

April 5, 2011

Mason County Commissioners  
415 N 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Shelton WA 98584

**TO:** KMAS, KRXV, Shelton-Mason County Journal, The Olympian, Shelton Chamber of Commerce, North Mason Chamber of Commerce, City of Shelton, Economic Development Council, The Sun

**RE:** 2011 County Health Rankings

Where we live matters to our health. The recent release of the 2011 County Health Rankings reveals 80% of what influences our health happens outside the doctor's office. Thirty percent of our health is influenced by individual health behaviors, 40% is influenced by the social and economic conditions we live in, and 10% of our health is influenced by the physical environment. In other words, our quality of health and length of life is strongly determined by where we live, learn, work, and play.

The second edition of the County Health Rankings, published by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranks counties in all 50 states by Health Outcomes (how healthy are we?) and Health Factors (how healthy can we be?). Mason County's rankings have not changed significantly from last year's report, ranking 35 out of 39 counties in Health Outcomes, meaning residents are more likely to have a chronic disease or die at an early age than in other Washington counties. Mason County ranks 30 out of 39 in Health Factors, which are the factors *today* that will influence our health *in the future* such as individual health behaviors, access to quality health care, the social and economic conditions in which we live, and the physical environment.

The County Health Rankings model depicts the percentages to which each Health Factor influences our overall health (Health Outcomes) and highlights evidence-based programs and policies that have been shown to improve health in communities.

## **County Health Rankings Model**

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## News Release

It's easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle when you live in a healthy community. The least healthy counties in Washington are more likely to have higher rates of smoking, poorer access to care, fewer opportunities for physical activity, more high-school dropouts, and higher rates of unemployment and poverty. The County Health Rankings report helps us identify the factors that are making it difficult for Mason County residents to maintain a healthy lifestyle and understand that health is *everyone's* responsibility. Individuals, media, health care, business, education and government sectors must recognize all the factors that influence the health of a community and work together to create programs and policies that will help people lead healthier lives.

Since the last Health Rankings report, Mason County Public Health has provided a series of community presentations about the factors that influence poor health in a community and the evidence based strategies that can help Mason County improve its health rankings. They were recently awarded an ACHIEVE grant to conduct a community assessment and are working with the non-profit group, Mason Matters, to develop a community health improvement plan. They hope to partner with representatives from different sectors (business, education, health care, media, etc.), in an effort to make a significant improvement in the health of the community. If you are interested in scheduling a health ranking presentation or being involved in the community planning process, please contact Kim Klint or Lydia Buchheit at 427-9670 ext. 400 from Shelton, or 275-4467 x400 from Belfair, or 482-5269 x400 from Elma. Below is a sample of how Mason County is doing. Go to [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) for the complete report.

- **Access to healthy foods 33%. National Target 92%. Same as 2010.** What It Is: Access to healthy foods is measured as the percent of zip codes in a county

with a healthy food outlet, defined as a grocery store or produce stand/farmers' market.

- **County adult obesity rate is 29%. National Target 22%. 1% decrease from 2010.** What It Is: The adult obesity measure represents the percent of the adult population (age 20 and older) that has a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.
- **Some College 49%. National Target 68%. No baseline in 2010.** What It Is: This measure represents the percent of the population age 25-44 with some post-secondary education, such as enrollment at vocational/technical schools, junior colleges, or four-year colleges. It includes individuals who pursued education following high school but did not receive a degree.
- **Motor Vehicle crash Death Rate is 26 per 100,000. National Target 12 per 100,000. Decrease of 1 per 100,000.** What It Is: Motor vehicle crash deaths are measured as the crude mortality rate per 100,000 populations due to on- or off-road accidents involving a motor vehicle. Deaths due to boating accidents and airline crashes are not included in this measure.
- **Children in poverty is 19%. National Target 11%. 1% increase from 2010.** What It Is: Children in poverty is the percent of children under age 18 living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).