “Studies such as this one show that a community’s health is the result of a complex web of factors and improving a community’s health will require complex answers. There is no silver bullet that will solve all these problems. That is why solutions will require communities to come together to address these challenges across a broad range of issues.”

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