



# 2011

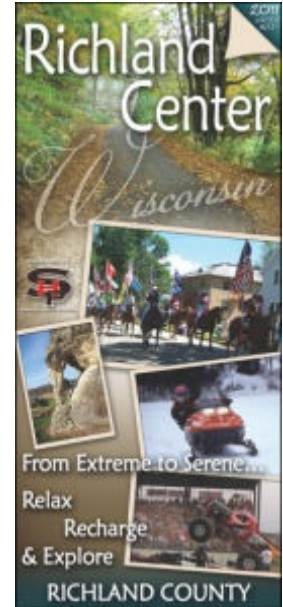
## Richland County Community Assessment Report

Prepared for Richland County Public Health  
by Scott Consulting Partners, LLC  
Richland Center, WI  
9/25/2011

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Richland County is a rural county with an estimated population of 18,021 in 2010. The county is divided into 21 supervisory districts, and each district has a representative on the Board of Supervisors.

The County has only one incorporated city, Richland Center, which has just over 5,000 in population and is the county seat as well as the hub of business activity. Other towns in the county include Buena Vista (2008 pop: 1,722), Richland (2008 pop: 1,364), and the village of Lone Rock (2008 pop: 929).



The Richland County Department of Health and Human Services provides an array of services in Richland County. These services are provided through the following programs:

- \* Aging, Disability, & Resource Center
- \* Birth to Three
- \* Children's Services
- \* Clinical Services
- \* Economic Support
- \* Public Health

### ***Richland County Public Health***

The mission of Richland County Public Health is to promote health and improve the quality of life of Richland County residents through the provision of a variety of public health programs based on primary prevention, early intervention, and health promotion. This community assessment is part of the function of public health planning that is essential to ascertaining the focus needed to best fulfill our mission. The Public Health Department conducted a survey of Community Partners in 2007 sent to 114 partners with 41 returned (37% response). Results are incorporated into this report.



Other sources of data for this report include:

- \* WI Department of Health
- \* Wisconsin Interactive State Health (WISH) data statistics
- \* WI KIDS COUNT
- \* US Census Bureau
- \* WI Department of Workforce Development
- \* UW Population Health Program *County Health Rankings*

## Demographics

### *Population-A stable population, with proportionately high number of elders*

Not much has changed in the Richland County population over the past decade – the total number of individuals living in Richland County was only 0.5% higher in 2010 than in 2000, compared to the 6.0% growth in the state and 9.7% growth in the Nation as a whole. Richland County continues to have a higher percentage of elderly (individuals over 65) than the state as a whole (17.4% vs. 13.5%).

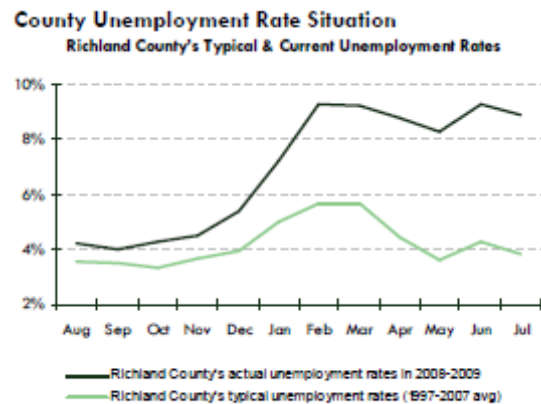
While Richland County citizens are primarily of European descent with English as their first language, we have seen an increase in the Spanish-speaking population, up from 0.9% in 2000 to 2% in 2009.

Richland is a rural county. Farming is still a vital part of the economic landscape with agriculture supplying 41% of jobs in the County. Other residents travel to surrounding counties for their work. Richland County's nearest neighbors supply workers to Richland employers, but more often supply jobs for the county's residents. Sauk County employs almost 1,100 Richland County residents while sending about 200 residents to Richland to work. Dane County employs over 500 Richland County residents, while sending about 50 workers into Richland County.

## Social Determinants

### *Poverty and Unemployment Reach into Richland County*

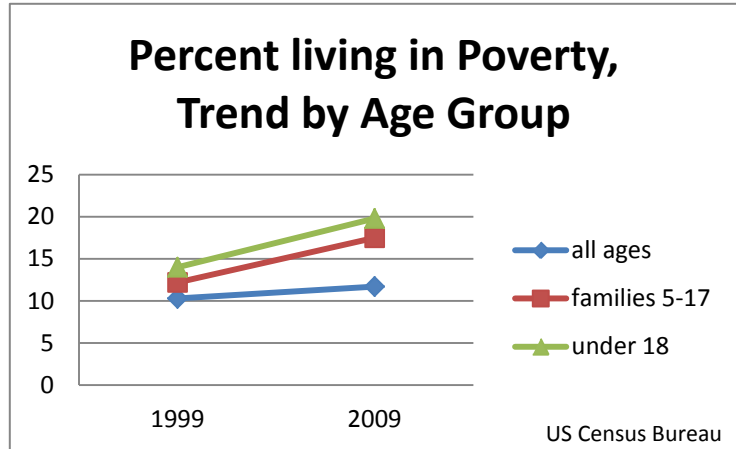
The social and economic resources that each person and family has to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle – sometimes called social determinants—are considered the most important factors predicting health outcomes and health behavior. Most of our Richland County residents, whether directly or indirectly are currently struggling with negative social and economic impacts from the strong hit delivered by the economic downturn beginning in late 2007. Even before the downturn, community leaders recognized the importance of social determinants in Richland County; in early 2007 they identified the need for quality employment opportunities, infrastructure (e.g., transportation, affordable housing), and the continued viability of the farming economy as top concerns for the Richland County area.



Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Training, LAUS, 2009

Beginning in 2008, with restaurants and local businesses closing, factories downsizing, and construction stagnating, unemployment increased, reaching 9% throughout most of 2009, and staying fixed around 8% in 2010. Hospitals, nursing homes, and the education sector were bright spots in the local economy that actually witnessed growth in 2008 and 2009. The loss of educational jobs through state budget cuts in 2011 offset gains in that sector in Richland County and elsewhere in the state.

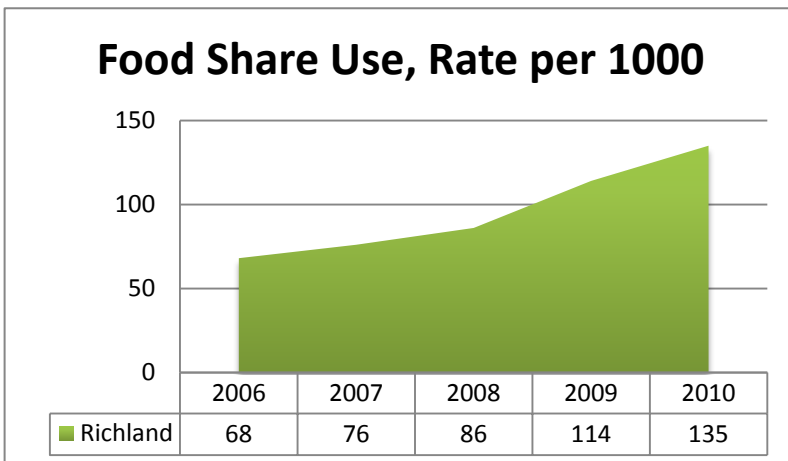
With high unemployment, Richland County has seen a major increase in poverty among children. While the poverty level of all citizens increased from 10% to 12% from 1999 to 2009, it was the level of children under 18 living at the federal poverty level that



increased most dramatically - reaching 20% in 2009. Another indicator of resources available within a community is Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI), or the total amount of income divided by the number of residents. From 2002 to 2007, PCPI increased at a slower rate than the state and the nation. At 13.7%, Richland County's increase was 7.2 percentage points lower than the state and almost 12% lower than the nation. Of the 72 counties in Wisconsin, Richland ranks in 70th place (*Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development*).

**Richland Residents Increase Use of Food Services after 2007**

Given these economic challenges, the rate of Richland County citizens under the "safety net" has grown for most, but not all, social services.



The rate of residents using the Food Share program, which provides financial assistance to purchase food, doubled from 2006 to 2010. Use of the Free or Reduced lunch benefit in Richland County also increased from 29% in 2005 to 38% in 2009 (*Kids Count Data Center*).

On the other hand, participation in the Women, Infant & Children (WIC) program, which provides food purchasing assistance to families with infants or children up to four years of age, did not show such a dramatic increase at either the county or state level after 2007.

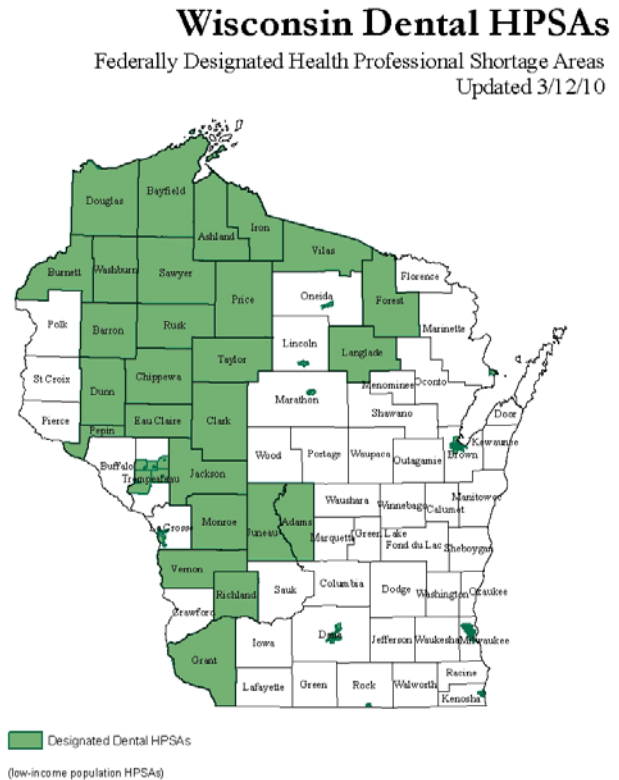
Rate of Children Receiving WIC, by Year					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Richland	453	355	343.3	388.7	407.5
WI	441	375	385	395	402

Source: Kids Count Data Center at [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

**Limited health care access and availability**

Community leaders identified access to health and dental care as their top concern overall, and the most pressing concern facing Richland County in the next 5 to 10 years. It should be noted that this was in 2007 just before the economic crisis.

