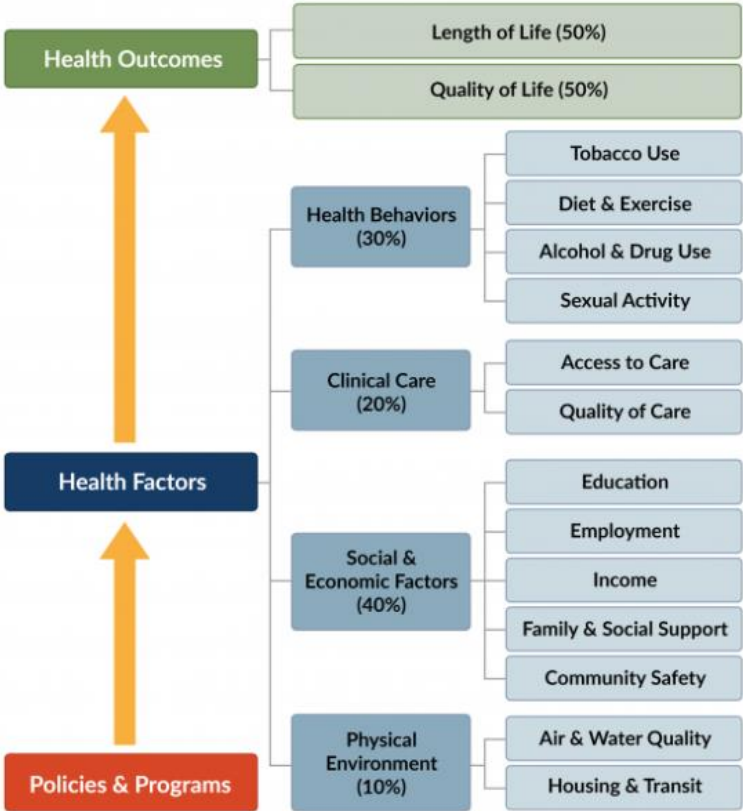


County Health Rankings & Roadmaps 2024: Putnam County Executive Summary

Introduction

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHR&R) is an annual publication of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute which compiles health data of counties across the nation, and then provides tools to compare county performance. In past years, this comparison came in the form of ranking counties within states, but in 2024 CHR&R changed its methodology. In 2024 counties were instead placed on a continuum in comparison to all counties nationally. CHR&R describes this methodology as counties being placed in "Health Groups, our data-informed groupings of counties nationwide with similar Health Outcomes or Health Factors on the continuum."

CHR&R's methodology is based on the conceptual model of population health displayed below. The model categorizes health indicator data as Health Outcomes (measures of how long people live and how much health they experience while alive) and Health Factors (measures of things that can impact length of life and degree of health). Health Outcome measures are subcategorized into length and quality of life. Health Factor measures are subcategorized into health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment. Subcategories are further broken down into focus areas that are composed of individual health indicator measures.



To place counties on the continuum, Health Outcome and Health Factor summary composite scores are calculated from the individual measures based on weights for the various subcategories of measures:

- Weighting for Health Outcomes: Length of Life 50%; Quality of Life 50%
- Weighting for Health Factors: Health Behaviors 30%; Clinical Care 20%, Social and Economic Factors 40%, Physical Environment 10%

After composite scores are calculated for a county, they are assigned to one of 10 groups. Groupings are made using national data, so all ten groups may not be represented in an individual state. Groups are not equally sized, rather they use a “data-informed grouping method” which groups counties based on similarity and meaningful gaps in data. Groups range from the 1st (healthiest in the nation) to the 10th (least healthy in the nation). CHR&R provides a visual representation of each county’s grouping in “Health Snapshots,” as seen below in the Topline Results for Putnam County.

Thirty-four individual Health Outcome and Health Factor measures are considered for the composite scores. These are the “select measures” which CHR&R has determined to best summarize the opportunity for health and how long and well people live in a particular county. To provide a broader picture of health and wellbeing, the CHR&R website also provides data on demographics and additional measures for each county.

