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Indicators of the Metroscope: Health Outcomes

Michael Burnham
Portland State University

Neba Noyan

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HEALTH OUTCOMES

by Michael Burnham

Maps by Neba Noyan

Education, employment, and environment are key factors affecting a person's health and longevity, according to a new study that ranks more than 3,000 U.S. counties and the District of Columbia. The study — prepared by the University of Wisconsin and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation — is published online at www.countyhealthrankings.org. So how do counties in the Metro scape stack up?

Multnomah ranked 16th out of 33 Oregon counties on the study's Health Outcomes index, which considers a broad range of metrics, including: the rate of people dying before age 75 (mortality), the percentage of adults in poor health (morbidity), and the percentage of babies with a low birth weight. Benton and Hood River counties ranked No. 1 and 2 in the state, followed by Washington and Clackamas counties. Yamhill County Ranked No. 12. North of the Columbia River, Clark ranked No. 9, and Skamania ranked No. 16 out of 39 Washington counties.

The study's Health Factors index is even more comprehensive; it includes 21 metrics, including whether a person works, is obese, smokes, has medical insurance, receives screening for diabetes and breast cancer, and has access to healthy foods and parks. Multnomah County was No. 9 in the state on the overall Health Factors list. Multnomah ranked No. 2 in the index's clinical care category, in part, because of the county's high ratio of population to primary care providers (478:1). Multnomah ranked 19th in the state in the social and economic factors category,

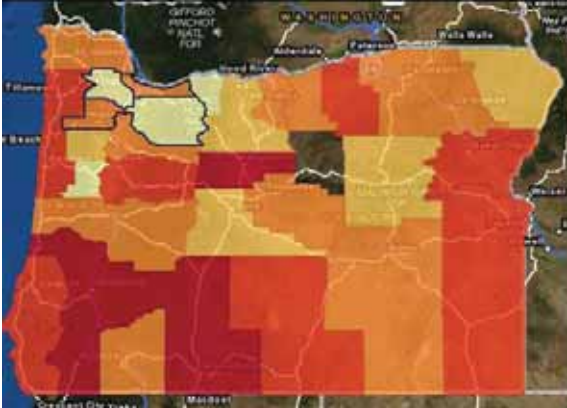
which included the rate of violent crime and unemployment and percentage of children living in poverty.

Benton County ranked first in the state on the Health Factors index, followed by Washington and Clackamas counties. Yamhill County ranked No. 10 overall, but No. 26 in the clinical care category. Washington County was No. 3 in Oregon in the health behaviors category, which considers the percentage of adults who are obese, who smoke and who binge drink. Washington County — an information-technology hub with median household income of \$65,576 in 2008 — ranked No. 2 in the state (behind Benton County) in the social and economic factors category. About 9.5 percent of Washington County residents lived below the federal poverty level in 2008, the most recent year for which U.S. Census Bureau data are available.

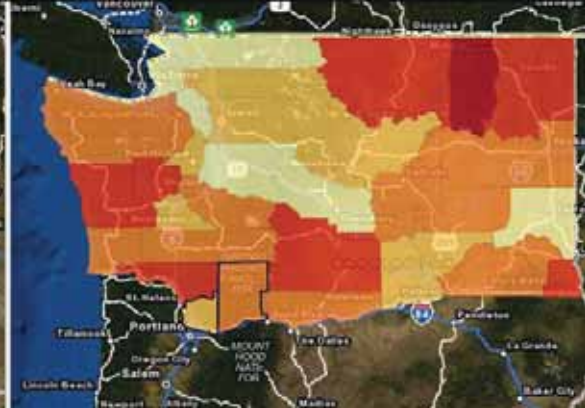
In Washington State, Clark County ranked No. 18 and Skamania County ranked No. 31 on the Health Factors index. Clark ranked No. 17 in the health behaviors category but No. 25 in the clinical care category. Skamania ranked No. 34 in the clinical care category, due in large part to its low 5,432:1 ratio of population to primary care providers.

Portland State University's Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies recently published health indicators, including tobacco use, obesity and mental health, for Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas and Clark counties. The institute's findings can be found online at: portlandpulse.org

County Health Outcomes



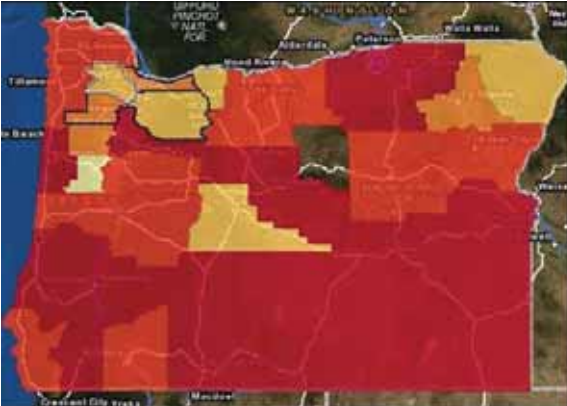
Oregon County Health Rankings
Total Outcomes Z-Score



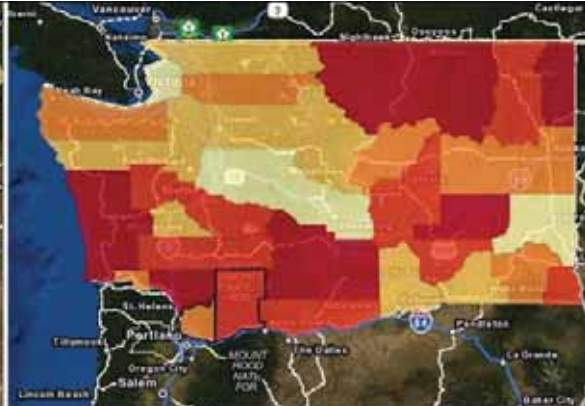
Washington County Health Rankings
Total Outcomes Z-Score



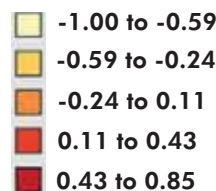
County Health Factors



Oregon County Health Rankings
Total Factors Z-Score



Washington County Health Rankings
Total Factors Z-Score



Each Z-score is relative to other counties in the same state — not compared to an absolute standard — and shown in the metric of standard deviations. A positive Z-score indicates a value higher than the average of counties in that state; a negative Z-score indicates a value for that county lower than the average of counties in that state. There were no data for Wheeler County, Oregon, so it is blank.