The southwestern and northern townships of Richland County are federally designated primary health professional shortage areas. In addition, the entire County is also designated as a mental health professional and dental health care shortage area, underscoring the great need for more resources in the county ([dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/primarycare](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/primarycare)).



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**County Health Rankings data show in 2010, about 1 in 10 Richland County adult residents (11%) did not have health insurance, up from 5% in 2008.**

## Health Outcomes

### **Mortality**

Richland County has a higher rate of overall mortality than the state at 962 compared to 819 per 100,000. In six of the top ten causes of mortality, Richland compares favorably to the state. In three areas --Cerebrovascular disease, Accidents, and Influenza/Pneumonia, Richland fared worse, while Lower Respiratory Infections had the same rate as the state.

<i>Top Ten Age Adjusted Mortality Rates, 2005-2009</i>			
		<i>Richland</i>	<i>WI</i>
Heart disease	<b>+</b>	166	176
Cancer	<b>+</b>	161	173
Cerebrovascular (CVD)	<b>-</b>	56	41
Accident	<b>-</b>	54	41
Respiratory	<b>-</b>	39	39
Influenza/Pneumonia	<b>-</b>	22	16
Nephritis	<b>+</b>	11	15
Alzheimers	<b>+</b>	10	24
Diabetes	<b>+</b>	10	19
Suicide	<b>+</b>	9	12

*Source: WISH interactive site, Data combined 2005-2009 at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish/)*

(+)= Richland County doing better compared to state

**(-) = Richland County doing worse or same compared to state**

### *Infant mortality*

During the five year time period of 2005 to 2009, Richland County lost eight infants out of 1,135 births. The resulting rate of infant mortality, 7.05 per 1,000, was higher than the statewide rate of 6.5 during the same time period.

**Premature Mortality or Potential Years of Life Lost**

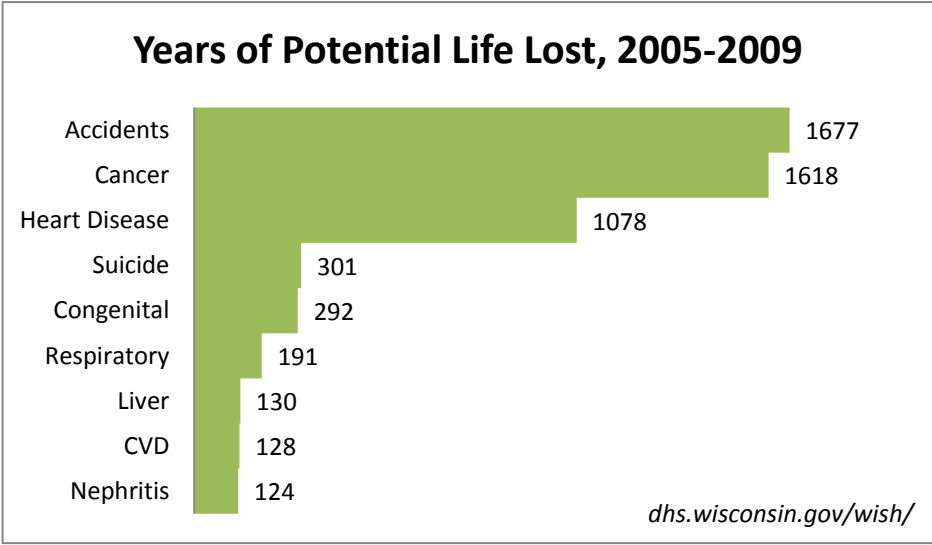
Diseases that affect younger populations have a high “cost” in terms of the years of life lost as a productive member of the community. Epidemiologists term this *years of potential life lost* (YPLL) and calculate age adjusted rates of mortality based on this estimate. So even though the NUMBER of deaths to a condition may be small, if the condition is affects younger people, it will carry a high cost to the community in YPLL.