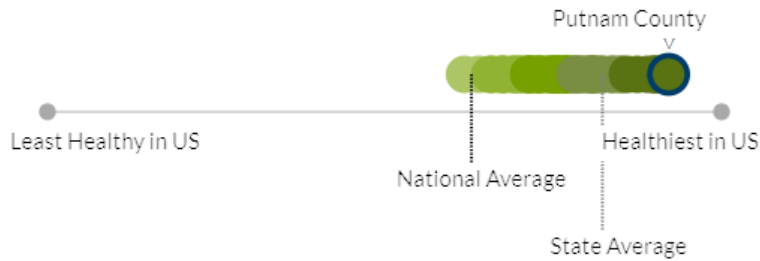
Further detail on CHR&R methodology can be found on their website:

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/methodology-and-sources/methods>

Topline Results for Putnam County

The Putnam County Health Snapshot, along with demographic data, and data on individual Health Outcome and Health Factor indicators can be found at: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/new-york/putnam?year=2024>

Health Outcomes

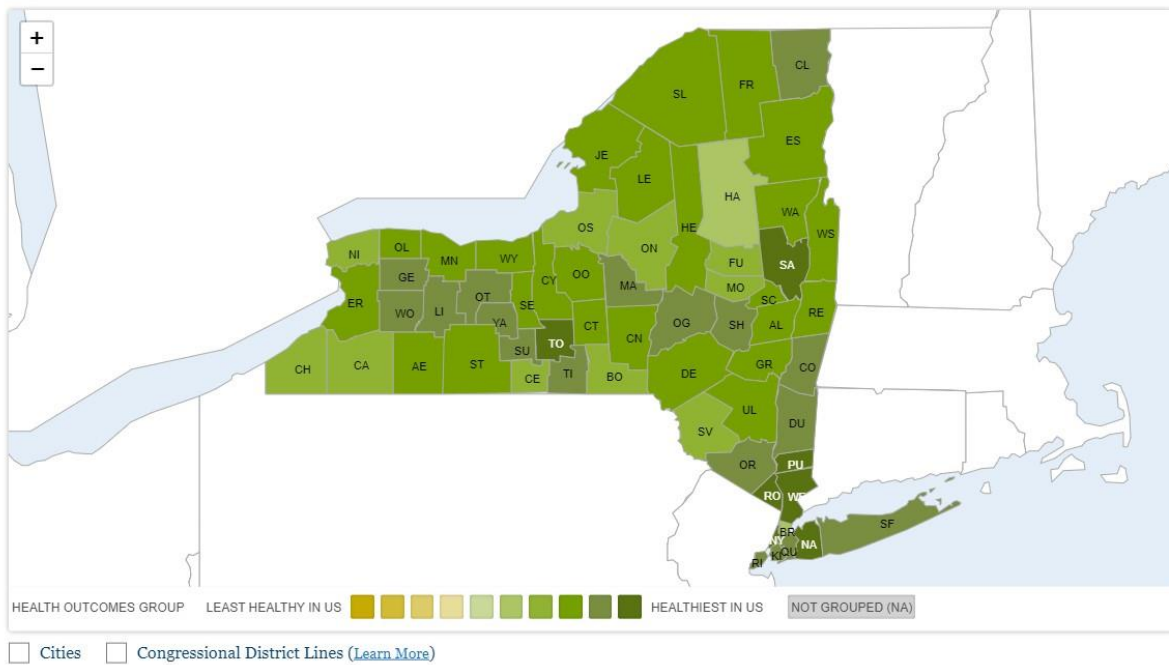


Putnam County performs better than both the national and state average for Health Outcomes and falls within in the healthiest nationwide group of counties. When compared to other counties in this healthiest group in New York State (Nassau, New York, Rockland, Saratoga, Tompkins, and Westchester), Putnam has the strongest composite score.

