

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 25, 2015

**Contact:** Karrey Britt  
Communications Coordinator  
Office: (785) 856-7362

## **Report ranks Douglas County as eighth healthiest in Kansas**

**(Lawrence, KS)** – Douglas County is the eighth healthiest county in Kansas, the same as last year, according to the County Health Rankings report released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. When it comes to health outcomes — length of life and quality of life — Douglas County has ranked among the state’s Top 10 counties since the report was first published in 2010.

The report also ranks counties based on the factors that influence health outcomes: behavior, clinical care, social and economic status, and physical environment. Douglas County ranked No. 7, down one spot from last year.

“The real story is not that we remain ranked as the eighth healthiest county in Kansas but in what the 35 measures used to create that ranking says about what a community needs to support good health,” said Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director Dan Partridge. “Living healthy is more than an individual choice, it is also about the choices we make as a community. Good jobs, good housing and a good education are keys to good health.”

Areas of concern where Douglas County continues to lag behind state averages include sexually transmitted infections, affordable housing, and violent crime. “Violence influences the health and quality of life of those directly and indirectly affected,” Partridge said. Douglas County also is worse off than the state in income inequality, a new measure added to the report this year.

Partridge said it was encouraging to see improvement in Douglas County’s high school graduation rate and access to exercise opportunities. These improvements were highlighted in a recent progress report about the community health plan, “Roadmap to a Healthier Douglas County.”

Results of this year’s County Health Rankings are available online at [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org). According to the report, the state’s five healthiest counties are: Riley, Johnson, Pottawatomie, Stevens and Jewell. The least healthy are: Woodson, Decatur, Cherokee, Greenwood and Labette.