

# **Delaware General Health District**

## ***Dedicated to your health***

# NEWS RELEASE

## **DELAWARE TOPS OHIO AGAIN IN 2ND-YEAR COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS**

P.O. Box 570            1-3 W. Winter St.      Delaware OH 43015  
740-368-1700          FAX 740-368-1736      Web Site: [www.delawarehealth.org](http://www.delawarehealth.org)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

**DELAWARE, Oh., March 30, 2011** – Delaware County came out on top in Ohio again in the second annual county-by-county health rankings issued today.

For the second straight year, Delaware County ranked best in Ohio in both health outcomes and health factors. Delaware County’s rankings improved over last year in the four categories of Health Factors utilized in the report. The rankings, presented by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, are available online at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

Delaware County was best in Ohio in the mortality ranking, calculated from deaths of residents under age 75.

Probably of greater importance, Delaware County continued to lead Ohio in health factors, the categories that predict future health and longevity of a population. Delaware County led the state with the best health behaviors, including the lowest smoking and obesity rates, and for the overall clinical care used by residents. It also ranked first in social and economic factors including college education, employment, and low poverty among children. And Delaware County tied with Hamilton County for the best access to recreational facilities – a measure linked to physical activity which is vital to good health.

“We are excited,” said Delaware Health Commissioner Frances M. Veverka MPH R.S. “Still, we have a ways to go to reach optimal public health goals, especially against obesity. We are fortunate to live in a county where so many organization and medical providers work together to address community health needs.”

“We will be continuing work to prevent obesity with innovative efforts to improve children’s eating habits and physical activity. And we are looking forward to working with our community partners in the ACHIEVE grant program to implement more efforts toward an even healthier Delaware County in the future,” Veverka said.

Despite Delaware County’s continued good ranking, Veverka added concern that there are still people lacking good health, access to health care and healthy foods.

The health outcomes rankings are based on both mortality (life length) and morbidity, a measure that includes self-reported health status, days of poor physical and mental health, and numbers of low birth weight infants. Most of the rankings are based on several years of data. Delaware County ranked best in the categories counting people in poor or fair health and people having poor physical health days.

Sixteen categories were used to create the health factors rankings, and Delaware County led the state in six of them: Adult smoking, adult obesity, college attendance, employment, low child poverty, and access to recreational facilities. The sixteen categories are organized into four groups, and Delaware County had the top ranking for three of them: Health Behaviors, Clinical Care, and Social and Economic Factors.

Delaware County also led the state last year in Social and Economic Factors, and was second-best in Health Behaviors and fourth-best in Clinical Care. Delaware County also improved this year in the fourth group, Physical Environment, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Physical Environment ranking covers ozone and particulate air pollution and access to healthy foods and recreational facilities. Delaware County was hurt by below-average rankings in the two air pollution categories, but was helped by the relatively large number of local recreational facilities.

While Delaware County led Ohio in the county rankings, Ohio’s ranking among the 50 states remains below average at 34<sup>th</sup>. That’s according to the America’s Health Rankings issued earlier this year by the United Health Foundation. That report lists air pollution and a high cancer death rate among Ohio’s greatest health challenges, and shows Ohio’s smoking rate is dropping but its obesity rate is rising.

The Delaware Board of Health’s top priorities include Chronic Disease Prevention and Youth Risk Prevention, both of which cover a number of categories considered in the County Health Rankings.