



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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To: Roscommon County Media

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

RE: County Health Rankings

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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. Last year's rankings had Roscommon County at 75 of the 82 counties in Michigan that were ranked, this year Roscommon came in at 71.

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. 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, Mary Kushion, "This is an immense success for the Roscommon County Health Improvement workgroup. With partners that include representation from all over the community, this workgroup has been determined to improve their community." The group's partners have implemented walking to make their workday healthier.

The *County Health Rankings* will be discussed The 4th Annual Public Health Summit on April 8th, at The Comfort Inn in Mt. Pleasant. The event is free and will feature Lt. Governor Brian Calley, Dr. Craig Thomas from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Melissa Kesterson, a community garden coordinator. 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 LIKE Together We Can on Facebook or email us at TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.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 Mary Kushion, please go to our website and complete the on-line interview request form (left column, yellow box).