



**PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA**

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

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8440  
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)

**To: Arenac County Media**

**From: Sarah M. Kile, Advocacy Coordinator, [skile@cmdhd.org](mailto:skile@cmdhd.org)**

**RE: County Health Rankings**

**Release Date: March 26, 2014**

**CENTRAL MICHIGAN IS GETTING HEALTHIER**

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. In 2010, Arenac ranked 72 of the 82 Michigan counties included in the report, this year they fell to 80.

Since the *Rankings* 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. The group has seen health improvements in many areas and continues to work diligently to serve central Michigan.

In late 2012, Arenac County began their Health Improvement workgroup, which has been working to improve the *Rankings* for the community. The first thing the group did was conduct a community survey to find out where the majority of their efforts should be focused. The top three priority areas were Health Services, Family Life/Parenting and Nutrition & Physical Activity. They’ve held a Bicycle Safety Rodeo in June of 2013, having 100 children participate and all were fitted for bicycle helmets. The event this year will be on June 19<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the Caring Bear Picnic. They are

also planning to host a Community Baby Shower for Arenac County parents on October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Saganing Tribal Center. According to CMDHD's Health Officer, Steve Hall, "This report shows that there is much work to be done. However, the work that this group has done is impressive. With their continued effort, we will see improvement in the health of our community. I encourage everyone to get involved in their health!"

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 Arenac County consider joining Together We Can or The Arenac County Health Improvement Planning workgroup. For more information, visit [www.together-we-can.org](http://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](http://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).