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Contact: Jason Grenn, 907-269-7285, Cell 907-382-7032, jason.grenn@alaska.gov
Jayne Andreen, 907-465-5729, Cell 907-723-5035, jayne.andreen@alaska.gov

Skagway, Angoon and Hoonah have the best health outcomes in Alaska: Report

Annual rankings show where Alaska regions do well and suggest opportunities for improvement

ANCHORAGE — Skagway, Angoon and Hoonah are ranked as having the most favorable health outcomes for length and quality of life across Alaska, according to the sixth annual *County Health Rankings*. The rankings, released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute provide county-to-county comparisons within a state.

“The rankings provide an opportunity for community leaders to assess how their areas compare to other parts of Alaska and to all of the U.S. on various measures of health,” said Dr. Jay Butler, Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer and director of the Alaska Division of Public Health. “In these times of scarce resources, this information can help guide determining where investments are needed to make our communities healthier and more attractive as places to live, work and play.”

The rankings are an easy-to-use snapshot comparing the health of nearly every county in the nation. The local-level data allow each state to see how its counties compare on 30 factors that influence health, including education, housing, violent crime, jobs, diet and exercise. Alaska’s data are broken out by 15 boroughs and 12 census areas, although four of these — Aleutians East, Bristol Bay, Denali and Yakutat — are not included in the survey due to their low population counts.

According to the 2015 rankings, the healthiest area in Alaska is Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon, followed by Aleutians West, Juneau, Kodiak Island Borough, Fairbanks North Star Borough and Haines Borough. The areas with the poorest health outcomes are the Wade Hampton, Nome, Yukon-Koyukuk and Bethel census areas, and the Northwest Arctic Borough. Out of the combined 27 boroughs and census areas in the state, the Municipality of Anchorage ranks 12th.

The Alaska Department and Health and Social Services is committed to supporting statewide efforts to improve the health of all Alaskans. Healthy Alaskans 2020, a partnership between the department and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, provides a framework that supports collaborative efforts among many sectors, agencies, and communities working towards common goals. Partners throughout the state are using Healthy Alaskans 2020 goals and strategies to align their work in a collective effort to improve

health outcomes and promote health equity across the state. Information on Alaska health data, the 25 health priorities, Alaska specific data, and proposed strategies can be found at www.ha2020.alaska.gov.

“The County Health Rankings have helped galvanize communities across the nation to improve health,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation president and CEO. “Solutions and innovation are coming from places as diverse as rural Williamson, West Virginia, in the heart of Appalachia to urban New Orleans; they are engaging business, public health, education, parents, and young people to build a Culture of Health.” The complete report is available at www.countyhealths.org.

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