

## **Creating the Conditions in Wisconsin for All People to Live Long and Healthy and Lives**

**Patrick Remington, MD, MPH  
Professor Emeritus**

**Family Impact Seminar  
January 2021**



# What is Health?

- It is physical, mental, and social well-being
- Our goal is that *all people* have the opportunity to live a long and healthy life
- But what contributes to good health?

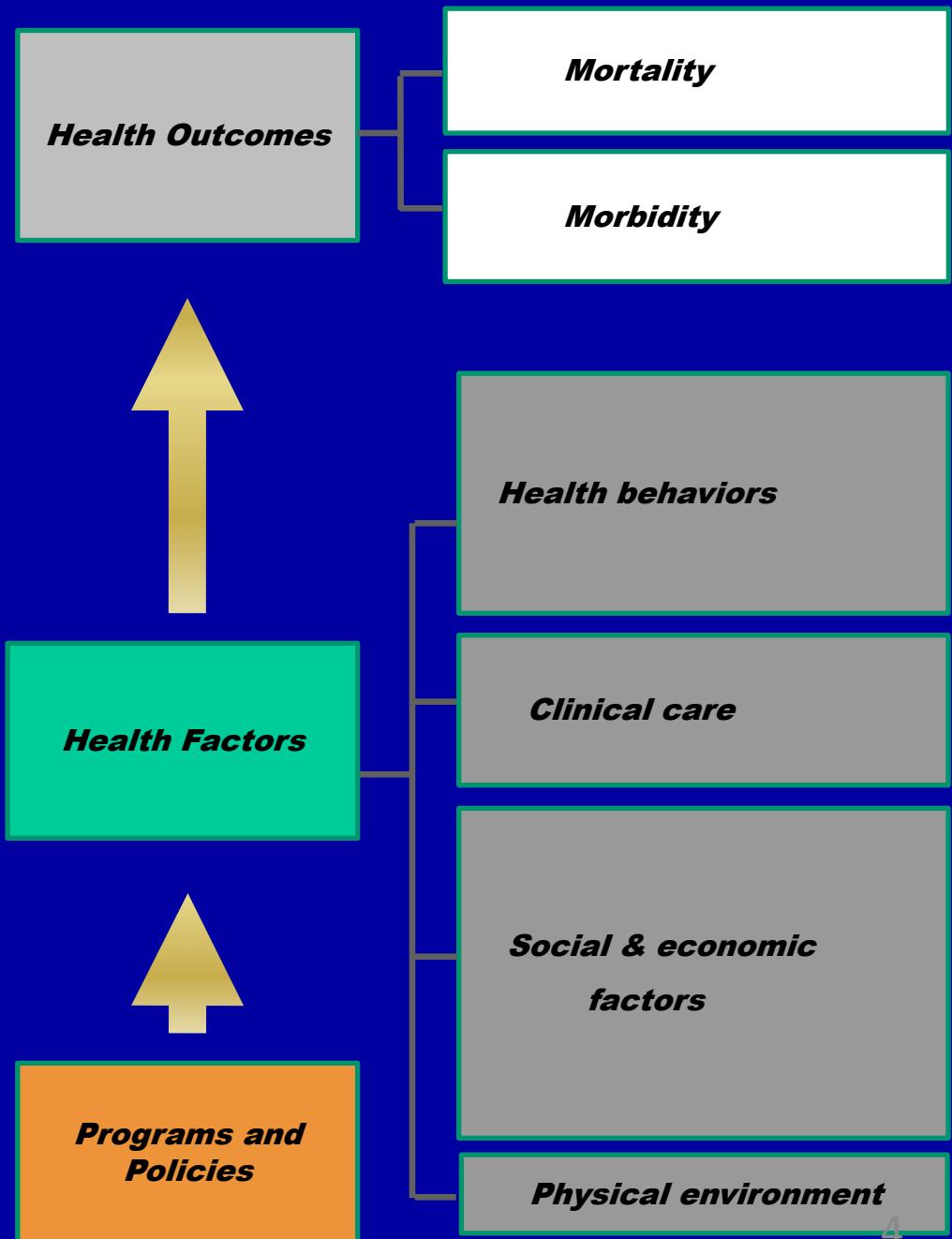
# Multiple Factors Influence Health

- Clinical care
- Health behaviors
- **Social and economic factors**
- **Physical environment**

How do you measure “long and healthy lives?”

