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March 31, 2015

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## **County Shows Improvement in 2015 PA Health Rankings; Still Has Work to Do**

**PITTSBURGH** – Allegheny County Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker lauded the recent *County Health Rankings* issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in which Allegheny County improved from 40<sup>th</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> out of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, but also noted that there continues to be room for improvement.

“We are excited to see the improvement noted in our health outcomes, but recognize that we still have work to do. This is particularly true in areas related to health behaviors, environmental and social factors that impact Allegheny County residents,” said Dr. Hacker. “Our recent health assessment and upcoming Allegheny Health Survey will help us get more timely data to determine progress.”

According to the annual *County Health Rankings*, Allegheny County is now ranked 34<sup>th</sup> out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania on health outcomes which relate to length of life and quality of life. The measurement of the health of the community includes physical activity, substance abuse, obesity, smoking, access to healthy foods, the quality of air and water as well as social factors such as unemployment and poverty. The improvement in the county’s ranking was driven largely by a decrease in premature death, and was based on 2010-2012 state data.

Allegheny County has room to improve on health factors as the county fell from 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>. Health factors include health behaviors, social and economic factors and physical environment. While there have been improvements in preventable hospital stays, violent crime and air pollution (PM 2.5), obesity and sexually transmitted diseases have climbed and mammography screening has declined.

“Improving community health is a collaborative effort. Data, such as that provided by the *County Health Rankings*, can help us work together to improve the health of our residents,” said Dr. Hacker. “The Health Department relies on data for decision making to improve community health. Our recent community health assessment and community health improvement plan, which is in progress, will help to focus efforts of the entire county on areas of concern.”

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, released its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual *County Health Rankings* on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The rankings show counties where they stand as well as where they are improving or declining, so they can address issues for the future and improve the health of their citizens. The full report can be found at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

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