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SEDGWICK COUNTY HEALTH RANKING REMAINS STABLE IN 2014 **Sedgwick County's Health is Ranked Among 98 Kansas Counties**

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – Sedgwick County, KS health ranking remains relatively stable, according to the “2014 County Health Rankings,” released today from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The findings show that health behavior and social and economic factors continue to impact the county’s health. The rankings may be found at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

What do the rankings tell us?

The County Health Rankings are snapshots of the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. The rankings are determined by two measures: health outcomes and health factors. Health outcomes refer to how healthy a community is and health factors represent what influences the health of a county. The rankings allow counties to see how they are doing on 29 factors that influence health including smoking, high school graduation rates, employment, physical inactivity and access to healthy foods.

These rankings help to illustrate that health is complex and cannot be measured by any one factor.

How did Sedgwick County rank?

Sedgwick County rankings are mostly unchanged from last year. Based on the health outcome measures (length and quality of life), Sedgwick County ranked 69th out of 102 ranked counties in Kansas. Sedgwick County was ranked 72nd in 2013.

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Sedgwick County ranked 75th for health factors that affect people's health within four categories: health behavior (48th), clinical care (17th), social and economic factors (91th), and physical environment (86th). In 2013 Sedgwick County was ranked 80th in this category.

"These rankings highlight areas where we excel compared to other parts of the state, like the fact that we are a medical hub and have proportionately higher numbers of primary care physicians and dentists," said Sedgwick County Health Department Director Claudia Blackburn. "They also illustrate social and economic factors where we rank poorly compared to other counties in Kansas."

Clinical care and access (measured as availability of providers) are high in Sedgwick County, yet 40 percent of women report not receiving recommended mammogram screenings. Among those socioeconomic factors, less education, more poverty and higher violent crime as compared to the rest of the state continue to affect the health of the community. These factors include:

- 75 percent high school graduation rate
- Almost one in four children in Sedgwick County live in poverty
- Sedgwick County has the highest crime rate in the state

There is also the need for continued work around individual health behaviors that lead to alcohol-impaired driving deaths, sexually transmitted diseases and teen births.

How does the health department use the rankings?

Assessing the health of the community and influencing health behaviors are core functions of public health and two of the many important roles for the Sedgwick County Health Department. The health department uses these data and others like it to better understand factors contributing to health, and engage residents and community leaders to take actions that support community health improvement.

The rankings support the work being done around many of the health priorities outlined in our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The plan focuses on access, obesity and diabetes, mental health, oral health, and health disparities.

At the community level, the health department works with a number of coalitions, such as the Visioneering Health Alliance and the Health and Wellness Coalition to catalyze action around policies that will create environmental change. At the department level we engage in programs to influence behavior change such as Healthy Today Healthy Tomorrow, which focuses on providing education to teens that will result in lower birth rates.

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Additional community health information can be found in the 2013-2015 Community Health Improvement Plan, available at www.sedgwickcounty.org.

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