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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HEADLINE: Madison County Is Healthiest in Idaho; Bear Lake County Is Least Healthy, According to New Rankings

LEWISTON, IDAHO -Madison County has the healthiest residents in State and Bear Lake County is the least healthy county in Idaho, according to the fourth annual *County Health Rankings*, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). The *Rankings* are available at www.countyhealthrankings.org.

The *County Health Rankings* rank the overall health of nearly every county in all 50 states. Nationally, the data revealed that unhealthy counties have more than twice the rate of premature deaths than healthy ones and childhood poverty rates are twice as high in unhealthy counties. The *Rankings* allow counties to see how they compare to other counties within the state based on a range of factors that influence health including high school graduation rates, obesity, smoking, and family and social support. This year's *Rankings* include new measures, such as how many dentists are in a community per resident.

According to the 2013 *Rankings*, the five healthiest counties in Idaho, starting with most healthy, are Madison, followed by Valley, Franklin, Latah, and Blaine. The five counties in the poorest health, starting with least healthy, are Bear Lake, Shoshone, Boise, Benewah and Lemhi.

The *Rankings* include a snapshot of each county in Idaho with a color-coded map comparing each county's overall health ranking. There are also new county-level trend graphs detailing change over time for several of the measures, including children in poverty, unemployment, and quality of care.

"We all have a stake in creating a healthier community and no single sector alone can tackle the health challenges in any given community," said Patrick Remington, MD, MPH, professor and associate dean at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. "Collaboration is critical. The *Rankings* are sparking action all over the country as people from all sectors join forces to create new possibilities in health—county by county."

"We know that our state faces unique challenges. While we have taken important steps to improve the health of our communities, no organization can improve the health of the community it serves single-handedly," says Carol Moehrle, Director of Public Health – Idaho North Central District. "Whether at the top of the list or the bottom, groups of people in any county are not as healthy as they could be."

The *Rankings* are one part of the *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program. Communities are taking information from the *County Health Rankings* and using the *County Health Roadmaps* to build connections with local and national partners to improve health. Today marks the release of the call for applications for the 2014 *RWJF Roadmaps to Health Prize*, which honors outstanding community partnerships that are helping people live healthier lives. To learn more about this year's winning communities or get information about becoming one, visit www.rwjf.org/goto/prize and www.countyhealthrankings.org.