

News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Patricia L. Walsh, Freeholder Director - Peter S. Palmer, Freeholder Deputy Director
Patrick Scaglione, Freeholder - Mark Caliguire, Freeholder - Brian D. Levine, Freeholder

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Somerset County Ranks Third Healthiest in New Jersey

Somerset County has been ranked the third healthiest county in New Jersey in the annual County Health Rankings nationwide survey conducted by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“For the past six years, Somerset County has been consistently ranked second or third healthiest county in the state,” said Freeholder Director Patricia L. Walsh.

“Although Somerset County is ranked third overall, when measuring health behaviors, including adult smoking, adult obesity, food choices, access to exercise opportunities and alcohol abuse, Somerset County emerges as No. 1,” she said.

“The Somerset County Department of Health continually works with our public health partners to improve health behaviors among residents through education and outreach on community health initiatives,” said Freeholder Walsh. “The ranking reflects the collaborative efforts taken by these groups to prioritize personal and community health.

“Good health is an essential component in determining quality of life, and provides an economic benefit,” said Freeholder Walsh, liaison to Healthier Somerset, a coalition formed to improve the health and wellness of everyone who lives and works in Somerset County.

While no ranking model can ever perfectly describe the health of a population, the County Health Rankings report can be used to demonstrate differences in health by place, raise awareness of the many factors that influence health and stimulate further community-health improvement efforts.

The Somerset County Department of Health attributes health-status achievements to ongoing community initiatives such as Healthier Somerset and several long-standing public health collaborations with organizations such as the Greater Somerset Public Health Partnership and three area hospitals: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital - Somerset and New Brunswick campuses - and Saint Peter’s University Hospital.

Additional regional collaborations with Morris and Middlesex counties have resulted in efforts to establish ordinances that promote community health, such as smoke-free parks and “Complete Streets” that enable access for all users.

Somerset County promotes programs that expand walking and biking trails and increase open space and utilization of alternative energy and green design. These initiatives are a direct result of health concerns that were raised in the 2013 Middlesex and Somerset Counties Community Health Improvement Plan and the 2015 Somerset County Community Health Improvement Plan. Residents are encouraged to review these local sources of data to understand more about the health of their community at <http://bit.ly/HDReports>

To view the County Health Rankings report, go to www.countyhealthrankings.org

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