



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

POST OFFICE BOX 962, 1080 EMELINE AVENUE SANTA CRUZ, CA 95061-0962
(831) 454-4000 FAX: (831) 454-4488 TDD: (831) 454-4123

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

Media Release

For immediate release:
Date: March 26, 2014

Contact: Lisa Hernandez, Health Officer
Phone: 831-454-4000
Email: lisa.hernandez@santacruzcountv.us

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA - According to the fifth annual *County Health Rankings*, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI), Santa Cruz County has achieved a ranking of 11 out of 57 California counties in Health Outcomes and a ranking of 11 out of 57 California counties in Health Factors. The Health Outcomes ranking represents an improvement over last year's score of 13 out of 57 while the Health Factors ranking went from 10 to 11 out of 57 this year. The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. Nationally, the data revealed that unhealthy counties have more than twice the rate of premature deaths than healthy ones and childhood poverty rates are twice as high in unhealthy counties. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how they compare to other counties within the state based on a range of factors that influence health including high school graduation rates, obesity, smoking, and family and social support.

The *Rankings* include a snapshot of each county in California with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. There are also new county-level trend graphs detailing change over time for several of the measures, including children in poverty, unemployment, and quality of care.

"We are very pleased that Santa Cruz County ranks as one of the healthiest in our state," said Lisa B. Hernandez, MD, MPH, Health Officer for Santa Cruz County. "But we still have areas of concern that need our attention. Partnering with other agencies, such as United Way has strengthened our ability to respond to health challenges in obesity and nutrition, despite the economic downturn in recent years."

The *Rankings* are one part of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program. Communities are taking information from the *County Health Rankings* and using the *County Health Roadmaps* to build connections with local and national partners to improve health.

###