

FOCUS

News from and about the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

April 11, 2014



Oldham tops 2014 County Health Rankings

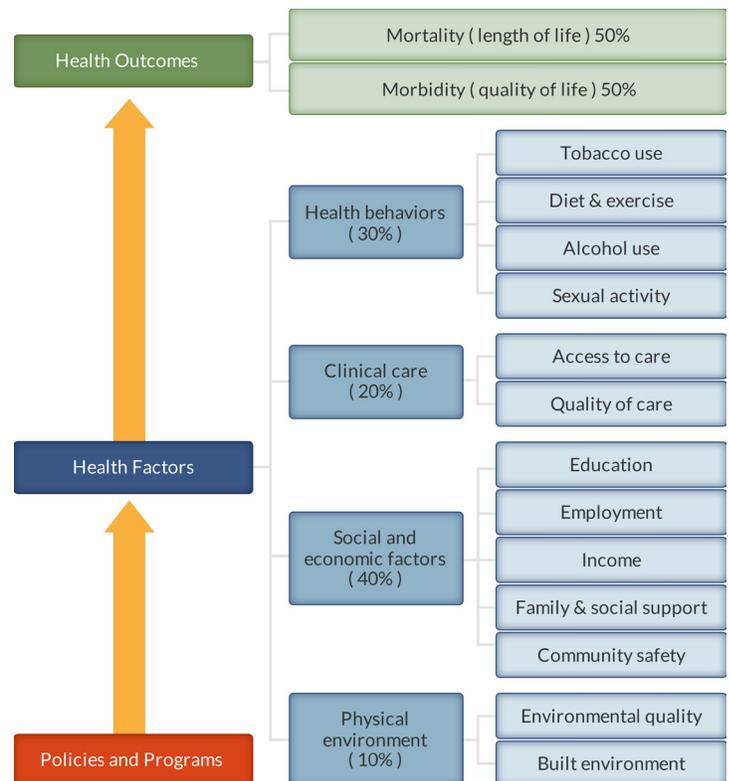
Top five counties include Scott, Boone, Shelby and Calloway

Oldham County ranks healthiest in Kentucky, according to the fifth annual County Health Rankings, released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The Rankings are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org. In addition to the updated rankings, Kentucky has been selected by RWJF as one of three states being highlighted nationally for its success in implementing strategies for improving health at the community level.

“This report demonstrates public health successes and highlights opportunities for improvement in counties across the commonwealth,” said Kentucky Public Health Commissioner Dr. Stephanie Mayfield. “Furthermore, in Kentucky, thousands of previously uninsured individuals now have access to care after enrolling in a health plan through our health benefit exchange, kynect. With so many people gaining access to health care – and comprehensive analysis on community health such as what is provided in the County Health Rankings – we are in a position to dramatically improve the health of the public.”

State officials and health leaders gathered on April 2 at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort to celebrate Kentucky’s successes, highlighting promising local health projects and initiatives to improve community health. Lieutenant Governor Jerry Abramson attend the event to outline Kentucky’s health successes and highlight Gov. Steve Beshear’s kyhealthnow initiative. Kyhealthnow is an aggressive and wide-ranging initiative to significantly reduce incidence and deaths from Kentucky’s dismal health rankings and habits. It builds on Kentucky’s successful implementation of health care reform and uses multiple strategies – including participation in outdoor activities at state parks – over the next several years to improve the state’s collective health.

The event featured four Kentucky communities – Grant, Todd, Floyd and Franklin counties - that have used the County Health Rankings to help their communities begin



County Health Rankings model ©2012 UWPHI

to show signs of progress.

The County Health Rankings rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. The Rankings allow counties to see how well they are doing on 29 factors that influence health, including smoking, high school graduation rates, employment, physical inactivity and access to healthy foods.

According to the 2014 Rankings, the five healthiest counties in Kentucky, starting with most healthy, are Oldham, followed by Boone, Shelby, Calloway and Scott counties.

“The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s vision for a culture of health is one where everyone has the opportunity to be healthy,” said Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey,

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Making connections helps remember names

If you are regularly meeting new customers, community partners and stakeholders, you may have trouble remembering all those names. These tips from Craig Harrison, a professional speaker and founder of the communications firm Expressions of Excellence, can help you recall names and details of your new contacts in both professional and social settings.

