

## NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until 3-26-14

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
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SHELTON, WA 98584

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

### RE: 2014 Release of County Health Rankings & Community Response

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The 2014 *County Health Rankings* were released this week, providing an easy-to-use snapshot of the overall health of nearly every county in the nation. Counties are ranked in each state based on a range of factors from education to housing to transportation to community safety. In addition, the *County Health Rankings* website offers 'roadmaps,' or ways communities can take action to promote lifelong health and improve their rankings. Since their national debut in 2010, the *Rankings* have helped to expand the conversation about the broad range of factors that impact health.

The *Rankings* illustrate in a powerful way that where you live can influence how well and how long you live. The *Health Outcomes* ranking is a picture of today's health, a combined measure of county's average length of life and quality of life. In 2014, Mason County ranks 31st out of 39 counties in its *Health Outcomes* measure. This is an improvement from Mason County's 37<sup>th</sup> *Health Outcomes* ranking in 2010.

The *Rankings* show much of our health is connected to where we live, learn, work, and play. The *Health Factors* ranking predicts the health of a county in the future, a combined measure of important aspects that influence a population's health. Access to health care is only one piece of the puzzle for helping people stay healthy. There are also health behaviors, social & economic conditions, and physical environment aspects that can promote or hinder health. In 2014, Mason County ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 39 counties in its *Health Factors* measure.

The *County Health Rankings* motivate community leaders and citizens to work together in new and creative ways to build a culture of health. In Mason County, a Community Health Improvement Plan, or CHIP, has been developed by community members to address many of the *Health Factors* that have been identified as needs. The attached graphic summarizes the Factors that Influence Health (from the *County Health Rankings*), the CHIP Priorities (identified by the community), CHIP Objectives (goals of each committee), and Community Partners working on the CHIP.


There is overwhelming community effort to make Mason County a healthier place to live. Examples of accomplishments in each priority area include:

1. Eating for Health
  - Launch of the HOPE Garden Project for at-risk youth. The HOPE Garden Project teaches youth how to grow their own food and prepare healthy meals by understanding basic nutrition principals. Youth also learn leadership and


entrepreneurial skills through this project. The HOPE Garden youth are sharing what they have learned with their peers and families, teaching healthy food preparation and exposing them to healthy food. They plan to sell the food they grow at the Shelton Farmers Market to help sustain the program.

- North Mason School District adopted a new Wellness Policy that creates a Fitness and Nutrition Committee for the District and requires healthier options in school food service, competitive food sales, fundraisers, celebrations and student rewards.
2. Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use
    - Crossroads Housing (formally Mason County Shelter) is adopting a smoke-free policy for its new shelter opening in 2014. This policy will not only help protect residents against the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, it will also help preserve the condition of the housing being built.
  3. Built Environment that Supports Health
    - City of Shelton, in partnership with Shelton School District, Shelton Police Department, and Mason County Public Health, successfully acquired a grant to make pedestrian improvements around Evergreen Elementary School in 2014-2015; making it safer or more inviting for students to walk to school.
  4. Access & Appropriate Use of Health Care Services
    - Establishment of a Mental Health & Substance Abuse Advisory Committee to recommend how county dollars are spent to prevent or successfully treat individuals with mental illness and chemical dependency problems in Mason County.
    - Creating a network of local patient navigators to promote and assist residents in applying for insurance through the Washington Health Plan Finder website.
  5. Trained & Prepared Workforce with Living Wage Jobs
    - The My Dreams Mason Campaign encourages local businesses to provide examples of problems for students to solve as a way of showing the connection between the student's math curriculum and "the real world" and exposing students to different types of career opportunities.
  6. Functional Families
    - Training local case managers on the 'Bridge to Self-Sufficiency' model on how to help families break down the factors that cause poverty and build up the assets that promote self-sufficiency and prosperity.
  7. Safe and Affordable Housing
    - The HOST Program served 15 homeless high school or GED students in 2013 by: helping to secure stable housing in the community, providing academic support, developing independent living skills and supporting their transition into adulthood.

The *County Health Rankings* show us where we live matters to our health. Mason County's Community Health Improvement Plan is working on improving the *Rankings* by building a culture of health where getting healthy, staying healthy, and making sure our kids grow up healthy are top priorities. If you would like more information about the *County Health Rankings* visit [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org) For information about the CHIP, please contact Heidi Iyall or Kim Klint at 360-427-9670 ext. 400. From Belfair: 360-275-4467, Elma: 360-482-5269.