<i>Top Conditions -Years of Potential Life Lost, 2005-2009</i>				
	<i># Richland deaths</i>		<i>Richland</i>	<i>WI</i>
Accidents	56	-	1677	1039
Cancer	204	-	1618	1446
Heart Disease	226	-	1078	860
Suicide	8	-	301	406
Congenital	5	-	292	205
Respiratory	50	-	191	146
Liver	7	+	130	138
CVD	80	+	128	154
Nephritis	14	-	124	56.2

*Source: WISH interactive site, Data combined 2005-2009*

(+)= Richland County doing better compared to state  
 (-) = **Richland County doing worse compared to state**

For Richland County, accidents move into the top position of conditions when considering YPLL. The 56 accidents during this time period cost the lives of mostly younger people, leading to 1,677 YPLL. Cancers and heart disease remain in the top three ranked health conditions, while suicide and congenital defects emerge as major causes of YPLL due to affecting children and young adults.



With a mission to improve the overall public health, reviewing potential years of life lost can help community leaders, residents, and the public health leaders consider priority action on conditions with the highest potential to reduce premature mortality.



**Preventable Hospitalizations**

Preventable hospitalizations are patient care for conditions where timely and effective ambulatory care can reduce the likelihood of hospitalization. These diagnoses in the WISH data set were defined by a medical panel of internists and pediatricians, and included conditions such as asthma, diabetes, bacterial pneumonia and bronchitis where timely and effective ambulatory care can reduce the likelihood of hospitalization by:

- Preventing the onset of an illness or condition;
- Controlling an acute episodic illness or condition; or
- Managing a chronic disease or condition.

Because public health is focused on prevention and alleviation of excess morbidity in the public, preventable hospitalizations can be examined for potential prevention priorities.

Compared to preventable hospitalizations statewide in Wisconsin, Richland County had higher rates of preventable hospitalizations in all age groups except 45-64, which had similar rates (data not shown).

<b>Preventable Hospitalizations in Richland County, Combined 2007/2008</b>					
	#	Rate/ 1000	Ave Days	Ave cost	Per capita charge
<b>Total</b>	680	18.7	3.8	\$12,629	\$236
<b>&lt;18</b>	47	5.8	1.8	\$5,835	\$34
<b>18-44</b>	83	7.15	3.7	\$17,676	\$124
<b>45-64</b>	112	10.8	2.8	\$11,752	\$128
<b>65+</b>	438	70.4	4.3	\$12,663	\$888
<b>Source: DHS Annual Data Profiles, Combined 2007 and 2008</b>					

During 2007 and 2008, Richland County experienced 680 preventable hospitalizations, each lasting an average of 3.8 days with an average charge of \$12,629. The most expensive visits were for those in the 18-44 age group, although the 65+ group experienced the highest number by far.

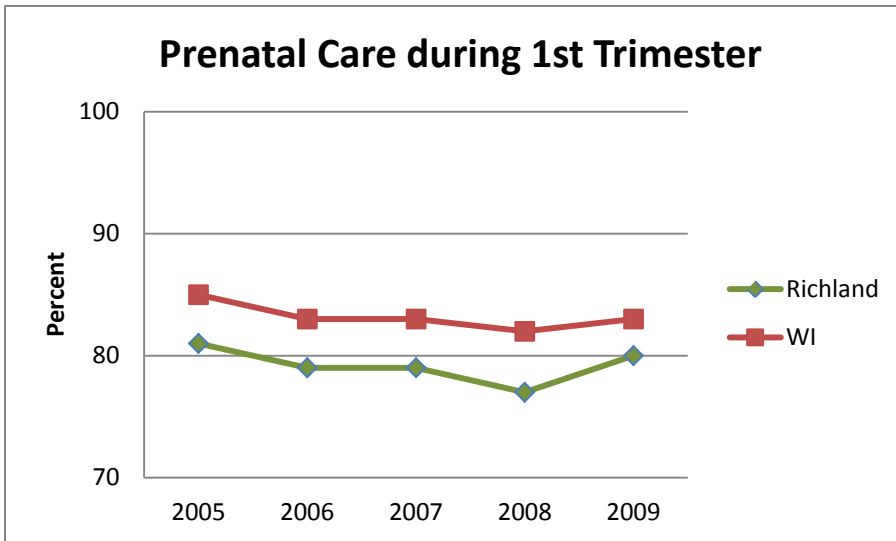
Compared to statewide rates in Wisconsin, Richland County had more hospitalizations that could have been prevented in all age groups, except 45-64, which had similar rates.

The total cost in human suffering and lost productivity can not be fully measured, but hospital costs alone translated to \$8,587,720 during 2007 and 2008. These funds were spent on hospitalizations that could have been prevented.

## Health Behaviors and Risk Factors

Health behaviors contribute significantly to morbidity and mortality, especially notable are those that contribute to chronic disease and preventable hospitalizations.

### Infant Health



During the past 5 years, over three out of four pregnant women (80%) in Richland County received prenatal care during the first three months of their pregnancy. This percentage is slightly lower than the statewide rate of 83% (WISH data at [dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish)).

#### Smoking during pregnancy

From 2005 to 2009, 213 out of 1,132 women smoked cigarettes while pregnant. This rate of almost 1 in 5, or 19%, is higher than the Wisconsin state rate of 14% during the same time period.

