# Appalachian counties continue to dominate lowest level of County Health Rankings in Ky.; most counties moved at least 10 notches

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Kentucky Health News

May 23, 2022

The annual County Health Rankings & Roadmaps report, showing how the health status of every county in the United States compares to that of every other county in the state, has been released.

Many Kentucky counties showed little change, but 76 of the state’s 120 counties shifted up or down by at least 10 notches in the rankings, which essentially measure of how long and how well we live.

The rankings measure health outcomes, gauged by life expectancy and measures of quality of life; and health factors, such as access to physicians and areas to exercise, tobacco use, children living in poverty, violent crime, long commutes and other environmental factors. The [report](https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/reports/state-reports/2022-kentucky-state-report)is issued by the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** and the **University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.**

The rankings are meant to be viewed more as a general categorization of a county’s health status, rather than making specific comparisons with counties that are relatively close in the rankings. Because the differences in rankings for most counties are so small that they are statistically insignificant, the researchers have placed counties in four groups of 30 counties each, called quartiles (each with one-fourth of the total of 120 counties).

The bottom quartile for both health outcomes and health actors in Kentucky continues to be made up of almost entirely Appalachian counties. The exceptions for health outcomes are Carroll County, between Louisville and Cincinnati, and Fulton County, at the state’s western tip. The relatively poor county is the only non-Appalachian county in the bottom quartile for health factors.

In health outcomes, Fulton County moved down 17 spots from last year’s report to rank 116th. Owsley County ranks 117th, followed by Perry County, which dropped 22 spots from last year’s ranking, and Wolfe and Breathitt counties. The last four counties form a cluster.