How Does Santa Barbara County Compare?

On April 3, 2012, Health Rankings for all counties in the United States were released. These rankings compare counties by state on a variety of health measures. In 2012, 56 of California’s 58 counties were ranked. Santa Barbara County ranked 19th in Health Outcomes and 15th in Health Factors. This is somewhat lower than in 2011 when Santa Barbara County ranked 18th in Health Outcomes and 13th in Health Factors. With these rankings, health agencies, community leaders and stakeholders throughout our county can see what is affecting the health of county residents and use that information to develop solutions to improve health in Santa Barbara County.

The annual County Health Rankings information looks at two primary areas: Health Outcomes, which reflect the health of our community today, and Health Factors which looks at measures that will affect the health of our community tomorrow. Health outcomes include data about death and illness in our community. Health factors look at things that drive health such as diet, exercise, tobacco use, access to and the quality of clinical care, and poverty.

The Robert Wood Johnson and University of Wisconsin Population Health institute have released the County Health Rankings each year since 2010. The rankings provide nearly every county in the country with easy-to-understand information on data related to health.

Dr. Takashi Wada, Director of the Public Health Department and Health Officer for the County stated, “The rankings are intended to be a starting point for our community to assess and address health issues. We want to look at where Santa Barbara County excels and strengthen those areas. We also want to identify areas needing improvement where we can work with community partners to make policy changes and improve health outcomes across the county.”

Rankings for Santa Barbara County Health Outcomes include the following:
- Mortality (premature death) – 15 of 56
- Morbidity (days of poor physical health, days of poor mental health, low birth weight) – 31 of 56

Rankings for Santa Barbara County Health Factors include the following:
- Health Behaviors (adult smoking, adult obesity, physical inactivity, excessive drinking, motor vehicle crash rate, sexually transmitted diseases, teen birth rate) – 8 of 56
- Clinical Care (uninsured adults, primary care provider ratio, preventable hospital stays, diabetes and mammography screening) – 12 of 56
- Social & economic factors (residents with high school diploma, some college and college diploma, unemployment, children in poverty, inadequate social support, children in single parent households, violent crime rate) – 19 of 56
- Physical Environment (air pollution, limited access to healthy food, fast food restaurants, and recreational activities) – 23 of 56

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