



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

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To: Isabella County Media

From: Sarah M. Kile, Advocacy Coordinator, skile@cmdhd.org

RE: County Health Rankings

Release Date: March 26, 2014

**ISABELLA COUNTY RANKED AS ONE OF THE HEALTHIEST COUNTIES
IN MICHIGAN**

The annual County Health Rankings released today by the University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have ranked Isabella County as the 12th healthiest county in Michigan. This is a significant improvement from Isabella’s first ranking in 2010 of 42nd.

Why the improvement? After the *County Health Rankings* were release in 2010, the Central Michigan District Health Department embarked on the Together We Can initiative, an effort to improve the overall health of the more than 196,000 people within its health district; which includes the central Michigan counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. The primary strategy of the health improvement effort was to engage the community both as a whole and within each county with a call to action. In 2010, Isabella County began their Health Improvement Planning workgroup, which has been working to improve the health rankings for the community.

According to CMDHD’s Health Officer, Steve Hall, “The work that this group has done is impressive. With their continued effort, we will keep seeing improvement in the health of our community. I encourage everyone to get involved in their health!” Since 2010, the Isabella Health Improvement Planning Work group has made strides in improving health in Isabella County, both leading and supporting many efforts, including the creation of the McLaren Free Clinic, the Isabella Citizens for Health clinic, a food policy council, and a permanent prescription drug drop off box located within the Mount Pleasant Police Post.

Each year since 2010, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute have released the annual *County Health Rankings*. Counties in each of the 50 states are ranked according to summaries of a variety of health measures. Those having high ranks (e.g. 1 or 2) are considered to be the "healthiest." Counties are ranked relative to the health of other counties in the same state. The 2010 County Health Rankings painted a troubling picture for the counties of central Michigan. Of the 82 Michigan counties evaluated, 6 central Michigan counties fell in the bottom half on health outcomes, and 3 of the 6 counties were ranked in the bottom 10 counties

The County Health Rankings will be discussed at the 5th Annual Public Health Summit on April 22nd, at The Comfort Inn & Suites Hotel Conference Center in Mt. Pleasant. The event is free and will feature a theme that will help every person determine what they can do to improve health. For more information, please contact Allison Dunn at (989) 773-5921 ext. 8413. We do ask that each person bring a fresh fruit or vegetable to be donated to local food banks.

If you would like an opportunity to get involved to improve the health of Isabella County, consider joining Together We Can or The Isabella County Health Improvement Planning workgroup. For more information visit our webpage at www.together-we-can.org.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

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For an interview opportunity with Health Officer Steve Hall please go to our website and complete the on-line interview request form (left column, yellow box).