
Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health (MATCH): The County Health Rankings

In January 2009, the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (the Institute) began a three-year project entitled *Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health* (MATCH). This project, supported by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is designed to

- Increase awareness of the many factors—health care access and quality, health-promoting behaviors, socio-economic factors, and the physical environment—that contribute to the health of communities
- Foster engagement among public and private decision makers to improve community health
- Develop incentives to encourage coordination across sectors for community health improvement, and
- Create innovative approaches to sharing the results of community health improvement efforts.

To fulfill its first objective—increase the awareness of the broad determinants of health—the Institute will prepare county health rankings for each state in the nation. These *County Health Rankings* will compile data for every county in all 50 states on health outcomes and measures¹ known to affect health in four key categories (health determinants):

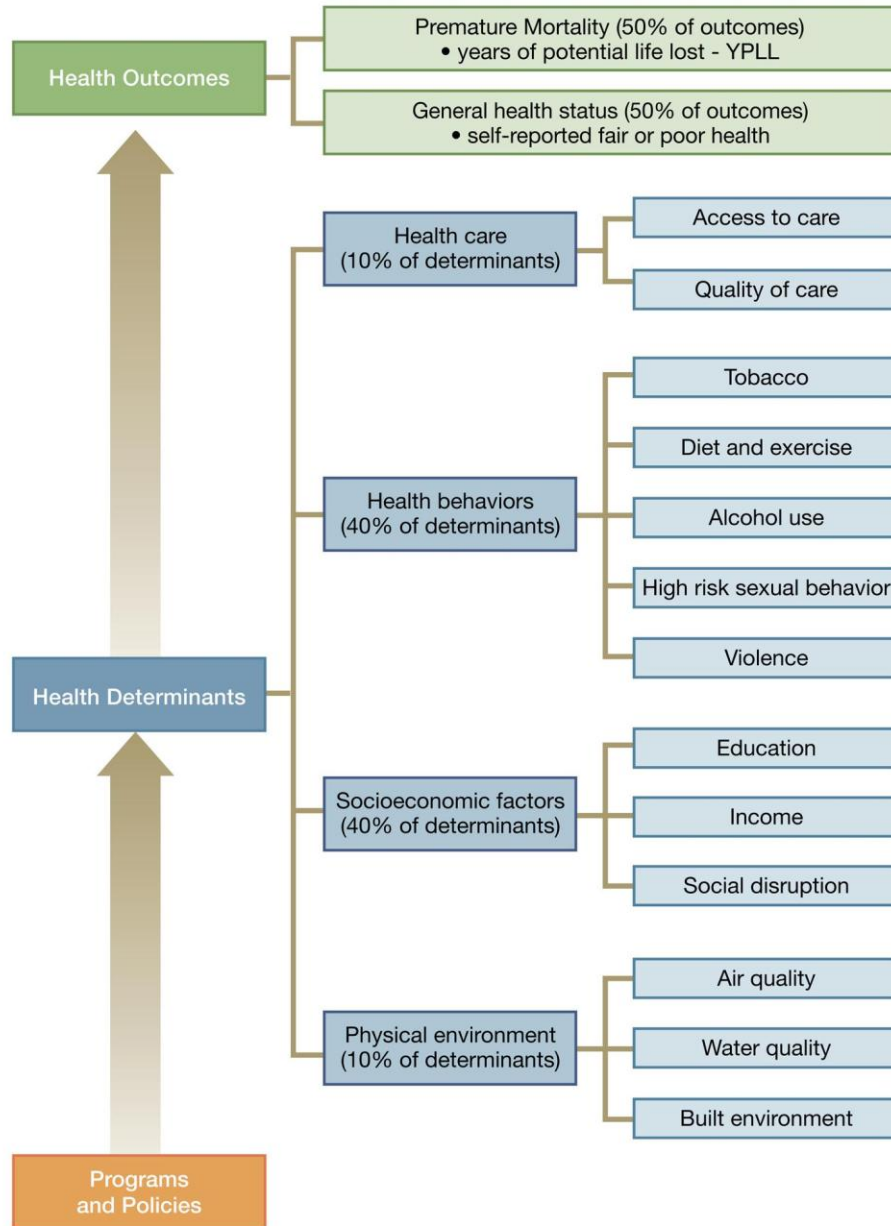
- **Health outcomes** include measures of premature mortality and health-related quality of life (self-reported health status).
- **Health determinants** include measures of
 - Health care quality and access
 - Personal health behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol use and obesity
 - Socio-economic factors, including measures of education and poverty, and
 - Environmental health, such as measures of air quality and the built environment.

These *County Health Rankings*, planned for release by January 2010, will be based on the Wisconsin model (shown on the next page) that has been used for the last six years to rank the health of Wisconsin's counties. In this model, health determinants represent a county's "health risk" or predictor of future health, while health outcomes serve as an assessment of current health.

The counties within each state will be ranked separately on health outcomes and health determinants so counties can use the results as a summary of current health and potential future health in their communities. According to the model, improvements in health determinants should, over time, result in improved health outcomes at the community level. The *Rankings* are intended to serve as a "Call to Action" for communities to their health by developing multi-sector partnerships and innovative strategies to address the broad determinants of health.

¹ Final decisions on measures will be made by Summer 2009.

The Wisconsin Model of Population Health



For more information, visit <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/pha/match.htm> or contact Bridget Booske, MATCH Deputy Director, at bbooske@wisc.edu