

2015 Marin County Local Supplement: County Health Rankings Key Points

How Healthy is your County?

For the sixth year in a row, Marin ranks #1 in California in both Health Outcomes and Health Factors.

Marin is ranked #1 among 56 California counties in the following four indicators:

- ✓ Lowest teen birth rate
- ✓ Lowest percent of uninsured adults
- ✓ Lowest percent unemployment
- ✓ Highest food environment index

The County Health Rankings

What: State-by-state rankings of the health of each county in the United States, based on data collected nationwide from 2006-2014*.

Who: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI)

When: Annually - 2015 Data Released on March 25th.

*Data source details:
<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/ranking-methods/data-sources-and-measures>

2015 Rank

Health Outcomes	1
Length of Life	2
Quality of Life	8
Health Factors	1
Healthy Behaviors	1
Clinical Care	1
Social & Economic Factors	1
Physical Environment	3



How does Marin compare to the other 56 counties ranked in California?

Top 5%

- Low premature death rate
- Low prevalence of adult obesity
- Low rate of physical inactivity
- Low teen birth rate
- High food environment index
- Low percent of uninsured adults
- High primary care physicians per capita
- High mental health provider per capita
- High dentists per capita
- Low percent unemployment
- Low violent crime rate
- Low percent of children in poverty

Top 25-50%

- Low rate of low birth weight infants
- High level of diabetic monitoring of Medicare enrollees
- High level of social association
- Low injury mortality rate
- Low exposure to drinking water violations
- Low rate of housing problems

Top 10%

- High percent with some college
- Low rate of preventable hospital stays
- ¹Low average number of mentally unhealthy days
- High percent of high school graduation
- ¹Low percent of adults reporting fair or poor health (age-adjusted)

Top 15%

- ¹Low percent of adults who smoke
- Low percent of children in single-parent households
- Low average daily air pollution
- Low percent driving alone to work

Top 25%

- ¹Low number of physically unhealthy days
- High access to exercise opportunities
- Low levels of sexually transmitted infections
- High levels of mammography screening for Medicare enrollees

Bottom 50%

- ¹Excessive drinking
- Alcohol impaired driving rate
- ²Drug poisoning mortality rate
- Percent of workers driving alone with a long commute
- Income inequality

¹Data collected from Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2006-2012 (2005-2010 for social support indicator) and may vary from other local sources used in county health reports and factsheets.

²Drug poisoning deaths was an additional measure and did not contribute to the overall county health rankings.

The Rankings

The Rankings consider multiple factors that affect people's health within four categories: healthy behavior, clinical care, physical environment, and social and economic factors. For the sixth year in a row, Marin ranks highest among counties in California. Marin residents can celebrate and take pride in this status. However, it is important to recognize not everyone in Marin enjoys high levels of wealth and health- and the income gap can cause poor health for people whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable.

Challenges

Income Inequality

Marin ranks poorly in income inequality. Stated simply, we see a wider gap between the rich and poor than in other counties. Our high cost of living and insufficient affordable housing causes poorer residents to be segregated in certain neighborhoods and schools, breaking down social connections and causing stress. This income gap and related stressors lead to poor health outcomes for our residents who are struggling to meet basic needs.

Increasing opportunities for educational achievement, safe housing, and self-sufficiency can help give everyone a chance to live a healthier life. High quality childcare and preschool for all children will help them get ready for kindergarten, a key predictor of academic success. Affordable rental housing and programs that help lower income and middle class families achieve home ownership is also an important step in building intergenerational wealth. Increasing the minimum wage locally can also help working families and boost our economy.

Several regional and local initiatives such as [Rise Together](#), [Marin Promise](#) and [Marin Strong Start](#) are working on alleviating poverty and setting the foundation for future success for all Marin residents.

Alcohol and Prescription Drugs

Marin continues to fare poor in both alcohol and drug related measures: excessive drinking, driving deaths related to alcohol, and deaths related to drug poisoning. For five years in a row, more than one in four adults in



"Health begins in our homes, neighborhoods, schools and jobs. We need to focus on policies and programs that increase opportunities for residents who are struggling to make ends meet, so that we can raise the bar for everyone."

*Larry Meredith,
Director of HHS*

Marin report binge drinking. The growing concerns around these issues have led to widespread community action. Coalitions in Mill Valley, Twin Cities, West Marin and Novato are all working on community based solutions around better enforcement of laws known to reduce drinking and promoting a culture where alcohol abuse is not the norm. For more information, contact klaw@marincounty.org. Launched in 2013, [RxSafe Marin](#) is a coalition of community members and experts collaborating to tackle the local prescription drug misuse and abuse epidemic. Strategies include working with prescribers toward judicious prescription practices, promoting safe medication storage in homes, and increased medication take-back sites. To find out more contact RxSafeMarin@gmail.com.

Preparing for an Aging Population

Our good health and long life expectancy means Marin has a growing number of residents who are aging. In 2023, an estimated one in four Marin residents will be 65 and older, compared to one in five today. Fortunately Marin County Health and Human Services Aging and Adult Services, with many community partners is poised to act and advocate for the needs of our changing demographics. Our active [Commission on Aging](#), advises the Marin County Board of Supervisors and has monthly public meetings. Additionally, the information and assistance line, 415-457-INFO can help older adults and their caregivers navigate the services and supports they need.