



Goodhue County **Health and Human Services**

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For immediate release

Local survey asking about health behaviors

Surveys mailed out September 21

Red Wing, MN (September 25, 2018) – What percent of Goodhue County adults are obese? What percent smoke? How does Goodhue County compare to the state average?

Every three to five years, local agencies come together to do a Community Health Needs Assessment survey, a mailed survey of county residents. Starting last weekend and continuing this week, surveys will be arriving in the mailboxes of randomly selected Goodhue County residents.

This year's survey will again ask residents about weight, height, and tobacco use, as well as other topics ranging from dental care and mental health to testing homes for radon and texting while driving. The last survey was conducted in 2015.

Data from the survey will again be used both by Mayo Clinic Health System, for Community Health Needs Assessment Reports, and by the Goodhue County Community Health Assessment Committee.

This year's survey is conducted by Freeborn, Mower, and Goodhue Counties, in partnership with Mayo Clinic Health System. The survey envelope residents may receive in the mail will show the logos of all four organizations: Freeborn County Public Health, Goodhue County Health and Human Services, Mower County Health and Human Services, and Mayo Clinic Health System.

"In Goodhue County, we have a longstanding partnership of doing surveys together with the county," said Pam Horlitz, Community Engagement Specialist with Mayo Clinic Health System. "It just makes sense to survey people once, and share the data, rather than doing separate surveys."

All three counties being surveyed are home to Mayo Clinic Health System hospitals including Austin, Albert Lea, Cannon Falls, Red Wing, and Lake City. All three local health departments also have local initiatives of the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP): Live Well Goodhue County, Mower Refreshed, and Freeborn County SHIP.

"Some of the questions on the survey are items that Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grantees were required to start monitoring around 2015. The questions about nutrition, physical activity and tobacco will help us learn about behaviors and will guide our work over the next five years." said David Anderson, Live Well Goodhue County Coordinator.

For the first time in 2015, the mailed survey asked questions about health behavior and not just opinions. For example, the 2005 and 2010 Goodhue County surveys asked residents if obesity among adults was a problem. The percentage of respondents who said obesity was a moderate or serious problem was 84% in 2005 and 62% in 2010. The 2015 survey, by contrast, was the first to actually measure obesity rates.

The 2015 results showed that 38% of Goodhue County adults were obese, based on self-reported weight and height. This is above the state average.

Minnesota's adult obesity rate rose to 28.4 percent in 2017 but continued to outperform neighboring states with a slower rate of increase. The national rate also rose to 30.1 percent, according to data released earlier this month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“Seeing our survey come back with a 38% obesity rate in Goodhue County was discouraging at the time, but it gave us a more recent estimate of obesity rates in our county,” said Ruth Greenslade, Healthy Communities Supervisor at Goodhue County Health and Human Services. “Now we can survey again this year and see if we’ve held steady since 2015.”

It is difficult to get accurate county numbers for obesity from other sources, Greenslade explained. “If you go to the County Health Rankings website today, in 2018, they have us at 31% for adult obesity. That is based on 2011-2013 data.”

For statistical reasons, the County Health Rankings combines three years of data from the CDC's national phone surveys with Census Bureau demographics to come up with an estimated obesity rate for the county.

The survey mailed out this week will provide more recent and more precise answers to the county, the local hospital system, and other organizations.

A thorough and valid assessment of a community's health is a customary practice and core function of public health, as well as for hospitals. Goodhue County Health and Human Services coordinates the Community Health Assessment Committee, which publishes a Community Health Assessment (CHA) every five years. Mayo Clinic Health System hospitals in Red Wing, Cannon Falls, and Lake City publish a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years.

The CHA is required by Minnesota state statute and national standards, and the CHNA is required by the Internal Revenue Service. The CHA covers the entire county, and the CHNA covers the population served by each hospital. The last CHA was published in 2017; the last CHNA was published in 2016.

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About Goodhue County Health and Human Services:

The mission of Goodhue County Health and Human Services is to “Promote, Protect and Strengthen the Health of Individuals, Families, and Communities.” The department has four service divisions: Economic Assistance, Public Health, Social Services, and HHS Finance/IT. For more information on Goodhue County Health & Human Services, please visit www.co.goodhue.mn.us.

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