



Lake County General Health District

NEWS RELEASE
March 30, 2011

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LAKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

LAKE COUNTY SHOWS IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH RANKINGS IN OHIO

Lake County improved in Health Factors according to the *2011 County Health Rankings*, being ranked 14th in Ohio moving up from its ranking of 17th in 2010. Lake County remained 13th in Health Outcomes as it was in 2010. Lake County Health Commissioner Frank Kellogg commented, "Although we're pleased to see improvement in the Health Factors ranking, we must keep in mind that Lake County's ranking is relative to all of Ohio's 88 other counties. In some instances, it may also be a reflection of declining conditions elsewhere in the State."

2011 is the second of the three-year project where county rankings will be issued. The rankings help Lake County leaders to understand what factors have influenced how it can continue to be a healthy place to live, learn, work, and play. Lake County's high ranking reflects the priority it has placed on influencing the factors that affect residents' health. It also shows how important it will be to sustain those programs in order to stay healthy. "Keep in mind that the biggest determinant of health status and our ranking is income and education," said Kellogg. "Lake County is blessed with a well-educated population and higher-than-average income levels." Lake County looks forward to sharing what has worked well in its community with other counties in Ohio. Lake County also plans to consult with leaders in counties that ranked higher in certain areas to learn effective best practices.

Even though Lake County ranked among the best in the area of socio-economic and other factors, these rates are far from ideal and do not meet the current goals set for the county. Most health status indicators are linked to specific behaviors. Fifty percent of all premature death is linked to obesity, tobacco use, nutrition, lack of exercise, and drug and alcohol abuse. "Only individuals can change their behavior," stated Kellogg. "It is largely a matter of individual choice, motivation, access, and other factors."

"Our behavioral choices were also clearly evident in the raw data from our 2,500 participant community health assessment data," declared Kellogg. In order to help direct public health services in Lake County, Lake County General Health District in partnership with Lake Health and other local agencies conducted a Community Health Assessment in October through December of 2010. The intent of the assessment was to obtain information that could be used to improve existing services and create new services in Lake County to better serve everyone. The results of the survey will soon be made available and will provide community agencies, including health care, non-profit, and local business with information to help evaluate and plan over the next five years. This will allow for targeted cost-effective programs and the creation of services that work and benefit Lake County residents. The Lake County General Health District's Health Assessment, a project led by Ron Graham, Deputy Health Commissioner, will be available in May 2011.

"Much of our Health District efforts are now beginning to move from traditional public health programming to focus on behavioral choices, which can be seen from new Health District programs, including **JUST RUN!®**, Action Communities in Health, Innovation, and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE), Veggie U, and Breathe

Well, Breathe Free; as well as our drug abuse prevention and childhood obesity prevention efforts,” commented Health Commissioner Kellogg." Furthermore, the Health District has been successful in acquiring national, state, and local grants with the intention of using them to support those in the front lines of community health. Graham commented, "Too often, we preach what people *should* do rather than helping them implement programs hand in hand. The ACHIEVE project and *JUST RUN*® are examples of the Health District providing the expertise, funds, and resources needed to help businesses and schools take the next step toward implementing sustainable programs."

The *County Health Rankings* show that where we live matters to our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors – ranging from individual health behaviors, education and jobs, to quality of health care, to the environment. This first-of-its-kind collection of 50 reports – one per state – helps community leaders see that where we live, learn, work, and play influences how healthy we are and how long we live. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is collaborating with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute to develop these Rankings for each state’s counties. This model has been used to rank the health of counties in Wisconsin for the past six years. For more information, visit the online report at www.countyhealthrankings.org .

The Lake Health District Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the goal of helping to expand innovative programming to Lake County residents, such as the Northeast Ohio Drug Repository Program that provides low-cost prescription medication to qualified Lake County residents. The Lake Health District Fund, in partnership with the Lake County General Health District, is developing a public obesity prevention campaign to raise funds to support health programs in schools. Graham commented, "We cannot expect one agency alone to combat obesity and poor lifestyle habits. We have been aggressively pursuing partnerships with Lake Health, Lake County Free Medical Clinic, schools, and numerous others to lead a coordinated and cost-effective effort in our county". Community partners, Businesses and Health Professionals can contact the Director of Community Health Services, Ron Graham at 440-350-2358 or rgraham@lcghd.org to get involved today.

For more information on the Lake County General Health District's programming visit:

www.lcghd.org

[http://www.justrun.org/JUST RUN Satellites/Lake County OH.htm](http://www.justrun.org/JUST_RUN_Satellites/Lake_County_OH.htm)

www.lakecountyohio.gov/achieve

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