Repeat. Upon introduction, say someone's name as soon as possible.

Make a connection. Associate names with what you learn about the person – their job, interests or purpose for meeting with you.

Take notes. If you keep meeting minutes, add details about attendees to your own files. Jotting notes on the business cards you've collected may also come in handy.

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Anya Armes Weber



Ask for help. If a name is unusual or in a foreign tongue, you'll be more likely to remember it if you hear its correct pronunciation or learn the story behind it.

Don't get upset. If you forget someone's name or position when you see them again, don't worry. Be honest with them and say so. And go ahead and re-introduce yourself if you sense someone might not remember your name. They might be grateful you did.

RANKINGS

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RWJF president and CEO. "The County Health Rankings are a starting point for change, helping communities come together, identify priorities, and create solutions that will help all in our diverse society live healthier lives, now and for generations to come."

The Rankings provide county-to-county comparisons within a state. Nationally, this year's Rankings show that people living in the least healthy counties are twice as likely to have shorter lives as people living in the healthiest counties. Unhealthy counties also have twice as many children living in poverty and twice as many teen births as the healthiest counties. This year's Rankings also feature several new measures including housing, transportation and access to mental health providers.

County Health Rankings is part of the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. The program includes the Roadmaps to Health Action Center, which provides local leaders with tools, step-

by-step guides, and stories to help communities identify and implement solutions that make it easier for people to live healthy lives. The program also includes the annual RWJF Culture of Health Prize, which celebrates communities that are harnessing the collective power of leaders, partners and stakeholders to build a culture of health. This year's prize winners and the call for 2014-2015 prize applications will be announced in June at the Aspen Ideas Festival, Spotlight: Health, a public gathering of national and international leaders to share ideas and information related to medicine, population health and global health, as well as the relationship between health and other disciplines.

"The County Health Rankings show us how health is influenced by our everyday surroundings – where we live, learn, work and play," said Bridget Catlin, Ph.D., MHSA, director of the County Health Rankings. "The County Health Rankings often provide the spark for businesses, community planners, policy-makers, public health, parents and others to work together for better health."

63rd Ten-Ure convention set for May 7-9

The Kentucky Employees State Ten-ure Organization will hold its 63rd annual Ten-Ure Convention May 7 - 9, 2014 at the Best Western Airport Plus Hotel in Louisville. The theme for the conference this year will be "Start Your Engines with Ten-ure." The conference will hold many different workshops for members to attend. There are many events schedule for this annual event.

Ten-Ure is a non-union state employees organization whose membership includes any state employee with 10 years' service or more and anyone who has retired from state government.

If anyone has any questions concerning this event please contact state Ten-Ure President Gary.Brooks@ky.gov.



Lieutenant Governor Jerry Abramson addresses a gathering of cabinet secretaries and other key state agency officials while CHFS Secretary Audrey Haynes, Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Stephanie Mayfield and Cabinet for Economic Development Chief of Staff Hollie Spade look on during the first meeting of the kyhealthnow Oversight Team on March 27.

kyhealthnow Oversight Team learns state health ‘in dire need of improvement’ in first meeting

Kentucky’s health is “in dire need of improvement,” yet the state is poised to make remarkable progress in the coming years by building on its recent efforts to make all Kentuckians healthier.

This was the diagnosis from the state’s public health commissioner to members of the “kyhealthnow” Oversight Team during its first meeting on March 27.

Gov. Steve Beshear created “kyhealthnow” last month to reduce Kentucky’s dismal health rankings and habits through seven specific goals and related strategies. The Oversight Team consists of cabinet secretaries and key state agency officials, and is chaired by Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson.

kyhealthnow targets seven major health goals to be met within five

years, by 2019:

- Health insurance - Reduce Kentucky’s rate of uninsured people to less than 5 percent
- Smoking - Reduce Kentucky’s smoking rate by 10 percent
- Obesity - Reduce the rate of obesity among Kentuckians by 10 percent
- Cancer - Reduce Kentucky cancer deaths by 10 percent
- Cardiovascular Disease - Reduce cardiovascular deaths by 10 percent
- Dental Decay - Reduce the percentage of children with untreated dental decay by 25 percent, and increase adult dental visits by 10 percent
- Drug Addiction and Mental Health - Reduce deaths from drug overdose by 25 percent, and reduce the average number of poor mental

health days of Kentuckians by 25 percent.

