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NACo applauds County Health Rankings and announces new partnership to improve community health

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today applauded the release of the 2013 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program and announced a new partnership to provide counties with information and explore innovations to improve community health.

According to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the County Health Rankings show the rank of the health of nearly every county in the nation and illustrate that much of what affects health occurs outside of the doctor’s office. Published online at www.countyhealthrankings.org, the rankings help counties understand what influences how healthy residents are and how long they will live.

The rankings, based on data available for each county, look at a variety of measures that affect health such as the rate of people dying before age 75, high school graduation rates, unemployment, limited access to healthy foods, air pollution levels, income, and rates of smoking, obesity and teen births.

NACo, through support from RWJF and in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, will be providing counties with information and exploring innovations for effective local programs and policies to improve overall community health, using the County Health Rankings as a tool.

“The County Health Rankings offer county elected officials data and information to effectively address challenges, enhancing and maintain healthy counties,” said NACo Health Advisory Board Chair Roy Brooks, commissioner, Tarrant County, Texas. “County officials are well-positioned to lead and coordinate local collaborative health initiatives because we bring together, not only county staff from a number of different departments, but also other local stakeholders, business leaders and community members.”

The NACo project is designed to:
- provide a forum for local elected and appointed officials to discuss common issues and opportunities to address them
- facilitate learning exchange among counties and other interested partners on promising innovations and evidence based policies and practices, and
- develop and leverage materials that will aid counties in their policy making and will assist other jurisdictions in developing effective policies and practices of their own.

For more information, please visit http://www.naco.org/improvingcountyhealth.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,069 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.