#### Low birth weight

Out of 1,135 births, Richland County had 55 which had low birthweight (<2500 grams), equal to a rate of 4.9. This is lower than the state rate of 7.0 and the Southern region rate of 6.2.

#### Childhood Immunizations

Richland County achieved an almost perfect record of school age child immunization from 2005 to 2008, with 100% immunization rate in 2007 and 99% the other years. Wisconsin as a whole had a rate of 96%, with the exception of a

jump to 98% in 2007 (Kids Count data center). However, we still have a way to go to reach 2 year olds: in 2010, only 60% of 2 year olds were up-to-date with vaccines (which means 4 DTap; 3 Hep. B; 3 Hib; 1MMR; 3 Polio; 1 Varicella) compared to 59% in 2009 and 65% in 2008.

Richland County achieved an almost perfect record of school age child immunization from 2005 to 2008, but still has room to improve with 2 year olds, at 65% in 2008, 59% in 2009, and 60% in 2010.

## Youth and Young Adults

### Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning can cause major neurological damage in the developing brains of young children, so testing is an important public health action which is monitored and reported to the state health department. Each year from 2005 to 2009, Richland County tested between 200 and 300 children under the age of six for lead poisoning. Unfortunately, 31 positive tests were found in Richland County children, ranging from 1% to almost 4% of those tested each year (*Richland County Environmental Health Profile, 2010, dhs.wisconsin.gov/epht*).

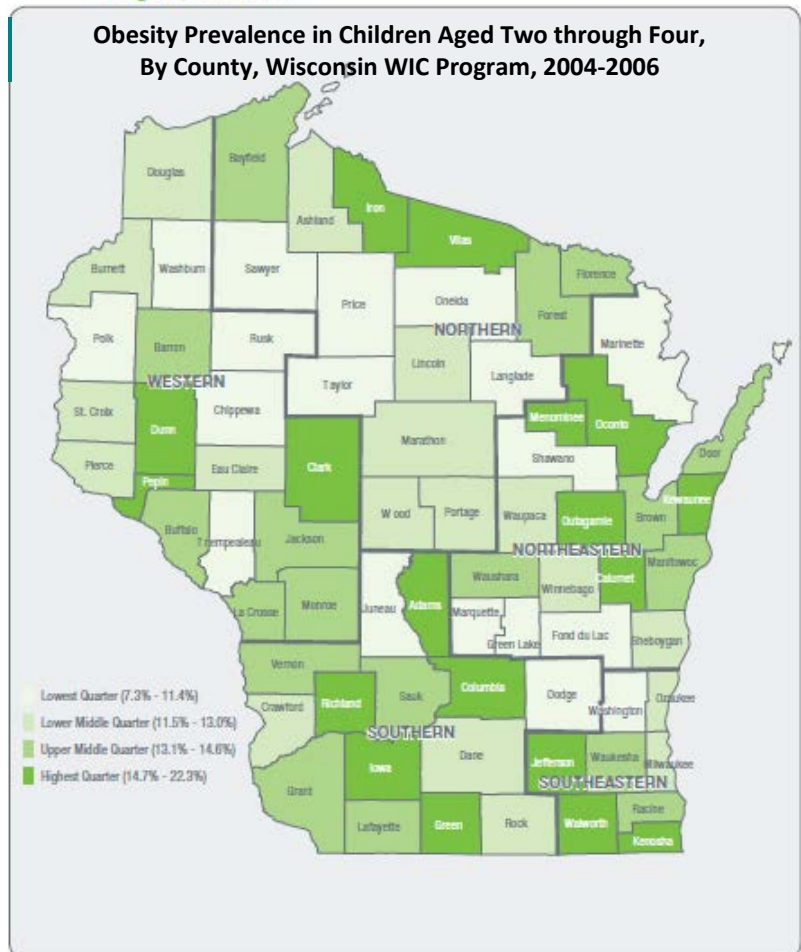
### Teen pregnancy

From 2005 to 2009, Richland County had a lower teen pregnancy rate than Wisconsin as a whole, with an average rate of 22.9 births per 1000 females aged 15 to 19, compared to 31 births per 1000 (WISH data at *dhs.wisconsin.gov/wish*).

### Obesity

The rapid increase in overweight and obesity over the past two decades is a source of major concern throughout the Nation as it has spared no state or locality, including Richland County.

Unfortunately, the children of Richland County are showing some of the worst rankings in the state – falling in the top 25% of counties with the highest obesity rates. The map to the right (from the WI Obesity Report) shows the counties with the highest rates in darker green, including Richland County.