What factors contribute to the health?

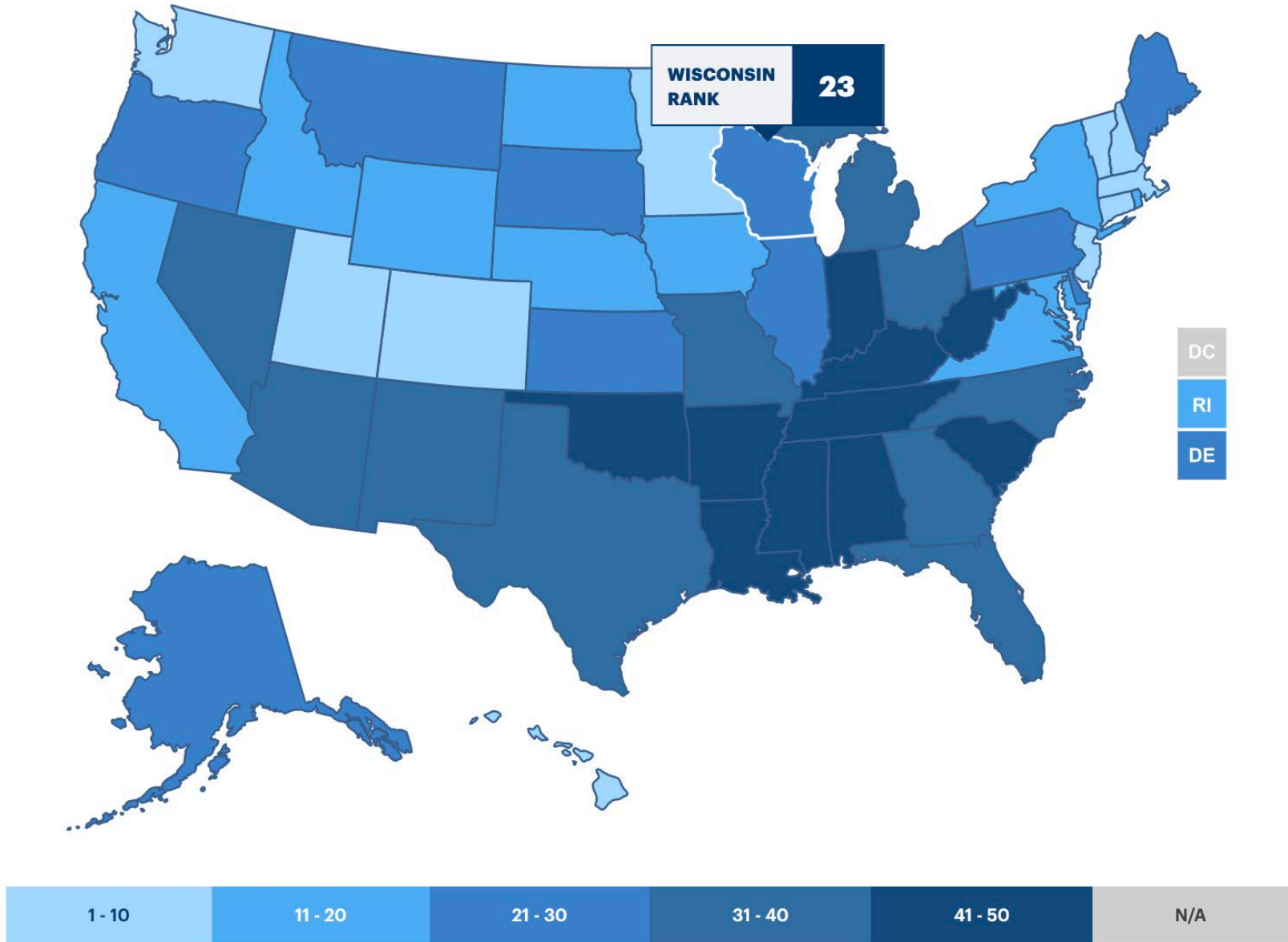
How can we support community health?



