

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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Contact: Catherine Cioffi
Communications Director
Office - (914) 995-2932
Cell- (914) 954 -5579
CCioffi@westchestergov.com
Caren Halbfinger
Office – (914) 813-5013
Cqh4@westchestergov.com

WESTCHESTER RANKS THIRD STATEWIDE IN HEALTH OUTCOMES AND FACTORS

(White Plains, NY) – Westchester improved its statewide rank, rising to third place out of 62 counties for both health outcomes and health factors, according to the County Health Rankings released this week by the ninth annual National County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Program.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said: “This is good news for Westchester County residents, as well as for our Health Department and its many community partners. We must continue to work together to improve the health and well-being of all County residents.”

The Westchester County Department of Health, led by Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner of Health, works to preserve, protect and improve the health of its residents and to assure access to quality care.

The County ranked third for health outcomes, which measures the length and quality of life, and third for health factors, which measures the ways health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and the environment affect our health. Westchester ranked fourth in both categories last year, and in the top five in 2016.

The survey showed that Westchester residents reported they felt physically and mentally healthy more often, on average, than residents statewide. County residents had better access to primary care providers, dentists and mental health providers than residents statewide, with more providers per capita, and higher rates for cancer and diabetes screenings.

When compared with the state, Westchester County had lower rates of smoking, physical inactivity, obesity and chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease. Westchester also had higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance, and lower rates of unemployment, violent crime and injury-related deaths.

“The overall health of Westchester County residents remains good and continues to improve,” Amler said. “While Westchester residents enjoy access to quality care and many have adapted healthier lifestyles, we still have residents who struggle with the burden of poverty and health disparities who need our help. Clearly these are complex and difficult problems where more work needs to be done.”

The County’s child poverty index and the teen birth rate both demonstrated stark racial disparities. While Westchester had a much lower rate of children living in poverty (12%) than the state (21%), the report found that 23 percent of black and 23 percent of Hispanic children lived in poverty, as compared to 4 percent of white children. Similarly, while the Westchester teen birth rate (11 per thousand) compared favorably with the state’s (18 per thousand), the burden of teen births was much greater in communities of color. In Westchester, the teen birth rate for Hispanics, blacks and whites was 27 per thousand, 19 per thousand and 2 per thousand, respectively.

The rankings were developed by The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, and funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The report shows how counties compare within the state for the length and quality of life, their access to clinical care, as well as for such factors as the teen birth rate and the percentage of residents who smoke, are obese, drink to excess or are physically inactive.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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