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## Collier Ranks Healthiest County in Florida... Again!

**Collier:** For the second consecutive year, Collier County is ranked the healthiest county in Florida. Today, the County Health Rankings 2011 Report was released by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The Report, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is the most comprehensive report of its kind to rank the overall health of nearly every county in the United States by using a standard way to measure how healthy people are and how long they live. The Rankings help everyone see how where people live, learn, work and play significantly impacts the overall health of our community and each person living in it.

"Being ranked the healthiest county in Florida, means people living in Collier County enjoy longer lives and are healthier than people living in any other county in our state," explains Dr. Joan Colfer, Director of the Collier County Health Department. "The credit for our stellar number one status belongs to the entire community as the health of our community depends on every individual and a variety of stakeholders including our hospital systems, healthcare providers, emergency services, law enforcement, education, public and social services and employment. Everyone has a stake in our community's health - when individuals choose to eat healthy, exercise, drive responsibly, avoid tobacco and not abuse alcohol, they contribute to not only their own good health, but the overall health of our community." To determine county health status, morbidity (quality of life) and mortality (length of life) data is ranked. Based on those rankings, it was determined Collier County is the healthiest county in Florida.

While Collier ranked the healthiest in the state, the reports helps community leaders determine where more work is needed. The Collier County Health Department and partner agencies met last November to discuss the 2010 Rankings and discussed how to sustain the number one status attained in last year's report. Over 100 county leaders attended the meeting entitled, "Sustaining Excellence". Dr. Allen Weiss, President & CEO of NCH Healthcare System, reports, "The conference was a successful collaboration where leaders worked synergistically to create solutions instead of agencies working in silos. Along with the health department, we are already planning another workshop to continue our efforts to sustain the good health of Collier County."

The Rankings, available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org), includes a snapshot of each county in Florida with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. Researchers used five measures to assess the level of overall health or "health outcomes" for Florida by county: the rate of people dying before age 75, the percent of people who report being in fair or poor health, the numbers of days people report being in poor physical and poor mental health, and the rate of low birth weight infants. The Rankings also look at factors that affect people's health within four categories: health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. Among the many health factors they looked at rates of adult smoking, adult obesity, excessive drinking among adults, and teenage births; the number of uninsured adults, availability of primary care providers, and preventable hospital stays; rates of high school graduation, adults who have attended college, children in poverty; community safety; access to healthy foods and recreational facilities; and air pollution levels.

**"The County Health Rankings help everyone see that much of what influences our health happens outside of the doctor's office and where we live matters to our health,"** says Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., President and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "We hope this second annual release of County Health Rankings data will spur all sectors – government, business, community and faith-based groups, education and public health – to work together to find solutions and take action and implement programs and policy changes to improve health."

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