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Henderson County Department of Public Health

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Henderson County ranked among healthiest in North Carolina

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. (March 10, 2021) – Henderson County has been ranked as the healthiest county in Western North Carolina and among the healthiest in the state, according to the 2020 County Health Rankings report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Henderson County achieved one of its highest combined rankings ever in the report, which evaluates both health factors and outcomes in all 100 counties. In overall health outcomes, Henderson County's rank improved from 13 in 2019 to 8 in 2020. In overall health factors, the county improved from 5 to 3.

The release of the County Health Rankings report in any other year would have garnered more attention. This has largely gone unnoticed given the challenges posed by COVID-19, which remains the top priority for public health. Despite the current challenges, it is important to take a moment to celebrate the county's achievements and progress with improving health.

"The recognition is certainly welcome and validates the strategic direction created by the board to unite in an organized way with our many community partners to address needs identified in the community health assessment and prioritize key initiatives that are clearly making a difference," said Dr. Craig Poole, Chair of the Henderson County Board of Health. "The board is proud of the department, the community and the efforts of our partners which are connected through the Partnership for Health."

The county's current priorities include mental health, substance misuse, physical activity, nutrition as well as safe and affordable housing. An update about those efforts is available in the 2020 State of the County's Health report available at: <https://www.hendersoncountync.gov/health/page/state-county-health-report>

"It has been a remarkable few years and I am privileged to serve on both boards and to have led some of the initial community conversations about mental health and substance misuse," said Bill Lapsley, Chairman of the Henderson County Board of Commissioners. "I commend the Commissioners for forming the Substance Abuse Task Force which I chaired on their behalf. That group and other community conversations led to our success with multiple grant resources that are now building upon the foundation that the Hope Coalition and Partnership for Health have established.

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“The strategic investments by the Commissioners for school nurses, social workers and the behavioral health system coordinator are also adding value to our collective vision for improved health in Henderson County,” Lapsley added.

The Henderson County Partnership for Health, a coalition of community organizations supporting collective efforts to address the health priorities, has also been briefed on the recent report.

“We are thrilled with the County Health Rankings report; this year’s ranking is clear confirmation of the strength of collaboration and of our community’s tremendous commitment to work together toward common goals,” said Judith Long, Chair of the Partnership.

“We all acknowledge that there is still much work to be done, but the progress we have made together over the last several years is truly remarkable,” Long added. “These rankings demonstrate the efficacy of our efforts, and the affirmation inherent in these rankings underscores and deepens our collective commitment to tackle those unmet needs and challenges. I am honored and privileged to work with my colleagues to create the change we seek and to contribute to the improvement of the health and vitality of our community.”

For more details and metrics on the County Health Rankings can be seen at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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