



Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

Barry County: 330 W. Woodlawn Ave., Hastings MI 49058
Phone: 269-945-9516 Fax: 269-818-0237

Eaton County: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-2430 Fax: 517-543-7737

Eaton Behavioral Health: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI
48813
Phone: 517-543-2580 Fax: 517-543-8191

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Barry County Ranks in Top 20% of Michigan Counties, According to County Health Rankings

The *2019 County Health Rankings* were released on March 19, 2019, with Barry County ranking very well on overall health. Barry County ranked 11th out of 83 Michigan counties for Health Outcomes and 15th for Health Factors, which put the county in the top 20 percent of Michigan counties.

The *Rankings* are based on a model of population health that focuses on many factors that, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, learn, work, and play. The Health Outcomes are based on the sickness and death that a county is currently experiencing, while the Health Factors are based on a variety of measures that can affect future health outcomes.

The *Rankings* show where Barry County is doing well and provides information about what is working:

- They show that Barry County is strong in the area of Social and Economic Factors, where it ranked 11th. These factors include measures of education, income and poverty, household and social structures, crime, and injuries. This report can be used to build on successes and encourage community leaders to take action and create programs and policy changes in areas in need of improvement in Barry County.
- For example, the Barry County Great Start Collaborative is working to increase social support to parents, reduce child poverty, and increase school readiness to improve educational outcomes. Visit <http://www.greatstartbarry.org/> for more information.

The *Rankings* also show what factors are making residents unhealthy and what more can be done to make Barry County a healthier place:

- The *Rankings* show that Barry County is at a medium risk for poor health when it comes to behaviors that affect health, such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity, where it ranked 29th out of 83 counties. This information shows that Barry County needs to do more to improve health behaviors and the physical environment. Potential ways to do this are stepping up efforts to help residents quit tobacco; prevent obesity; improve access to dentists, mental health, and primary care providers; and increase opportunities for physical activity.

The *Rankings* also highlight the importance of our physical environment to our health:

- Barry County ranked poorly for the physical environment, 57th in the state. The physical environment score includes measures of air pollution, drinking water violations, severe housing problems, and motor vehicle driving commutes. The ranking for Barry County was partly driven by below average measures of air pollution and the percentage of commuters who drive alone and who have a long commute.

The *Rankings* provide the community with a chance to learn about the steps being taken to improve the health of Barry County residents:

- The B. Healthy Coalition is working to prevent and control obesity and chronic disease through policy and environmental change and to increase awareness of healthy lifestyles. For more information, visit <http://www.behealthybarrycounty.com/>.
- The Barry County Tobacco Reduction Coalition has a strategic plan to improve the health of Barry County through reducing exposure to tobacco, cigarettes, nicotine, and environmental tobacco smoke. Contact Lauren Metcalfe at (517) 541-2624 for more information.
- The Barry County Substance Abuse Task Force is focused on improving health through reducing the negative effects of alcohol and substance misuse and prescription drug misuse. Visit their website at www.barrycountysatf.com/ for more information.

Barry County's overall health ranking has improved from 21st out of 83 counties in 2015 to 11th out of 83 counties in 2019. Over the past five years, the overall health factor ranking stayed within the range of 13th to 18th out of 83 counties.

Everyone in the community has a stake in being healthy. Working together, Barry County residents can make their community a healthier place to live, learn, work, and play. Learn more about the *2019 County Health Rankings* at www.countyhealthrankings.org.