



Kane County Health Department

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Health Rankings show where Kane is doing well, where we need to improve

The County Health Rankings, a national study released today, show once again that Kane County residents are some of the healthiest in the state, but they also highlight areas that need to be addressed in order to achieve the Kane County Health Department's 2030 vision of having the healthiest residents in Illinois. Kane ranked 9th out of 102 Illinois counties in Health Outcomes, an improvement from 11th last year.

"We are happy that we're moving in the right direction. We can see with this study that where we live, learn, work and play influences how healthy we are and how long we live. So much of what influences our health happens outside of the doctor's office," said Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert.

The study shows Kane County dropping to 41st in Health Factors, a decline from 19th last year. The Health Factors part of the study highlights areas that need improvement in order to achieve better Health Outcomes. Below are some areas to be addressed:

- Adult smoking—17 percent in Kane County; national benchmark: 15 percent.
- Adult obesity—28 percent in Kane County; national benchmark: 25 percent.
- Teen birth rate—46 per 1,000 female population between 13 and 19 years; national benchmark: 22 per thousand of that population.

"Smoking and obesity tie directly into chronic disease, while a high teen birth rate will tie into infant mortality disparities. We must continue to work as a community to attend to these health factors and make progress in order to move toward having the healthiest residents in Illinois," Kuehnert said. "We are fortunate that so many Kane community members and
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leaders—from parents to faith leaders to elected officials at all levels—are working in active health partnerships, like ‘Making Kane County Fit for Kids,’ the Kane County Perinatal Committee, and the Aurora and Elgin ‘Circles of Wise Women’ to address these health issues in Kane.”

The County Health Rankings Report also identifies key measures of Social and Economic impact on health, as well as the Environment. Key measures include:

- Unemployment, which was 10.3 percent at the time of the study in Kane, compared to 5.3 percent in the national comparison counties
- College education which was 59 percent in Kane, compared to 64 percent in the national comparison counties
- Uninsured which was 19 percent in Kane, compared to 13 percent nationally
- Air quality improved from last year, with Kane seeing two air pollution particulate matter days, a decline from four last year, and no ozone action days this year compared to nine last year.
- Access to healthy foods also showed an improvement, with 75 percent of the ZIP codes having access this year, compared to 43 percent last year

How we will use the results

The Health Department will use the results of this study as it conducts its Community Health Assessment, which currently is in its initial stages. The five-year update of the Kane’s Community Health Assessment and Community Health Action Plan will be completed by the end of 2011. Working with our partners, we will use the data in the County Health Rankings report, a comprehensive community health risk behavior survey, data from other surveys and sources such as the 2010 Census, as well as focus groups and a series of community meetings to develop an updated blue print for improving the health of Kane County residents over the next five years.

Kane County started to address some of the significant issues raised in the Health Rankings long before the first Rankings were issued last year. Based on the recommendations of the County’s Regional Planning Commission and at the direction of the County Board, the County’s staff in Development and Community Services, Health and Transportation have begun updating the 2030 Land Resource Management Plan to a new 2040 Plan. The Making Kane County Fit for Kids initiative, with its goal of promoting active living and access to fresh foods, released its Fit Kids’ 2020 Plan in January. The Fit Kids 2020 plan focuses on sector specific issues that each community can address to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity and will be integrated into the 2040 Land Resource Management Plan.

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The Study

The second annual study, commissioned and paid for by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and conducted by the University of Wisconsin's Population Institute, ranks each county in a state in Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Health Outcomes were measured by length and quality of life. Health Factors include clinical care, health behaviors, social and economic factors and physical environment. In simple terms, Health Outcomes can be described as a snapshot of our resident's current health, and Health Factors can be seen as a potential picture of their health in the future.

To find more information about the County Health Rankings, including accessing the full report, please visit www.kanehealth.com.

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