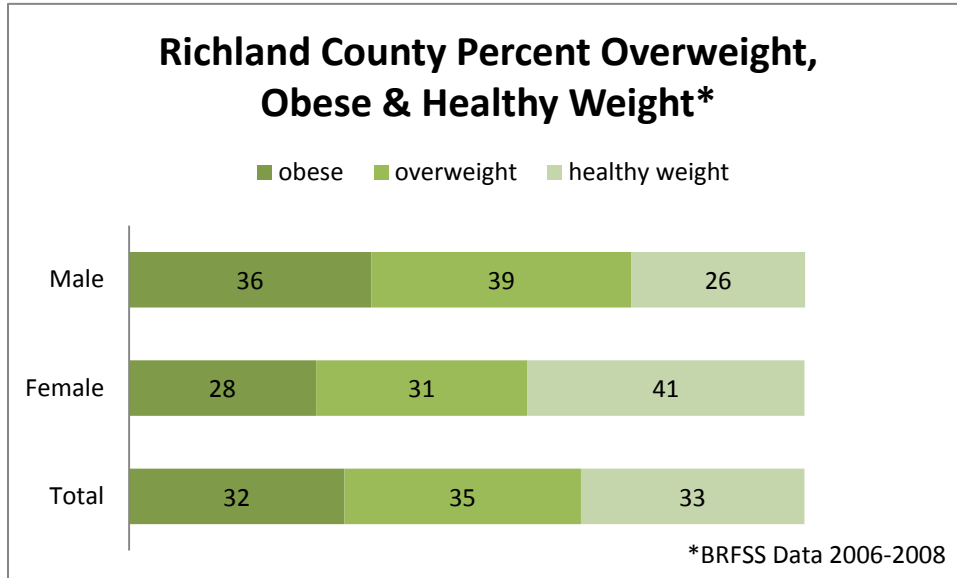


Data source: 2004-2006 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**Adults**

*Obesity*

Among adults, as well as children, Richland County ranks in the top (highest) quarter of obesity rates of all Wisconsin counties. Two out of three Richland



County residents are overweight or obese, and among males it is three out of four.

*Nutrition*

Richland County has also been identified as one of the Wisconsin counties with the lowest access to healthy foods. Access to healthy foods is measured

as the percent of zip codes in a county with a healthy food outlet, with a healthy food outlet defined as a grocery store with more than 4 employees or a produce stand/farmers' market. The UW Population County Health Rankings 2010 placed Richland Center with 17% of residents having such access, which is much lower than the residents of the state as a whole at 46%.

In addition to the lack of access to fresh foods, 86% of Richland County residents reported insufficient fruit and vegetable intake compared to 77% of Wisconsin as a whole (2008 County Health Rankings).

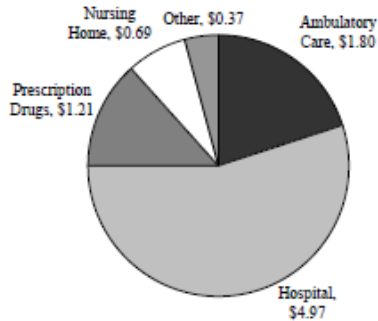
*Physical Activity*

About one in every five Richland County citizens is not physically active, which is similar to the state as a whole (BRFSS, 2006-2008). As a rural county, 70% of residents live outside of Richland Center, where most of the resources for physical activity (gyms, recreation centers, etc.) are located.

**Commercial Tobacco**

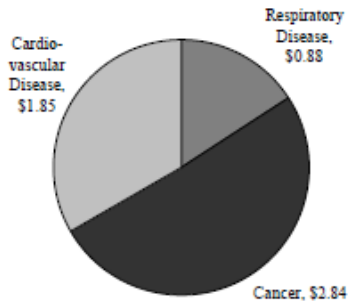
The use of commercial tobacco products accounts for the largest cause of morbidity and mortality in the population. Each year, we lose 25 residents directly related to smoking, with 320 years of potential life lost due to smoking. The costs to the county are staggering, totaling almost \$15 million annually.

**Smoking Attributable Health Care Costs in Richland County, 2007<sup>6,12</sup>**  
(In millions of dollars)



**Total: \$9.1 Million\***

**Cost of Productivity Lost Due to Smoking in Richland County, Averaged Annual 2003-07<sup>6-8</sup>**  
(In millions of dollars)

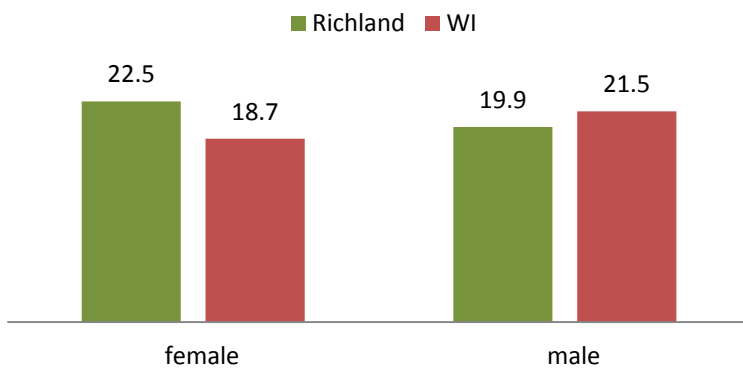


**Total: \$5.6 Million\***

Source: *Burden of Tobacco in Wisconsin: 2010 Edition*. University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center. Madison, WI: March, 2010.