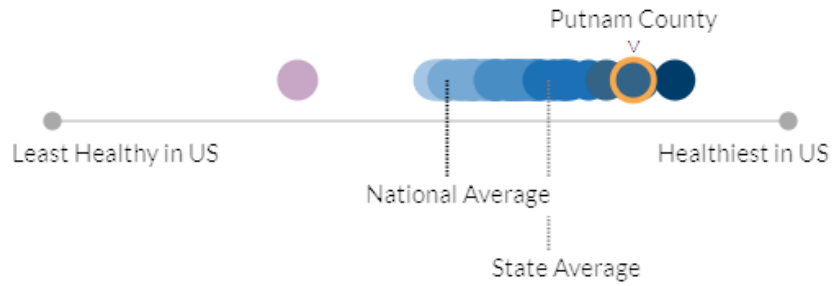


County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

2024 Health Outcomes - New York



Health Factors

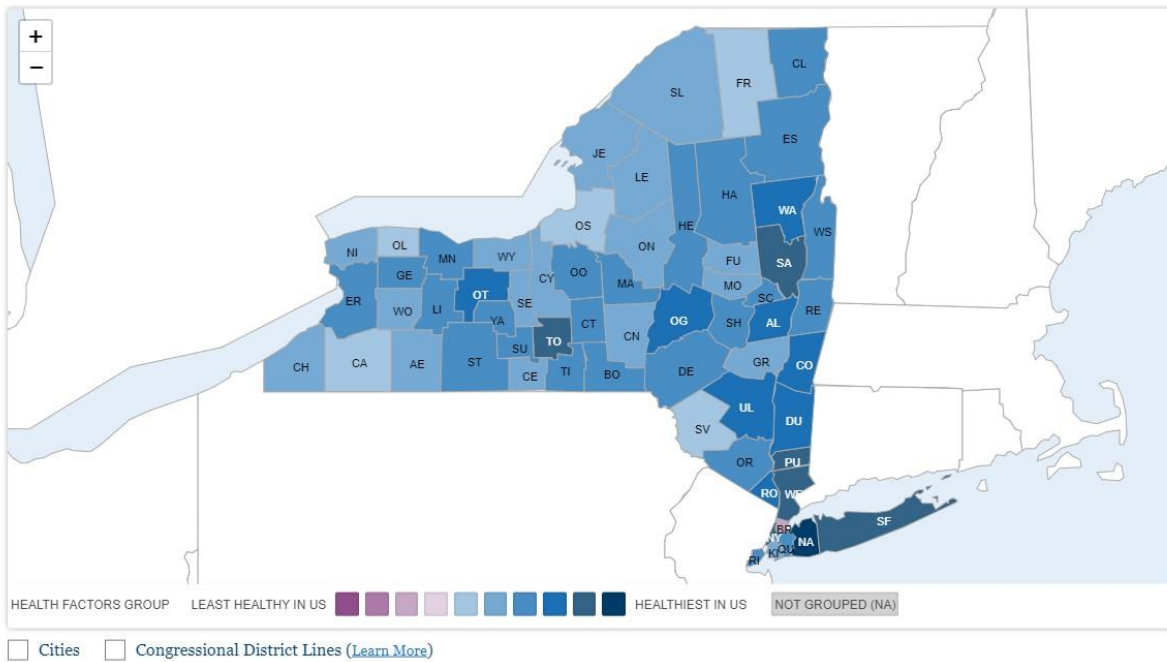


Putnam County performs better than both the national and state average for Health Factors and falls within in the second healthiest nationwide group of counties. When compared to other counties in in New York State Putnam has the 5th strongest composite score behind Nassau, Westchester, Saratoga and New York.



County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

2024 Health Factors - New York



Methodology-Analysis of Putnam County Data

Each year, upon release of the CHR&R, the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) conducts a full review of the findings to maintain awareness of the status of health indicators and inform program planning. In addition to data that contributes to Putnam County Health Snapshot, this review includes examination of additional measures and, when available, trends over time and stratification by race/ethnicity.

