

# Central Valley and Rural Northern California Counties Ranked Unhealthiest

April 1, 2015

**By Hannah Guzik**

People living in California's Central Valley and rural northern counties have the poorest health outcomes in the state, according to a [report](#) released last Wednesday.

The 2015 County Health Rankings, a nationwide report released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranks counties based on health outcomes.

In a ranking that weighs length of life and quality of life equally, Marin County had the best score in the state, followed by Placer, Santa Clara, San Mateo and Orange counties. Sierra County scored lowest on the rating system, followed by Lake, Siskiyou, Trinity and Modoc counties.

All California counties were ranked except for Alpine County, which has a population of 1,150 people and did not provide enough data for researchers.

In another ranking, called Health Factors, that weighs access to clinical care, the health behaviors of residents, the physical environment and social and economic factors, Marin County again had the best score, followed by Placer, San Mateo, San Francisco and Santa Clara counties. The poorest score in that ranking system went to Imperial County, followed by Tulare, Kern, Fresno and Lake counties.

The rankings are based on high school graduation rates, access to healthy foods, rates of smoking, obesity and teen births, among many other factors.

According to the research, "the healthiest counties in each state have higher college attendance, fewer preventable hospital stays and better access to parks and gyms. The least healthy counties in each state have more smokers, more teen births and more alcohol related car crashes."

The foundation hopes communities will use the rankings to identify problems and seek support to fix them.

"In the six years since the County Health Rankings began, we've seen them serve as a rallying point for change," Bridget Catlin, co-director of the rankings, said in a release. "Communities are using the rankings to inform their priorities as they work to build a culture of health."