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## ***New Report Gives North Carolinians a County-by-County Snapshot of How Multiple Factors Can Influence Their Health***

RALEIGH – A new report released today by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranks the overall health of counties in all 50 states – more than 3,000 counties in all– by measuring how healthy people are and how long they live. The ranking gives a “snapshot” of residents’ health so each county can see what they are doing well and where they need to improve.

The online report, *County Health Rankings: Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH)* ([www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)), lists health outcomes and factors affecting people’s health for each county in North Carolina as it does for other states, accompanied by color-coded maps of each state comparing their counties’ overall health rankings. It does not compare states to one another.

“There are big differences in health among North Carolina counties,” said State Health Director Jeff Engel, MD. “Poorer communities have poorer health. Education, jobs, availability of healthy foods, access to high-quality affordable health care, individual behavior...all these things have a big effect on people’s health.”

Researchers used five measures of overall health or “health outcomes” for counties: the rate of people dying before age 75, the percent of people who report being in fair or poor health, the numbers of days people report being in poor physical and poor mental health, and the rate of low-birthweight infants.

The report then looked at factors that affect people’s health in four categories: health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. Those factors included rates of adult smoking, adult obesity, binge drinking, and teenage pregnancy; the number of uninsured adults, availability of primary care providers, and preventable hospital stays; rates of high school graduation, number of children in poverty, and rates of violent crime; access to healthy foods, air pollution levels, and liquor store density.

“It takes everyone making healthy choices to effect change in North Carolina,” said Dr. Engel. “We hope this report will mobilize community leaders to take action to invest in programs and policy changes that improve health. Everyone has a stake in community health, and we all need to work together to find solutions.”

North Carolina uses health statistics – including reports such as the *County Health Rankings* – to identify needs and to find effective ways to improve the health of communities. One of the newest data sources is the state’s CATCH (Comprehensive Assessment for Tracking Community Health) system, an online “health data warehouse” that enables North Carolina communities identify health priorities and analyze health outcomes for their populations over time. That helps communities better understand the factors that influence health status so that they can work together as a community to improve health outcomes.

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*(see county ranking maps on next page)*



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For more information on NC CATCH, see [www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/catch](http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/catch).

### County Health Rankings maps for North Carolina

Figure 1: North Carolina **Health Outcome** Rankings by County

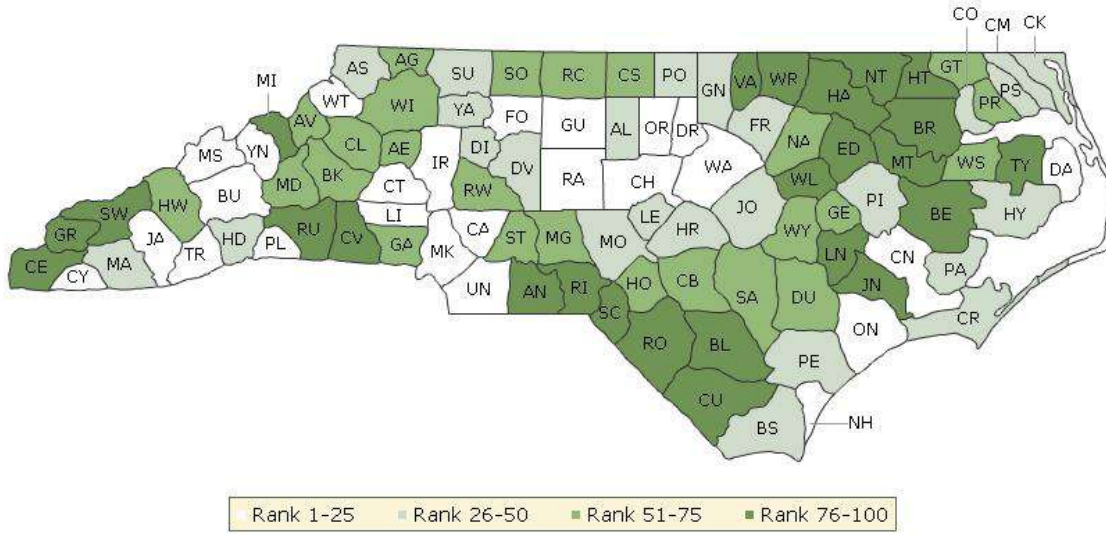
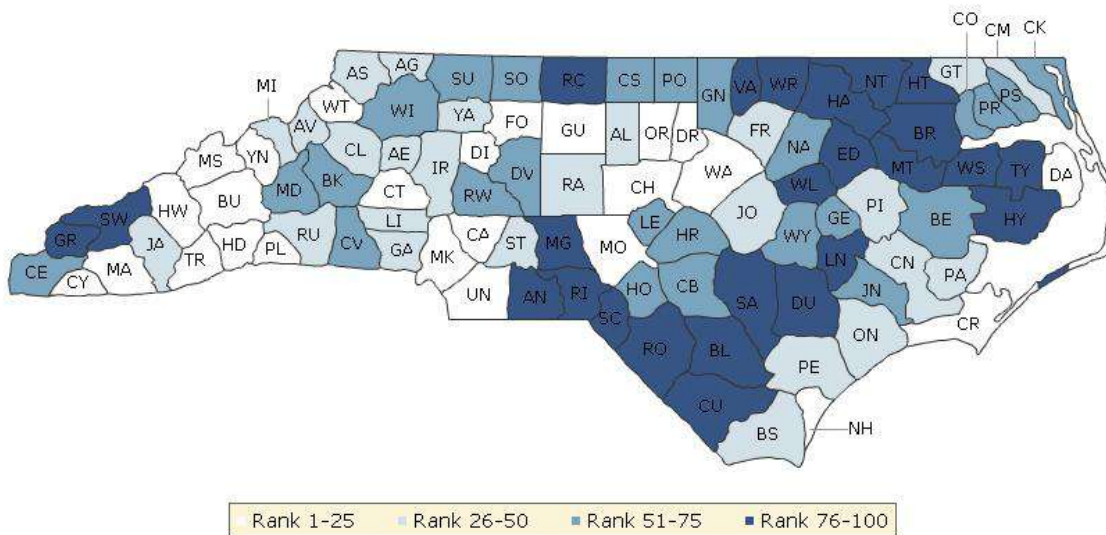


Figure 2: North Carolina **Health Factors** Rankings by County



**Maps source:** County Health Rankings: Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH). University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Feb. 2010.