



**Humboldt County**  
**Department of Health and Human Services**

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## **Nationwide report shows continuing health challenges for rural communities**

A report comparing various health factors in every county in the country suggests small rural counties continue to face barriers to good health.

The report, produced by the University of Wisconsin and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranked the more than 3,000 counties in the U.S. according to various factors intended to represent the health and longevity of their residents.

Out of 54 California counties ranked in the survey, Humboldt County was ranked 29<sup>th</sup> for health-related quality of life and birth outcomes. Humboldt ranked 45<sup>th</sup> for mortality. Alpine and Sierra counties were not included in the report.

Humboldt County Health Officer Ann Lindsay said, "The Wisconsin report demonstrates that health is more than the absence of disease, and that a range of social, economic and environmental factors influence well being."

Typically, Lindsay added, rural counties such as Del Norte and Trinity score lower in health outcomes. More affluent counties like Marin score higher.

"Humboldt County ranked relatively high in the category of access to clinical care and quality of that care," she said. "This reflects years of work in our community to coordinate care, especially for people with chronic diseases like diabetes. And the report also shows that we still have work to do as a community. "

Lindsay pointed out that the report ranks health behaviors and social and economic factors as being responsible for 70 percent of the overall health ranking. This acknowledges that tobacco use, alcohol use and diet and

exercise play an important role in a community's health. But so do education, employment and public safety.

Public Health Epidemiologist Ron M. Largusa said, "The University of Wisconsin county rankings are one of several tools that can be used to assess community health outcomes and behavioral risk factors within Humboldt County. Data from the California Department of Public Health's County Health Profiles and our own internal analyses of mortality data largely substantiate these rankings."

Positive findings from the survey rank Humboldt County in the top third of counties with a high proportion of healthy birth weight babies, in the top fifth in air quality, and the top third for social support and community safety.

The chart below shows some of the more significant findings of the report.

| 2011 HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA<br>HEALTH RANKINGS | HUMBOLDT<br>RANK | PERCENTILE* |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| <b>HEALTH OUTCOMES</b>                              | <b>45</b>        | <b>80%</b>  |
| MORTALITY--50%                                      | 49               | 88%         |
| MORBIDITY--50%                                      | 28               | 50%         |
| <b>HEALTH FACTORS</b>                               | <b>28</b>        | <b>50%</b>  |
| HEALTH BEHAVIORS--30%                               | 40               | 71%         |
| CLINICAL CARE--20%                                  | 22               | 38%         |
| SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FACTORS--40%                      | 25               | 44%         |
| ENVIRONMENT--10%                                    | 34               | 60%         |

\*PERCENTILE--Percent of California counties ranking higher than Humboldt.  
Source: 2011 County Health Rankings

For additional information, visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).