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Report ranks Douglas County as eighth healthiest in Kansas

(Lawrence, KS) – Douglas County is the eighth healthiest county in Kansas for the third consecutive 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. 11, down four spots from last year.

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director Dan Partridge said the rankings make it clear that good health includes many factors such as jobs, housing, smoking and access to health care — factors that Douglas County can do something about. “Building a culture of health means creating a community that gives every person, no matter who they are or where they live, the opportunity to be as healthy as they can be,” he said.

While Douglas County ranked high overall, the report helps identify areas where the county historically falls behind state averages. These areas include sexually transmitted infections, excessive drinking, uninsured residents and affordable housing.

There has been positive momentum, too. For example, Douglas County fares better than the state in areas such as teen births, access to exercise opportunities and adult obesity. “Health is everyone’s responsibility,” Partridge said. “When we improve the environments and behaviors that drive health outcomes, we become healthier together.”

The report is available at countyhealthrankings.org. According to the report, the state’s five healthiest counties are: Johnson, Thomas, Logan, Pottawatomie and Doniphan. The least healthy are: Wyandotte, Labette, Decatur, Cherokee and Wilson.