Kentucky Public Health Commissioner Dr. Stephanie Mayfield, vice chair of the Oversight Team, presented the overview of the baseline data and metrics that will form the core of the evaluation of the state’s progress toward meeting the seven kyhealthnow goals.

While Kentucky starts near the bottom of national rankings on nearly every kyhealthnow goal, “the state is poised to make strong progress, for example, by building on the preventive services benefit of kynect and improving the health of children through school-based initiatives,” Dr. Mayfield said.

She summarized the state’s over-

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TEAM

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all health as “in dire need of improvement,” but emphasized that kyhealthnow sets clear targets and measurable strategies that will meaningfully improve the health of Kentuckians over “the remainder of Gov. Beshear’s term and beyond.”

By setting specific, five-year goals, kyhealthnow holds state health agencies accountable for measurable success, and also challenges local governments, businesses, schools, nonprofits and individuals to take meaningful steps toward improving health in their communities.

Each of the seven goals is supported by multiple strategies, as many as a dozen in each area. The oversight team is engaging state agencies and private partners to highlight their work and resources to help make Kentucky a healthier state.

The team heard from three state agencies and one outside partner at its meeting.

Carrie Banahan, executive director of the Office of the Kentucky Health Benefit Exchange, called on members to collaborate with her office to continue to insure Kentuckians through kynect.

A preliminary analysis completed by her office found that approximately 75 percent of all enrollees report



that they did not have insurance before signing up for health care coverage through kynect, she said.

The group heard from two state agencies that share similar goals but operate in very different areas – the Kentucky Department of Employee Insurance (DEI) and the Office of Adventure Tourism.

DEI Commissioner Joe Cowles told members that his department provides health insurance coverage for 266,000 members, including employees of state agencies, school boards and local government, as well as retirees under age 65 and their dependents.

Cowles highlighted the two Kentucky employees’ health insurance plans that contain a wellness component designed to encourage members to lead healthier lifestyles.

The Diabetes Prevention Program, offered at no cost to members, also shows encouraging results, Cowles said. Current participants are improving their overall health and physical

activity.

Office of Adventure Tourism Executive Director Elaine Wilson said her agency connects Kentuckians with the state’s “outdoor assets.”

She said, for example, adventure tourism has two primary goals set forth by Gov. Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear – “get our citizens back outdoors and create trail destinations where they and visitors can enjoy the rivers and lakes, and mountains and beauty of Kentucky.”

The members of the oversight team heard from Dave Adkisson, president and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Adkisson said the health and wellness of Kentuckians has become a greater concern to employers during the past decade as health insurance costs have increased and an increasing share of companies’ tax dollars go to pay for health care.

Adkisson addressed the importance and urgency of health issues to employers, the efforts to engage employers in wellness policies and work-site wellness programs, and the challenges Kentucky faces in addressing health problems that are now of epidemic proportions.

The Oversight Team will meet quarterly and continue to partner with state agencies and share knowledge with the private sector to help meet its seven goals, said Lt. Gov. Abramson.

Earth Day celebration planned for Old State Capitol lawn

Looking for a way to celebrate Earth Day? Join First Lady Jane Beshear and other special guests for the 2014 Kentucky State Government Earth Day Celebration on Tuesday, April 15, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on the lawn of the Old State Capitol in downtown Frankfort.

The following groups will have environmental education booths and displays at the celebration: Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission, Governor’s Garden, Division of Forestry, Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund, Kentucky State Parks, Division of Water - Watershed Management Branch, Walk/Bike Frankfort, Bluegrass

Greensource, City of Frankfort Public Works Department, Division for Air Quality, Division of Compliance Assistance, Kentucky State Fire Marshal, Division of Waste Management, Kentucky National Energy Education Development Project, Capital City Beekeepers, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky Housing Corporation Home Performance Program, Kentucky Exotic Pest Control Council, Kentucky Environmental Education Council, Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

State employees may request up to two hours to attend this event with prior supervisory approval.