Putnam data was reviewed systematically in the following manner to better delineate areas in which Putnam County over or under performs:

- Individual measures were flagged for poor performance if they met the following criteria:
 - Performance worse than New York State
 - Performance in the bottom three amongst the seven counties that make up the Mid-Hudson (MH) Region
 - Any indicator with time trend data available where performance is worsening over time
 - Any indicator stratified by race/ethnicity where a disparity is identified
- Individual measures were flagged for strong performance if they met the following criteria:
 - If Putnam was the top performer amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties
 - If measure was highlighted as a strength by CHR&R (specific methodology not provided)

Key findings are a review of flagged indicators broken down by Health Outcomes, Health Factors and their sub-categories and focus areas.

Key Findings

- Putnam continues to be amongst the healthiest counties in New York State, as it has been since CHR&R's inception in 2011. As indicated by CHR&R's change in methodology, specific ordinal rankings provide limited added value in developing a clear picture of the health of Putnam County.
- Putnam continues to perform better in Health Outcomes than it does in Health Factors.
- More details on Health Outcomes, Health Factors and focus areas and individual measures flagged for over or under performance can be found below.

Health Outcomes

Putnam's strong performance in Health Outcomes is driven by results for measures of length of life. Amongst the seven Mid-Hudson Counties, Putnam had:

- The lowest age adjusted years of potential life lost (YPLL) before the age of 75 per 100,000 population (a measure of premature death)
- The second highest life expectancy
- The lowest child mortality rate

In measures of quality of life, Putnam performs better in measures of physical health than in those of mental health. Amongst the seven Mid-Hudson Counties Putnam had:

- The lowest percentage of adults reporting fair or poor health, the lowest age-adjusted percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor health per month, and the second lowest age-adjusted average number of reported physically unhealthy days in the past 30 days in the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
- The lowest age-adjusted percentage of adults with diagnosed diabetes and the lowest rate of people over the age of 13 living with HIV

In contrast, Putnam was outperformed by New York State, and was only 3rd best in the Mid-Hudson Region in measures of mental health including:

- The age-adjusted average number of mentally unhealthy days in the last 30 days
- The age-adjusted percentage of adults reporting 14 or more days of poor mental health per month

Health Factors

Health Behaviors- Diet and Exercise

In measures of Health Behaviors, Putnam County performs most strongly in the focus area of Diet and Exercise. Amongst the seven Mid-Hudson Counties Putnam:

- Had the lowest percentage population lacking adequate access to food, the lowest age-adjusted percentage of adults reporting no leisure-time physical activity, and the second highest percentage of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity

However, performance in measures of physical activity only translated to mediocre performance in the measure of obesity, where Putnam had the 3rd lowest age-adjusted percentage of adults reporting a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to 30, on par with that of New York State.

Additionally, strong performance in overall access to adequate food may mask issues with food access for low-income residents. Putnam has a higher percentage of its low-income population living in places that do not have a grocery store close by than New York State, and the highest percentage amongst the Mid-Hudson Region Counties.

Health Behaviors-Sexual Activity

Unsurprisingly based on annual surveillance data, and as previously reported in the [2022 County Health Assessment](#), increasing rates of chlamydia were flagged on the 2024 CHR&R.

Additionally, disparities were noted in the teen birth rate, where rates were higher in the Hispanic population than in the White population.

Health Behaviors-Tobacco Use

The CHR&R only includes one measure of tobacco use, the age-adjusted percentage of adults who are current smokers. Though Putnam has the second lowest percentage in the Mid-Hudson Region, the percentage is higher than that for New York State.

Clinical Care- Access to Care

Results are mixed for measures of access to care in Putnam County. Putnam performs better than New York State and the best in the Mid-Hudson region in measures related to health insurance including:

- the overall percentage of the population under age 65 lacking health insurance

- the percentage of adults under age 65 lacking health insurance
- and the percentage of children under age 65 lacking health insurance.

In contrast to low barriers presented by insurance, high ratios of population to care providers could present barriers to accessing care in Putnam County. The ratio of population to primary care physicians, primary care providers other than physicians, and dentists is higher in Putnam than New York State, and higher than five of the six other counties in the region. While the ratio of population to dentists has improved over time, the ratio of population to primary care physicians is worsening. The only care providers in Putnam with a favorable population to provider ratio are mental health providers, where Putnam has a ratio lower than that of the State and the second lowest in the Mid-Hudson Region.

