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Public Health
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March 15, 2018

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For Immediate Release:

Sauk County Shows Significant Improvement in County Health Rankings

Sauk County ranked 25 out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 21 for health factors, according to the eighth annual *County Health Rankings*, released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). Last year, Sauk County ranked 36 out of 72 counties for health outcomes and 32 for health factors. The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

An easy-to-use snapshot that compares counties within states, the *Rankings* show that where you live influences how well and how long you live. The local level data makes it clear that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care including housing, education, jobs, access to healthy foods, and more.

The County Health Rankings is a tool the health department uses in analyzing the health of Sauk County. Yearly trends are provided that allow the health department to assess improvements or declines in certain areas over a period of time.

The *Rankings* Key Findings Report show that the national percentage of babies born at low birthweight may be on the rise (8.2% in 2016, a 2% increase from 2014). However, Sauk County health rankings reveal that infant low birth weight is declining in the county. Teen birth rates have been declining across community types and racial groups for more than a decade. In Sauk County, the teen birth rates have remained steady with the Wisconsin average of 20. Alcohol impaired driving deaths and excessive drinking remain an issue in Sauk County.

The *Rankings* have become an important tool for communities that want to improve health for all. A few of Sauk County's initiatives to expand health opportunities include: the Sauk County Health and Wellness Coalition; the Sauk County Preventing Drug/Opioid Overdose Death grant; the Tri-County Medication Treatment Recovery & Support grant (Tri-County MATRS); the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's work including Treatment Court; HOPE Sauk Prairie Suicide Prevention; Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) suicide prevention trainings; Mental Health First Aid trainings; and Sauk County Mental Health Task Force. Please see the Sauk County Health Department Web page @ www.co.sauk.wi.us , for more information and initiatives.