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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Public Health Officials Meet to Discuss County Health Rankings
Participants generate ideas for policy change to meet challenges

Carson City – Douglas County has the healthiest residents in Nevada, and Mineral and Nye Counties are the least healthy counties in the state, according to the third annual *County Health Rankings*, released recently by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). In response to the *County Health Rankings*, a group of Nevada public health officials gathered recently to explore ways to improve the overall health of their communities. The meeting was co-sponsored by the *County Health Rankings*, the Nevada Public Health Foundation and the Nevada State Health Division.

The *County Health Rankings* score the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states, using a standard way to measure how healthy people are and how long they live. This year's *Rankings* include several new measures, such as how many fast food restaurants are in a county and levels of physical inactivity among residents.

"Where we live, learn, work and play has a big role in determining how healthy we are and how long we live," said Richard Whitley, Nevada State Health Division Administrator. "The *Rankings* are like an annual check-up, and the results point us in right directions to improve the health of our counties."

The *Rankings*, available at www.countyhealthrankings.org, include a snapshot of each county in Nevada with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. Researchers scored Nevada counties on "health outcomes" with scores that measure how long people live (mortality) and their quality of life (morbidity).

The *Rankings* also consider "health factors," variables that affect people's health in categories of health behavior, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. Examples of health factors are rates of adult smoking; availability of primary care physicians; adults who have attended some college; and air pollution levels.

"The good news is that businesses, health care providers, government, consumers and community leaders are already joining forces in communities across the nation to change some of the gaps that the *Rankings* highlight," said Whitley.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Whitley".

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