



**PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA**

Central Michigan District Health Department  
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8440  
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)

**To: Clare County Media**

**From: Sarah M. Kile, Advocacy Coordinator, [skile@cmdhd.org](mailto:skile@cmdhd.org)**

**RE: County Health Rankings**

**Release Date: March 20, 2013**

### CLARE COUNTY CONTINUES TO GET HEALTHIER

Each year since 2010, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute have released the annual *County Health Rankings*. Counties in each of the 50 states are ranked according to summaries of a variety of health measures. Those having high ranks (e.g. 1 or 2) are considered to be the "healthiest." Counties are ranked relative to the health of other counties in the same state. The 2010 County Health Rankings painted a troubling picture for the counties of central Michigan. Of the 82 Michigan counties evaluated, 6 central Michigan counties fell in the bottom half on health outcomes, and 3 of the 6 counties were ranked in the bottom 10 counties. In 2010 Clare County gained notoriety for being ranked as the unhealthiest, 82 of 82. The new rankings paint a much better picture for Clare County, ranking in at 75!

Why the improvement? Since the *Rankings* were released in 2010, the Central Michigan District Health Department embarked on the Together We Can initiative, an effort to improve the overall health of the more than 196,000 people within its health district; which includes the central Michigan counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. The primary strategy of the health improvement effort was to engage the community both as a whole and within each county with a call to action. Clare County partnered with Gladwin County to begin their Health Improvement workgroup, which has been working since 2010 to improve the health rankings for the community.

According to CMDHD's Health Officer, Mary Kushion, "This is an immense success for the Clare-Gladwin HIP workgroup. With partners that include representation from all over the community, this workgroup has certainly made

headway.” The group has planned activities that range from health fairs to healthy walks.

The *Rankings* will be discussed at The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Public Health Summit on April 8<sup>th</sup>, at The Comfort Inn in Mt. Pleasant. The event is free and will feature Lt. Governor Brian Calley, Dr. Craig Thomas from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Melissa Kesterson, a community garden coordinator. For more information please contact Allison Dunn at (989)773-5921 ext. 8413. We do ask that each person bring a fresh fruit or vegetable that will be donated to local food banks.

If you would like an opportunity to get involved to improve the health of Clare County consider joining Together We Can or The Clare-Gladwin Health Improvement Planning workgroup. For more information LIKE Together We Can on Facebook or email us at [TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.org](mailto:TogetherWeCan@cmdhd.org).

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon. Visit our website at [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org) and LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook.

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For an interview opportunity with Health Officer Mary Kushion, please go to our website and complete the on-line interview request form (left column, yellow box).