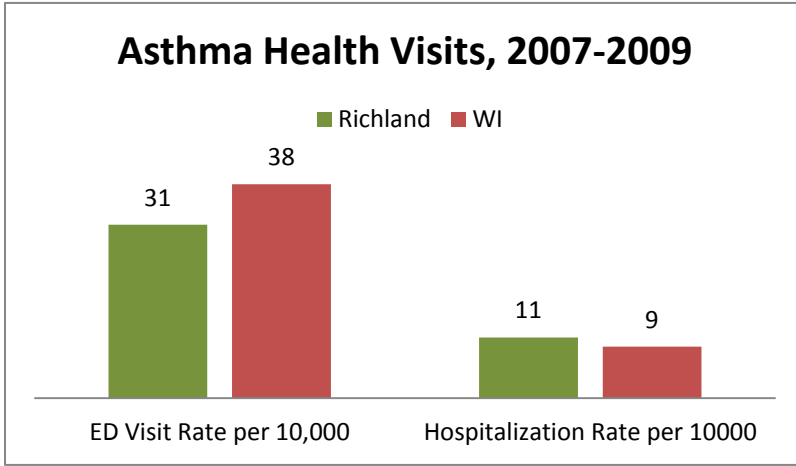
Richland County has a slightly higher proportion of adult smokers than the state as a whole: 21.2 compared to 20.1 statewide (BRFSS, 2006-2008). Digging deeper, we find that the elevated rate is due to higher smoking among females -- in Richland, the rates for females are notably higher than the rates for both Richland males and WI females. In addition, we also have high rates of smoking during pregnancy, as noted on p. 10.

**Smoking Rate by Gender, 2006-2008**



**Asthma**

Tobacco relates directly to another Richland County health concern, asthma,



which is exacerbated by exposure to secondhand smoke. But with proper education, treatment, and care, most emergency room and hospitalizations due to asthma can be prevented. The Wisconsin state health department conducted a study on “the Burden of Asthma” and reported county rankings for based on an analysis of the 2007-2009 Wisconsin Emergency Department Visit and Inpatient Hospitalization Files

([www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/asthma/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/asthma/index.htm)). Richland County is ranked # 35 out of 72 counties for emergency department visits for asthma but is ranked #7 (1 is the worst) in the hospitalization rate for asthma. Such visits are extremely costly in terms of human suffering, productivity, and medical costs.

**Alcohol and Drugs**

Richland County has a lower rate of binge drinking than Wisconsin as a whole at 17.4% vs 23.5% (BRFSS, 2006-2008). However, alcohol contributes to our County’s high accident mortality previously noted in this report. In 2007 and 2008, about 20% of motor vehicle crashes were related to operating while intoxicated or using alcohol. And in 2008, this included two fatal crashes.

<b>Alcohol and Drug Related Hospitalizations &amp; Vehicular Accidents, Richland County, 2007 &amp; 2008</b>		
<b>Hospitalizations</b>	2007	2008
Alcohol	33	26
Drug	15	16
<b>Motor vehicle crashes</b>		
Alcohol	17	19
OWI	13	14
Source: DHS Annual Data Profiles		

**Environmental Quality**

The Wisconsin Department of Health published a detailed report on the quality of water, air, and environmental contaminants in Richland County ([dhs.wisconsin.gov/epht](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/epht)). Overall, our County has good ratings, although private wells can contain nitrates, a special concern for households with young children.

## Community Assets & Resources

Richland County has existing community assets and resources, at the state, regional, and local levels, which will play an integral part in community solutions and responses to health issues identified in this report.



### **Primary Health Care**

Richland County has several key health care resources to serve the county, including a community-based hospital and medical practice in Richland Center.

#### *The Richland Hospital*

The Richland Hospital is a 25-bed acute care Critical Access hospital serving the health care needs of people in Richland Center and the surrounding area.

#### *The Richland Medical Center*

The Richland Medical Center is a full services primary care clinic located in Richland Center. Staff includes 13 board certified family physicians, one board certified general surgeon, one board certified orthopaedist, 4 certified nurse practitioners who are Advanced Practice Nurse Prescribers (APNP), and one certified physician assistant (PA-C). Many specialist physicians hold office hours in our clinic on varying schedules.

#### *Richland Center Free Clinic*

The Free Clinic is set up to reach underinsured individuals in Richland County. The County Health Department nursing staff, a Richland Medical Center physician, and local volunteers provide services one morning a week.

### **Public health**

#### *Richland County Health and Human Services, Public Health*

Staff includes the public health manager and 2 FTE public health nurses; and a .2 FTE HealthCheck Outreach Worker. Richland County Public Health is part of a five County Environmental Health Consortia and the Environmental Health Consultant is in Richland County one morning a week. Public Health is part of Richland County Health & Human Services and is located in the Community Services Building in Richland Center. Public Health provides immunizations, communicable disease prevention and control, maternal child health programs, public health preparedness, environmental health programs, and a variety of other public health programs and services, and is involved with other organizations and agencies within the community to increase and improve services available to our residents.