402,000 now enrolled in kynect; more than 30,000 in the past 7 days

More than 30,000 individuals signed up for healthcare coverage during the April 4-11 kynect special enrollment period, bringing total kynect enrollment to over 402,000. The deadline to apply for subsidies and purchase new affordable health coverage ends at midnight April 11.

Kentuckians who completed their applications by March 31 can visit the kynect.ky.gov website to select a plan. All individuals must select a plan by midnight April 15, with coverage beginning May 1.

“There’s still time for people to sign up for private health plans and possibly receive discounts, but after midnight Friday, they’ll need to wait until the fall open enrollment period,” said Carrie Banahan, executive director of kynect. “We strongly encourage those who still need to select a plan to do so as soon as possible. Those who have started applications should work to complete them quickly, too.”

To take advantage of the special enrollment period, Kentuckians are asked to attest that they attempted to complete an application by March 31, 2014, and had problems doing so. On the kynect website, this will simply require selecting a button when the special enrollment screen comes up. Applications must be completed by midnight April 11, and a plan must be selected by midnight April 15.

Since the special enrollment period began last week, Kentuckians continued to swarm the website and call center. An average of 4,500 Kentuckians have signed up each day since April 4 – similar to the final peak days of enrollment in late March.

Now, nearly 1 out of every 11 Kentuckians has health insurance through kynect – or 9.3 percent



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state’s population.

These figures do not include previously uninsured individuals who may have purchased health insurance outside of kynect.

Kentuckians who need assistance can also contact the kynect call center at 1-855-4kynect weekdays from 7 a.m. to midnight Eastern time or from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern time, Saturday and Sunday. They can also search at kynect.ky.gov to find a kynector or insurance agent who can assist them with enrollment, or visit a local Department for Community Based Services office.

After the open enrollment period,

individuals will still be able to apply for Medicaid.

Only those who experience a qualifying event, such as the loss of employer-sponsored health insurance coverage, will be able to purchase private health plans. The next open enrollment period begins Nov. 15, 2014.

The below statistics reflect activity on kynect as of noon, April 10:

- 402,407 Kentuckians are enrolled in new health coverage
 - 322,827 have qualified for Medicaid coverage
 - 79,580 have purchased private insurance
 - 51 percent of all kynect enrollees are under age 35
 - 33 percent of all private health plan enrollees are under age 35
 - Nearly 1.5 million unique visitors to kynect website
 - 873,084 individuals have conducted preliminary screenings
 - 21,314 have enrolled in stand-alone dental plans
 - 87,514 have been found eligible for a subsidy to purchase a qualified health plan (some have yet to select a plan)
 - 805,602 calls have been handled by the kynect contact center
- For further updates on kynect numbers, visit governor.ky.gov/healthierky. Statistics will be updated there regularly.



KET report highlights early childhood development, CHFS staff and programs

KET's health special report "Safe and Sound: Raising Emotionally Healthy Children in a Stressful World," featuring staff and programs of the cabinet, will premiere at 9 p.m. EDT on Monday, April 21 on KET.

The program explores why social and emotional development is so important in the first years of life.

Research on brain development shows that positive early experiences are critical for long-term mental and physical health. When young children do not receive proper nurturing or they experience trauma or constant stress, it can have serious repercus-

sions on their development. Through interviews with experts and profiles of programs across Kentucky, "Safe and Sound" presents ways that parents can foster good social and emotional development.

Dr. Ruth Ann Shepherd, director of DPH's Maternal and Child Health is featured discussing her study of adverse childhood trauma and its effect on children as they develop.

Tina Willauer, director of DCBS' Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) and program staff is featured discussing how that program uses a collaborative model to

provide intensive and efficient help for families facing substance abuse. Focus is on the Boyd County area START program.

"Safe and Sound" also highlights the Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS), a program for new parents offered through DPH.

The program, available in all 120 Kentucky counties, supports parents with research-based information about how to foster good social and emotional development.

The program visits families in Clark County that have benefited from HANDS.



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