  
Terri Jeffreys  
Chair

  
Randy Neatherlin  
Commissioner

  
Tim Sheldon  
Commissioner

## Factors that Influence Health

## Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Priorities

## CHIP Objectives (Goals)

## Community Partners

Health Behaviors  
(30%)

Eating for Health & Built Environment that Supports Health

Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Use

Increase access to locally grown Food

Promote consistent breastfeeding information and support

Promote healthy eating policies and messaging in the community

Promote safe walking and biking to school

Increase walking, biking, and recreational options

Enhance public transit options

Clinical Care  
(20%)

Access & Appropriate Use of Health Care Services

Develop youth prevention plan in schools and community

Promote smoke-free policies in the community

Provide Patient Navigators for insurance enrollments

Provide telephonic access to Psychiatrists

Develop mental health / chemical dependency case management program

Install electronic medical records at Mason General Hospital & Family or Clinics

Social and Economic  
(40%)

Trained & Prepared Workforce with Living Wage Jobs and Functional Families

Break cycles of poverty through 'Bridge to Self Sufficiency' case management, financial skill building and recovery, and safe banking options

Develop early learning plan for community

Re-engage youth to education and job training through GRAVITY

Engage youth and families in planning for secondary education & training through My Dreams Mason Campaign

Provide home visits & goal setting for first time moms through Nurse-Family Partnership

Provide court options for families dealing with drug dependency Issues

Support for at-risk families in schools through Building Bridges and High Poverty-High Performance Schools training

Build resiliency skills in families dealing with chronic stress

Physical Environment  
(10%)

Safe and Affordable Housing

Provide 'Housing First' case management to homeless individuals and families.

Provide housing to homeless youth through HOST Home program.

Increase availability of affordable housing options.

Provide rental and utility assistance to at-risk individuals and families.

Provide housing to homeless youth through HOST Home program.

Mason General Hospital & Family of Clinics, Community Action Council WIC, Harrison Medical WIC, WSU Extension-FoodSense/Master Gardeners, Mason Conservation District, Belfair Farmers Market, Local Farmers, HOPE Garden Program, GRUB, Public Hospital District #2, Mason Matters, Local School Districts, City of Shelton Community Development/Public Works/Parks/Police, Mason County Public Works/Parks/Public Health/Juvenile Court/Sheriff's Office, Mason Transit Authority, Educational Service District 113, Crossroads Housing, Youth in Action, Skokomish Tribe, Wraparound & Family Alliance, SADD Club, Squaxin Island Tribe, City of Shelton Police, Youth Empowerment Strategies, Northwest Resources, New Direction, DSHS, United Way of MC

Mason General Hospital & Family of Clinics, Area Agency on Aging, Planned Parenthood, Public Hospital District #2, CHOICE Regional Health Network, Northwest Resources, *Mental Health & Substance Abuse Advisory Committee* (citizen, veterans, and business representatives; Mason County Re-entry Coalition; 40 et 8; chemical dependency counselor; Mason Matters; City of Shelton; Faith in Action; Mason County Housing Coalition; and Mason County Commissioner/Public Health/Juvenile Probation/Problem Solving Courts/Jail)

Mason County Public Health/Courts, United Way of Mason County, *Mason County Early Learning Coalition* (Local School Districts, Child Care Action Council, Shelton Valley Christian Childcare, Squaxin Island Child Dev. Center, ESD 113, Holly Ridge, WSU Extension-4-H /FoodSense, Nurse Consultant, Skokomish Head Start, Evergreen State College, Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP, First Steps, Community Action Council, South Sound Reading Foundation, Sound Learning, Mason Matters, State Representative, Mental Health Counselor, Family Education and Support Services, Timberland Library, Read Right Systems, Dept. of Early Learning, citizens) *Asset Building Coalition of Mason County* (Educational Service District 113, Mason Matters, North Mason Resources, Habitat for Humanity, Crossroads Housing, DSHS, Olympic College, IRS, Kitsap Credit Union, Peninsula Credit Union, Columbia Bank, Washington ABC)

*Mason County Housing Coalition* (Mason County Public Health, United Way of Mason County, Mason Matters, HOST Home, ESD113, Habitat for Humanity, BHR, Crossroads Housing, Turning Pointe, County Commissioners, Shelton City/Commissioners/Community Development, Faith in Action, North Mason Resources, Asset Building Coalition, Housing Authority/Mason/Longview, WorkFirst, DSHS, Olympic College, Community Lifeline, Community Action Council, Sound to Harbor Head Start, Area Agency on Aging, Crisis Clinic, Family Alliance, The Coffee Oasis, NW Justice Project, Community Youth Services, Family Ed Support)