As was noted in last year's [CHR&R Executive Summary](#), deficits in access to care cannot necessarily be inferred from a high ratio of population to care providers. Putnam is a geographically small county flanked by three other counties and the state of Connecticut, which are within reasonable travel distance for Putnam residents to access care. Deficits in access to care were not found in the 2022 CHA. In fact, in the [Mid-Hudson Regional Community Health Survey \(MHRCHS\)](#), Putnam performed best amongst the seven counties on all of the following: proportion unable to access healthcare (including dental and vision) in the last year; proportion with a regular health care provider; proportions who visited a healthcare provider for a routine physical in the past year; and proportion who visited a dentist for a checkup in the last year. Furthermore, in [the 2022 Mid-Hudson Region CHA](#), of the seven MH counties, Putnam had the lowest percentage of adults who did not receive medical care due to cost. Nonetheless, high ratios of population to care providers are concerning, and close examination of access to care should be made in the upcoming 2025 CHA.

Clinical Care- Quality of Care

Putnam performs well overall in measures of quality of care, but disparities exist based on race and ethnicity.

- Putnam performs better than New York State and has lowest rate amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties for hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions (a measure of preventable hospital stays) in Medicare enrollees. This rate has an overall decreasing trend from 2012-2021.
 - Rates of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions are higher in the Black population than in other segments of the population.
- Putnam performs better than New York State and second best amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties for percentage of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees with an annual flu vaccination in 2021. The percentage has been trending upward from 2012-2021.
 - The percentage of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees with an annual flu vaccination was higher in the White population than in the Asian and Hispanic populations, and higher still than the Black population.
- Putnam performs better than New York State and second best amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties for percentage of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 who received annual mammography screening. This percentage has been relatively stable from 2012-2021.
 - The percentage of female Medicare enrollees ages 65-74 who received annual mammography screening varied by race and ethnicity. The highest percentage was seen in the White population, then Hispanic, then Black, with the lowest percentage in the Asian population.

- Putnam performs better than New York State and second best amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties for the percentage of low birthweight live births, but there was a higher percentage of low birthweight births to Black women as compared to other groups from 2016-2022. Disparities by race and ethnicity were also noted in birth-related indicators in the [2022-2024 Putnam County CHA/CHIP](#).

The Physical Environment: Air and Water Quality

There are only two measures in the focus area of Air and Water Quality. Putnam performed worse than the state and fifth amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties in average daily density of fine particulate matter. Putnam's performance for this measure has been improving over time, but the most recent data on this measure is from 2019, so caution should be used in interpretation of this measure. The only measure of water quality is the presence or absence of reported health-related drinking violations. There were no violations in Putnam in 2022.

The Physical Environment: Housing and Transit

Putnam County performs relatively well in measures related to housing, but less so in measures related to transit.

Putnam performs better than the state and second best amongst Mid-Hudson Region Counties in the following housing measures:

- Percentage of households with housing problems including overcrowding, high cost, and lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities
- Percentage of households that spend 50% or more of their income on housing

Putnam performs better than the state and best amongst Mid-Hudson Region Counties in the following housing measures:

- Percentage of owner-occupied housing units
- Percentage of households with broadband internet connections

While traffic volume is not an issue of concern on Putnam roadways, as was the case last year, commuting is a problem area:

- A higher percentage of the Putnam workforce drives alone to work than that of New York State, and Putnam ranks 4th in this regard amongst Mid-Hudson Counties
- Among the workforce who commute alone in their car, Putnam has a higher percentage commuting more than 30 minutes than New York State, and the highest percentage of all Mid-Hudson Region Counties

Social and Economic Factors

CHR&R divides measures of social and economic factors into the following categories: income, employment, education, community safety, and family and social support.

