

County Health Rankings talking points

Please note: There is some overlap between different talking points, so don't directly cut/paste them to avoid duplication. Choose the point(s) that is/are right for your community, and personalize them for your jurisdiction.

General tips

Start with a positive frame instead of starting with the problem to solve: If you're able, start your talking points first with the positive outcome or goal you're trying to create in your area, and then share what problem that outcome will help solve while naming the partners at the table doing the work. Starting with the end result can invite your audience to imagine that future positive state alongside you, engaging them from the start. Starting with the problem first and then moving to the outcome/goal second puts in your audience's mind that this is just another of many problems to solve, which can discourage them from dreaming big with you from the start. (Definitely don't *start* with data. Humans are trained to see meaning before details, so give your audience meaning first, then fill in the data.)

Ground your message in shared values: Name the values you share together with your audience (e.g., we both want healthy kids, communities that feel safe, etc.), and choose talking points that are grounded in those shared values (or create your own). These shared values will be different with different audiences.

Specific talking points

When someone travels across the state, they don't leave their health behind in their home county—it's why we need a strong public health system across the entire state.

- We're building a strong public health system statewide, where we work together to improve public health in all Minnesota counties, because we know that a person's health doesn't stay behind when they leave their home.
- No matter where someone lives, they should have the same public health protections—and the same opportunity to achieve their best health. Minnesota's public health leaders want a statewide public health system in which the most critical activities to prevent, detect, and contain a wide range of threats to health are in place from border to border.
- Sharing resources and knowledge across counties and agencies allows local health departments, like ours, achieve economies of scale, be more efficient with what we have, and increase our capacity to serve their residents.

Minnesota is often ranked as one of the healthiest states in the nation, but significant health inequities exist.

- When we consider the averages, Minnesota compares quite well overall for health, economic opportunity, civic engagement and more. However, Many Minnesotans don't have the same

opportunities to shape a healthy life as others do; we see persistent inequities in health by race and geographic location.

- By highlighting these inequities, the County Health Rankings, like the [Minnesota statewide health assessment](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/healthymnpartnership/sha.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/healthymnpartnership/sha.html>) helps us look at how different conditions in our communities create or limit optimal health. The governmental public health system has a responsibility to address these root causes of poor health outcomes, alongside controlling infectious diseases, environmental threats, and risk factors for chronic diseases (to name a few).
- Our partnerships in the community help us make sure we work together with the people we serve to create sustainable, long-term solutions that can grow beyond government alone.
- [To give a local example, you could choose to highlight how a particular health factor—like food environment index, unemployment, or air pollution—are better or worse than other parts of the state due to the particular assets or challenges of your local community, then bridge to the work happening in your jurisdiction to reduce it.]

We have a long history of looking at our communities' health, measuring it, and working to improve it in partnership with community organizations, health care systems, and others.

- Minnesota's community health assessment and planning process is comprehensive, and includes measurement, planning, and community engagement. Although this process is often guided by a local health department, it includes partners from all sectors in the community—business, housing, medical care, education, other government agencies, nonprofits, and individual community members—working together to connect, energize, and amplify each other's work to improve community health.
- This community health assessment and planning process helps our communities measure community health and grow the cross-community relationships to address community needs on multiple fronts.
- [To give a local example, share some of the cross-partner work from your community health improvement plan, Health Equity Network, or other initiative—what you're working to improve and what the end result will be, who's at the table, etc.]

We can use what we learn from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps to open conversations about what creates health, and how to improve the health of our communities.

- Minnesota's quality of life depends on healthy, vibrant communities. The communities where people live provide the building blocks for long-term health and wellbeing, including protection from the spread of infectious diseases and environmental threats, clean water, strong schools, sustaining jobs, community connectedness, and access to health care and other important community support. Minnesota's governmental public health system, working together with community partners, plays an important part in creating and sustaining healthy communities so that the individuals and families that live there can reach their full health potential.

COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS TALKING POINTS

- Many factors that affect health are not under the direct control of public health departments. We look for creative, strategic ways to build partnerships to improve health across communities, with business, housing, medical care, education, other government agencies, nonprofits, and individual community members—all working together to connect, energize, and amplify each other’s work to improve community health.
- As an example, at the state-level, the Healthy Minnesota Partnership brings together community partners and the Minnesota Department of Health to improve the health and quality of life for everyone in Minnesota.
- [Share examples from your own jurisdiction, like community health assessment and planning work, SHIP Community Leadership Team, action from the Minnesota Health Equity Networks, and other local coalitions that are unique to your jurisdiction not listed here.]

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