*WI Division of Public Health Southern Regional Office (SRO)*

The SRO supports Richland County HHS Public Health through the provision of technical assistance and serves as the link to other State Department of Health Services. Southern Regional Office staff serves as the contract monitor for funding through the Grants and Contracts System.

*WI Division of Public Health*

The Division of Public Health is responsible for providing public health services to the people of Wisconsin. The Division includes programs that address environmental and occupational health, family and community health, emergency medical services and injury prevention, chronic disease prevention and health promotion, and communicable diseases. It is also responsible for issuing birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates as well as collecting statistics related to the health of Wisconsin's population.

*WI State Lab of Hygiene*

The State laboratory of Hygiene provides clinical, water, and other environmental and industrial hygiene analytical services, specialized public health procedures, reference testing, training, technical assistance and consultation for private and public health agencies. As part of UW Madison, the State Lab performs research and instruction related to public and environmental health protection.

***Social & Economic***

*Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Richland County*

For over 25 years, the NHS has been helping local residents find affordable, quality housing. It was established in Richland Center in 1983 as a private, non-profit, community controlled corporation with a volunteer board and committees. The program finances the construction of new homes with financing for low income residents. They also provide workshops and counseling on home financing.

*Aging and Disability Resource Center*

The Aging and Disability Resource Center office in Richland Center is part of a regional network of offices designed to inform county residents about programs, services and public benefits, assist people to understand and consider their options, and help to make connections to resources, services, and benefits. Staff includes four social workers and two benefit specialists, as well as a manager and office assistant. The Center recently began participating as a pilot site in a University of Wisconsin research project to develop technology for improving the quality of life of seniors.



*Family Support Services*

The County provides services for families with children with physical and or mental conditions that could lead to developmental delays. Other services for families in need include protective services and foster care.

*Economic Support Services*

The County provides economic support services, staffed by six benefits specialists who help connect local residents with economic support services, such as Food Share, Medical Assistance, child care assistance, employment counseling, and low income energy assistance.

**Community Assets and Resources**

*Symons Recreation Complex*

The Symons Recreation Complex (SRC) is a fitness center that is operated by Richland County and the City of Richland Center. The SRC is open to the public and features an indoor pool, whirlpool, sauna, two racquetball courts and two exercise rooms with cardiovascular and weight training equipment.



*County and City Parks Departments*

Richland County is a rural setting with beautiful natural resources. The county maintains parks, with biking paths and outdoor activities. Richland Center, the county seat and only city in the county, has a strong and active parks department, which includes an outdoor pool. The department sponsors summer recreational programs with low cost options for low income families.

*UW Richland*

UW Richland is a freshman-sophomore campus of the University of Wisconsin. Located in Richland Center, the campus offers an Associate of Arts and Sciences degree which transfers to all UW campuses. UW Richland also serves southwestern Wisconsin as a cultural center and provides a wide variety of non-credit outreach courses for people of all ages.

*UW Extension*

Cooperative Extension develops practical education programs tailored to needs and based on university knowledge and research. County based Extension educators are University of Wisconsin faculty and staff who are experts in agriculture and agribusiness, community and economic development, natural resources, family and youth development.

## **Next Steps – Dissemination and Utilization of Findings**

The 2011 Richland County Community Assessment Report was reviewed by Public Health Staff and Health & Human Services Management.

### ***Dissemination to community at-large***

The Report is available on the Public Health website at [www.co.richland.wi.us](http://www.co.richland.wi.us) (select *Departments*, then *Health & Human Services*, then *Public Health*). A copy of the Report was sent to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Southern Regional Office. The Report is also available at the Brewer Public Library in Richland Center, with a request for comments/ input attached.

### ***Opportunity provided to review and contribute to assessment***

The Report was widely distributed to Public Health's local and regional partners, and we look forward to comments and discussions of our findings with these partners. The assessment was introduced to Richland County partners at our October 6, 2011 Maternal Child Health Community Meeting, and we plan to discuss findings and implications for our work at future meetings of this group.

The Richland County Aging and Disability Resource Center is also a pilot site for a new project focusing on using technology to assist elders and their caregivers maintain higher quality of life. We will share this Report with the project staff and enhance the Report with their findings, including interviews with Richland County seniors, as they become available.

### ***Utilization of Findings***

We have identified two specific opportunities for the use of the findings in this Report.

\* The Richland County HHS Public Health and Richland Hospital plan to partner in future needs assessment and community health improvement planning activities and this document will be fundamental to future work.

\* Richland County is embarking on a strategic planning project to address obesity in our community. The staff and coalition members involved in the project will review the obesity-related findings as a building block for a larger and more comprehensive assessment specific to the prevention of obesity in our community.