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Douglas County drops in health rankings to No. 23 in Kansas

(Lawrence, KS) – Douglas County fell 16 spots to No. 23 in Kansas, according to the *County Health Rankings* report released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. It's the first time that Douglas County has not been listed in the Top 10 since the report was first published nine years ago.

The No. 23 ranking is based on length and quality of life. Here's how Douglas County fared:

- **Length of life** — No. 6, down three spots from 2017.
- **Quality of Life** — No. 68, down 40 spots from 2017. This includes poor mental and physical health days and low birth weights.

The report also ranks counties based on the factors that influence these health outcomes: behavior, clinical care, social and economic status, and physical environment. Douglas County ranked No. 22, down five spots from last year.

The *Rankings* identify areas where the county falls behind state averages. These areas include: excessive drinking, alcohol-impaired driving deaths, sexually-transmitted infections, high school graduation rates, income inequality and severe housing problems.

These issues also have been identified in the Douglas County Community Health Assessment, which was published in August 2017. A multi-sector, multi-jurisdiction steering committee is working to develop the next five-year Community Health Plan that will address the following issues: behavioral health, safe and affordable housing, poverty and jobs, and nutrition and physical activity with a focus on health equity.

“These *Rankings* show that we can't afford to be complacent in our work,” said Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director Dan Partridge. “These are big and complex issues, and there's no simple fix. It's going to take everyone working together across sectors to make progress toward better health for everyone in our community.”

There are areas where Douglas County is faring better than the state average. These include: adult smoking, teen births, violent crime and preventable hospital stays.

The report ranked Johnson, Wabaunsee, Riley, Nemaha and Pottawatomie as the healthiest counties in Kansas. Those listed as the least healthy were: Republic, Morton, Labette, Woodson and Wyandotte. The report is available at countyhealthrankings.org. For more data and information about the health of Douglas County, visit ldchealth.org/communityhealthplan.