



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

To: Roscommon County Media

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

RE: County Health Rankings

Release Date: March 26, 2014

ROSCOMMON COUNTY GETS 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. 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. This year Roscommon came in at 71, the same ranking as last year but up from 2011 and 2012.

Why the improvement? Since the *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. Roscommon County began their Health Improvement workgroup in 2010; they have been working diligently to improve the health rankings for the community.

According to CMDHD’s Health Officer, Steve Hall, “While we didn’t see an increase in the ranking this year, the work that this group has done is impressive. With their continued effort, we will see an improvement in the health of our community. I encourage everyone to get involved in their health!” The Roscommon Health

Improvement Planning Workgroup is working with head starts and local schools. They are also planning a community garden to improve access to healthy food.

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 Roscommon County consider joining Together We Can or The Roscommon County Health Improvement Planning workgroup. For more information visit 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.

###

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).