

Jackson County Health Department

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Creating Healthy Communities



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2017 County Health Rankings & Roadmap Released
Jackson County Focuses on Systems Change to Improve Health

JACKSON COUNTY, MI – March 31, 2016 – How well and how long can Jackson County residents expect to live? The release of the 2017 *County Health Rankings & Roadmap* (CHRR) report, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, helps us understand what factors influence the health of our community and what areas we need to explore to continue to make Jackson County a healthier place to live, learn, work and play.

Out of 83 Michigan Counties, the 2017 CHRR ranks Jackson in the middle on overall health – 55th for *Health Outcomes* and 52nd for *Health Factors*. *Health Outcomes* reflect length of life, which includes how many potential years of life was lost by Jackson residents because of death before age 75, as well as the quality of life, which considers mental health, physical health and the percent of live births with low birthweight.

Although our ranking in Health Outcomes and Health Factors is slightly improved compared to 2016, as a community, we know where we need to continue to focus our health improvement efforts. These include adult smoking, adult obesity, excessive drinking, high school graduation, income inequality, and violent crime. We are doing well with our mammography screening rates, diabetic monitoring, injury deaths, and lower unemployment compared to last year.

However, the *Rankings*, and other local data sources, make it clear that improving the health of Jackson will require that we do things differently and do different things than we have in the past. And we are doing things differently and doing different things! Over the past few years, the development of multiple networks and coordinating councils in Jackson focused on education, health, and financial stability have established the foundation for significantly moving system change forward. The health factors and outcomes that we face

today are intricately linked with existing systems and approaches that have not successfully enabled our community to significantly improve these important measures.

The Health Improvement Organization, Cradle to Career, and Financial Stability Network are all using the collective impact model to coordinate our improvement efforts with a focus on policy, environmental and systems change approaches to improve the overall social and health status of our community. Our selection as a regional State Innovation Model (SIM) test site pushes us to embrace and focus our efforts on the linkages between community social services and clinical providers of care, along with local public health and many others in health care system transformation. The model will connect people with the care they need at the point they need it through protocols that are designed to provide quality, optimal care while reducing barriers and coordinating services with the health care delivery system. The integration of health and social services between public health, behavioral health, community human and social services, and the clinical health care delivery system continues to demonstrate the understanding that clients' needs must be addressed using more than one approach. All of this work is supported by a significantly developed collaborative council and information network that is tying all of our work together strategically. Our value system supports all sectors of the community working together as one to advance health and equitable access to care and needed social supports.

Sharing some key findings from the 2017 CHRR report provides us with an opportunity to help all Jackson County residents and community leaders become aware of our health status so that we can continue to collaborate and mobilize our community to take action. We need to continue to implement programs and policy, environmental and system changes in Jackson County. Health is everyone's responsibility. Working together, we can make Jackson County a healthier and safer place to live, learn, work and play.

"The *Rankings* are one tool in our toolbox to support existing and new plans for better community health. We know that there are many factors beyond medical care that influence health. As we advance our collective work, we need to bring more residents into our decision making processes. We need to hear about their living experiences so we can design changes with them that will make a difference. Everyone in our community has a stake in being healthy. Working together, we can improve the health of Jackson County," said Richard Thoun, Health Officer.

For more information on the health status of Jackson County please visit www.countyhealthrankings.org or call Richard Thoun, Health Officer, Jackson County Health Department, at 517.768.1658 or 517. 205. 7072.

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