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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation releases 2017 County Health Rankings **Carroll is ranked #1 in all of Maryland for “quality of life”**

Westminister, MD — (March 29, 2017) — In the 2017 edition of the *County Health Rankings* report released on March 29, Carroll County is ranked #3 out of 24 Maryland jurisdictions for overall Health Outcomes, and #4 for Health Factors. For the second year in a row, Carroll is ranked #1 in all of Maryland for the “quality of life” measure, which is one of six measures in the Health Outcomes group. Carroll also finds itself ranked #2 for Social and Economic Factors. The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County is pleased to note that our county has been one of the top Maryland counties in the Rankings ever since they began in 2010, along with Frederick, Howard, and Montgomery counties.

The *Rankings* make it clear that good health is influenced by “Health Factors” beyond medical care; 31 different Health Factors are compared in the report, including measures such as housing, education, jobs, access to healthy foods, clean water, and exercise opportunities. These Health Factors have a combined effect on 6 measurable “Health Outcomes”, like birth weights, quality of life, and longevity. Dorothy Fox, Executive Director and CEO for The Partnership stated, “I believe that looking at supporting health factors is crucial for improving overall health and well-being”.

Carroll’s ranking in Health Outcomes has improved since the annual County Health Rankings report began in 2010, when it was ranked #5 in Health Outcomes. Fox, responded to the new rankings: “I’m very happy to see that these objective measures support what we already knew - that Carroll County is a great place to live. The Partnership is committed to our community’s health; we want to celebrate what we do well, and dig deeper in the areas that indicate otherwise. We’ll continue working to maintain our status as one of the healthiest places in Maryland.

Much of the data points used in the *Rankings* has been tracked by The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County since 2005 as part of our *Healthy Carroll Vital Signs* system for monitoring local health. Current data may be viewed on HealthyCarroll.org under “Assessments & Data”. The Partnership also conducts a regular Community Health Needs Assessment to analyze data and

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prioritize areas for improvement and action. Fox added, "The results of the Assessment process have an impact on focus areas for our county's leading health organizations. The next Health Assessment will begin July 1, 2017. The Assessment survey will be available on line and take approximately ten minutes to complete. Fox welcomes everyone to become part of this process, "County Rankings are an excellent source of information and allows us to see where we stand when compared with each of Maryland's other counties. What makes our Community Health Needs Assessment so special is that we ask for the input from our community. This gives our residents the ability to influence the results."

In the Community Health Needs Assessment process, The Partnership uses objective health data together with community input to develop partnerships and spur action that will help people in Carroll County live longer, healthier lives. This year, a special project called *Healthy Community Vision* is being conducted to ensure that the voice of people who live in our community is heard. Chalkboards for collecting individual thoughts and ideas were installed throughout Carroll County to engage people in thinking about *health*, and collect their comments. By opening a dialogue with Carroll community residents, The Partnership is going "outside the box" for ideas and input on improving health.

To view the 2017 County Health Rankings reports for Maryland and Carroll County, visit CountyHealthRankings.org.

*The Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County, Inc., an affiliate of Carroll Hospital Center and the Carroll County Health Department, is a private nonprofit organization working to improve health by **connecting people, inspiring action, and strengthening community.***

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