



NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer, 636-949-7408

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 29, 2017

ST. CHARLES COUNTY TOPS MISSOURI'S HEALTHIEST COUNTIES LIST

County Health Rankings Report Places St. Charles 1st in State for Health Factors, 2nd for Health Outcomes

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – For the eighth consecutive year, St. Charles County ranks at the top of Missouri's "Healthiest Counties" list. The annual report, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute, places St. Charles County first in Missouri for the "Health Factors" category and second in the state for "Health Outcomes."

"As individuals and as a collective unit, our community has traditionally placed an emphasis on being healthy," Department of Public Health Director Hope Woodson says. "Earning these high rankings for an eighth consecutive year recognizes both our department's efforts to enhance this community and the commitment made by residents, businesses and leaders to make health a priority. Building upon an active citizenry, a strong economy and an extensive support network, we can proactively overcome potential health risks and educate residents on ways to further their quality of life."

Healthy behaviors, access to medical care and environmental surroundings influence a population's health. St. Charles County topped the state for the fifth consecutive year in the "Social and Economic Factors" category and received high marks for "Health Behaviors" and "Clinical Care" to earn its first place ranking in Health Factors. A low premature death rate that is among the top 10 percent in the nation and a low percentage of those reporting to be in poor or fair health contributed to the second place ranking in Health Outcomes.

"Even with our continued high ranking, there is more that can be achieved to improve the health of our citizens," Woodson notes. "Staff from the Department of Public Health actively networks with medical professionals, community leaders and our residents to assess needs, monitor threats and reduce incidences of illness. In addition, the services we offer have a direct impact on the well-being of our community."

Services provided by the Department of Public Health include: free and low-cost preventative immunizations for children and adults; the prevention, detection and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases; and nutritional counseling and assistance for growing families through the WIC program. Additionally, department staff engages in educational partnerships and outreach to counter the prescription drug and opioid drug abuse problem, address hygiene and safety issues for young children, parents and caregivers; prepare for public health emergencies and natural disasters; and much more.

(MORE)

(County Health Rankings – continued p.2)

This recognition furthers the notion that St. Charles County is an excellent place to raise a family or to start, grow or relocate a business. The county continues to have one of the state's fastest growing populations, with an estimated 390,000 residents — 77 percent of whom the Health Rankings report notes as having some college education and 90 percent are high school graduates. An affordable cost-of-living and competitive operating expenses make St. Charles County home to a host of top global companies like Boeing, Citi, Enterprise Holdings, General Motors, MasterCard and Nike; which, in turn, contributes to the county having the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan Area and accounts for nearly 7 percent of Missouri's total economy.

The annual County Health Rankings are based upon public data collected from vital statistics and government health surveys. Health Outcomes are a representation of the current health of a community, with rankings determined by how long people live (mortality) and how healthy they feel (morbidity). Health Factors allude to the population's health in the future and the items that influence overall well-being. The complete nationwide and Missouri-specific rankings may be viewed at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

-end-

The St. Charles County Department of Public Health is committed to the protection and enhancement of health and the quality of life for all members of our community. Through three divisions — Environmental Health and Protection, Health Services and Humane Services — the department provides a wide range of services that have a profound impact on the lives of St. Charles County's residents and visitors. To discover ways that the department assists this region or to learn about volunteer opportunities with any of the divisions, please visit www.sccmo.org/PublicHealth or call 636-949-7400.

*Issued since 2010, the **County Health Rankings** are a joint effort by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute that is designed to lay groundwork for health improvement efforts by government officials, organizations and citizens throughout the United States. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable, and timely change. For information, visit www.rwjf.org. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute is the focal point within the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health for translating public health and health policy research into practice. For more information, visit <http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu>.*