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## Marinette County health rankings below average

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# Marinette County health rankings below average



According to a report on county health released by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Marinette County ranked 67th in the state. The 2008 rankings summarize the current health of the counties, using different information sources, including reasons for death and a person's quality of health.

"Research has shown that the health of a community is determined by a number of factors; including the quality of health care, health behaviors, social and economic factors, and physical environment," stated Dr. Patrick Remington, Director, Population Health Institute. Marinette County ranked in the top quarter of the state for women who receive mammography check-ups for breast cancer and diabetic care. It also has high rates of important health behaviors such as binge drinking (27%) and teen birth rates. It has, however, a high rate of smoking (29%), and high rate of physical inactivity (50%).

Marinette County is below average in the social and economic factors that influence health. For example, Marinette County has high rate of divorce (63rd) and unemployment (57th). However, despite having a relatively high divorce rate, the county has a fairly low rate of single-parent households and of children living in poverty (11%).

Marinette County also has one of the highest rankings of its physical environment (13th). It is 24th in the state in nitrates in water and 23rd in the percentage of screened homes with a risk of radon. Other neighboring counties had similar rankings.

"Our community's health plan, Healthy People Healthy Marinette County, focuses on four ways to improve upon the health of Marinette County residents. By working together we can make our community a healthier and safer place to live," said Mary Mursau, Director, Marinette County Health Department. Marinette County is focusing on a number of health priorities that have been identified by community members. The four health priorities identified by the coalition is to increase access to health care, improve nutrition and increase physical activity; support mental health and prevent mental disorders and reduce alcohol and tobacco use in the community.

Health Department Director Mursau noted that Wisconsin as a state compares poorly with Minnesota. "While Minnesota ranks second in the nation in health, Wisconsin has been falling rank in recent years. Our state spends only about \$7 per person for public health and ranks 4th in the nation. Minnesota spends seven times that amount and it shows in its health outcomes."

To learn more call the health department at 715-732-7670. For more information on the health rankings, visit: <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/researchrankings2008/rankings2008.htm>.