CLARE COUNTY CONTINUES TO GET 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. In 2010, Clare County gained notoriety for being ranked as the unhealthiest, 82 of 82. The new rankings paint a much better picture for Clare County, ranking in at 72!

Why the improvement? Since the Rankings were released 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. Clare County partnered with Gladwin County to begin their Health Improvement workgroup, which has been working since 2010 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!” The group has planned activities that range from cleaning a local park to helping provide free food to children in need.

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 Clare County consider joining Together We Can or The Clare-Gladwin 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.

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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).