Putnam generally performs well on income measures of **income and employment**, apart from cost of living, but disparities are evident:

- The percentage of the population age 16 and over who are unemployed and seeking work is lower in Putnam than in the state and the second lowest in the Mid-Hudson Region.
- Putnam performs better than New York State and best amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties in the:
 - Percentage of public-school children eligible for free or reduced lunch
 - The ratio of high- to low-income households
 - Median household income
 - Percentage of people under 18 in poverty

Asian and Hispanic populations have a lower median income than other groups, and there is a higher percentage of Asian, Black and Hispanic youth in poverty than for the White population. Moreover, cost of living is high in

Putnam with an average hourly wage of \$71.69 necessary to cover basic household expenses and taxes for a household of one adult and two children, as determined by the Living Wage Institute for 2023. This is a higher cost of living than New York State, and the second highest amongst Mid-Hudson Region Counties behind Rockland County.

Putnam performs well on measures of **education**. Putnam has the second highest percentage of adults in the Mid-Hudson Region with some post-secondary education, and outperforms New York State and is doing best amongst Mid-Hudson Region Counties in:

- Percentage of adults over age 25 with a high school diploma
- Percentage of ninth graders graduating high school in four years
- Index of school segregation (measure of degree to which racial and ethnic groups are distributed amongst schools in the county)
- Spending per pupil, this measure is also improving over time

Putnam generally performs well in measures of **community safety**, outperforming New York State and doing best amongst Mid-Hudson Region Counties in:

- Age-adjusted suicide rate
- Firearms death rate
- Rate of juvenile arrests

Performance is weaker on community safety measures related to injuries. Putnam has the 3rd lowest rate of deaths due to injury of Mid-Hudson Region counties, but there is a disparity with higher death rates in the Hispanic population. Putnam has the same motor vehicle crash rate as New York State, and the 3rd lowest rate amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties.

Putnam generally performs well in measures of **family and social support**, with a lower childcare cost burden than New York State, and the lowest burden amongst counties in the Mid-Hudson Region, as measured by the percent of median household income required for childcare costs for a household with two children.

Putnam also performs better than New York State, and second best in the Mid-Hudson Region for:

- The number of childcare centers per 1000 population under the age of five
- Percent of children living in single parent households

In terms of **civic engagement**, Putnam has a higher percentage than New York State, and the highest percentage amongst Mid-Hudson Region counties, of:

- citizens who voted in the 2020 presidential election
- households who self-responded to the 2020 Census

In contrast, Putnam has a lower number of membership associations per 10,000 population than New York State, and the fifth lowest amongst the Mid-Hudson counties.

Discussion and Recommendations

Review of the 2024 CHR&R reaffirms that Putnam County continues to perform well overall in measures of Health Outcomes and Health Factors. County leaders should give consideration to CHR&R findings, alongside those of the [2022 Putnam County CHA](#) in policy and program planning.

Perhaps the most notable findings in the CHR&R for Putnam are its strong performance in physical health outcomes in the face of concerning high ratios of population to primary care providers, and the converse for mental health where outcome measures are poor in the face of ample mental health providers, on a population to provider basis. Putnam County leaders should consider:

- Working collaboratively with healthcare organizations to further assess and address potential gaps in access to primary care and dental care
- Further assessment of the drivers of poor mental health outcomes, including exploration of the relationship between potential risk factors for less-than-optimal mental health such as stress related to high cost of living, and high rates of commuters driving long distances.

Based on the findings of the CHR&R, it is also recommended that Putnam County continue to:

- Prioritize ongoing population health initiatives aimed at
 - Reducing rates of sexually transmitted infections
 - Reducing rates of adult smokers
- Support Cornell Cooperative Extension initiative to fill gaps in food access
- Seek opportunities to work collaboratively with healthcare and other partners to reduce disparities in measures of health care quality and promote health equity

PCDOH will publish this executive summary on its website, and share it with the leadership of other county agencies, community organizations, and other partners for whom the information is relevant to their work. Stakeholders looking for greater detail on the 2023 CHR&R are encouraged to visit <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/new-york/putnam?year=2024>