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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Rankings Shed Light on Where Texas Counties Could Improve Health**

Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health) and Smith County received the release of the annual *County Health Rankings*, by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (UWPHI). Their annual review of our citizens' health shows that where we live, learn, worship, work and play truly matters to our personal health.

In this study, Smith County ranked 85 out of 243 counties for Health Outcomes (Today's Health) and a rank of 107 out of 243 in Health Factors (Tomorrow's Health). The *Rankings* allow communities to see how people from their county compare to others on a range of factors from education, housing, and transportation to community safety. It offers ways to take action to promote lifelong health.

“Change begins by bringing people from all walks of life together – from education, transportation, public health, business, and other sectors – these rankings can help community leaders and citizens work together in new and creative ways to build a culture of health.” says George Roberts, chief executive officer of NET Health.

The *Rankings* illustrate in a powerful way that where you live can influence how well and how long you live. The NET Health Center for Healthy Living, the Healthy Me Healthy Babies preconception coalition, Fit City Tyler, our healthcare systems, extensive parks and comprehensive tobacco-free policies are examples of how our community is taking action to improve health. While we have taken important steps to improve the health of our community, there is more we can do to help our residents lead healthier lives.

The *Rankings* are calculated each year and it is important to note that one year's rankings should not become directly compared to a county's score in previous years. This fact underscores how important it is to build a culture of health where getting healthy, staying healthy, and making sure our kids grow up healthy are top priorities for each county.

### **About the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health)**

NET Health serves a vital function through our Departments of Immunizations, Tuberculosis Control, Laboratory Services, Vital Statistics, Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Disease Surveillance, Environmental Health, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) & Community Outreach.

The mission of NET Health is to promote health, prevent illness and protect our community.

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