



# News Release

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**Contact:**

Lilián Bravo, Director of Public Health Partnerships

509-249-6514

## ***County Health Rankings Rank Yakima as 31<sup>st</sup> in Washington State***

Yakima County's overall health is ranking 31<sup>st</sup> among 39 Washington counties, according to information released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI).

In 2017, Yakima ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in Washington State. Washington State consistently ranks among the top 10 healthiest States in the nation. Specific health outcomes that continue to place Yakima in a low ranking include: obesity, physical inactivity, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

“These findings are a reminder of the diverse range of health problems that face Yakima County residents that can impact their learning, productivity and quality of life. Just as the problems are diverse in nature, so are their causes,” said Health Officer Dr. Christopher Spitters. “The Health District’s mission is to work with community partners to identify strategies and catalyze action to address preventable causes of illness and death.”

The County Health Rankings make it clear that good health is influenced by many factors beyond medical care such as education, and jobs – factors that Yakima can do something about. In fact, Yakima’s rankings demonstrated a significant decrease in preventable hospital stays and the number of uninsured individuals, as well as an increase in overall high school graduation rates.

Even with the great work taking place in the community, we still have many challenges to overcome as a community. In 2017, the median household income in Yakima dropped to \$48,200, 28% below the State average of \$67,100. In addition, 26% of children in Yakima are currently living in poverty, 92% of which are Hispanic or Black. The teen birth rate in Yakima is 138% higher than the State average and is consistently ranked as one of the highest teen birth rates in the State.

“We’ve known for some time that our county faces challenges,” said Executive Director, André Fresco, “these numbers point to the magnitude of the challenge we continue to face with some of the social determinants of our county’s health status. The Health District aims to utilize the County Health Rankings as a tool to raise awareness among partners to rise to the challenge of improving our county’s health.”

The Yakima Health District is currently engaged in work to prevent and contain tuberculosis, STIs, HIV and other communicable diseases, monitoring the safety of food and drinking water, as well as coordinating access to free screening for breast, cervical and colon cancer.

The nation-wide rankings are available at [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).