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Blaine County One of the Five Healthiest in Idaho, According to New Rankings

TWIN FALLS – According to the fifth annual *County Health Rankings*, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute the five healthiest counties in Idaho (starting with most healthy) are Madison County, followed by Latah, Valley, Blaine, and Franklin. The five counties in the poorest health (starting with least healthy) are Bear Lake, Shoshone, Benewah, Lemhi, and Boise.

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. This year's *Rankings* also feature several new measures including housing, transportation, and access to mental health providers.

“The study shows that much of what influences our health happens outside of the doctor’s office,” says Rene LeBlanc, South Central Public Health District Director. “We must find ways to create policies, programs, and social structures that promote healthy living across all of Idaho, especially for those members of our communities who have the fewest resources and options.”

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.

The *Rankings*, available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, includes a snapshot of each county in Idaho with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking.

For more information on the services of the South Central Public Health District and office locations, please visit www.phd5.idaho.gov .

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