# Policies and Programs are Essential

- What we do as a society can create the conditions so that all people can live long and healthy lives.
- As policymakers, you lead this effort by setting the agenda and investing in policies and programs to improve the social, economic, and physical environment in which families live.

# How Healthy are Wisconsin Residents?



# How Wisconsin Ranks on Health Factors

	Rate	Rank
High School Graduation (Percent of incoming ninth graders)	90.7	1
Lack of Health Insurance (Percent without health insurance)	9.9	6
Occupational Fatalities (Deaths per 100,000 workers)	3.3	10
Violent Crime (Offenses per 100,000 population)	249	11
Immunization Coverage % of children ages 19 to 35 months)	92.3	12
Preventable Hospitalizations (# per 1,000 Medicare enrollees)	55.3	13
Low Birthweight (Percent of live births)	7	14
Primary Care Physicians (Number per 100,000 population)	121.3	18
Smoking (Percent of adult population)	20.9	22
Obesity (Percent of adult population)	27.7	24
Children in Poverty (Percent of persons under age 18)	21.4	27
Air Pollution (Micrograms of fine particles per cubic meter)	10	31
Binge Drinking (Percent of adult population)	24.3	50
Public Health Funding (Dollars per person)	\$39	50



AMERICA'S  
**HEALTH  
RANKINGS**<sup>®</sup>  
UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION

**30 YEARS**



# Annual Report ▼

MEASURES:

Overall ▼

POPULATION:

General ▼

STATE:

WI

ABOUT OVERALL

OVERALL IN WISCONSIN

Trend: Overall, Wisconsin

BRIEF REPORT

## The Race to the Bottom: Wisconsin's Long-Term Trends in Health Rankings

Odilchi Ezenwanne, MD, MPH; Rich Crawford, MD, MPH; Patrick L. Remington, MD, MPH

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Wisconsin's health ranking dropped from 7th healthiest in 1990 to 23rd in 2018. The purpose of this paper is to identify the contributory factors to this decline.

**Methods:** Trends in Wisconsin's health rank for 1990 to 2018 were compared overall and for only identical measures used in both years.

**Results:** Of the identical measures used in both years (n=10), the median rank declined from 8.5 (range 6-21) in 1990 to 19 (range 9-43) in 2018, with the greatest declines for infectious diseases, infant mortality, and smoking. The ranks were lower in 2018 for the similar measures used and for measures used only in 2018 compared to measures used only in 1990.

**Discussion:** Wisconsin's drop in health ranking is real and calls for action to address the root causes.

### METHODS

The America's Health Rankings uses measures of health determinants and outcomes to assess the health of each of the 50 states. These individual measures are weighted and then combined into a single summary measure, eg, smoking contributes 7.5% to the overall health of a state. More detailed methods are available online.<sup>1</sup>

Wisconsin's overall health ranking from 1990 to 2018 was obtained from the America's Health Rankings website.<sup>1</sup> For each of the 32 measures used in the ranking for 1990 and/or 2018, we obtained

the value of that measure (eg, percent smokers), the weight that the measure contributed to the overall rankings (eg, 7.5%), and Wisconsin's rank among the 50 states. These measures varied over the period of analysis and were categorized as follows:

1. Identical and used in both years (n=10).
2. Similar and used in both years (n=3).
3. Used only in 1990 (n=4).
4. Used only in 2018 (n=15).

The change in Wisconsin's rank for the measures used in both 1990 and 2018 was calculated. In addition, Wisconsin's rank within each of these 4 categories (median and range) was determined, as well as the weights used in the models. Actual values of the measures also were included to quantify the absolute change in the health measures over this time period.

### RESULTS

Wisconsin's overall health ranking dropped from 7th in 1990 to 23rd in 2018 (see Figure), representing an average drop of about 1 place every 2 years over the 28-year period. The first report in 1990 used 17 measures categorized into 5 domains: mortality, lifestyle, access, disease, and disability. In contrast, the 2018 report used 33 measures categorized into 5 different domains: outcomes, plus 4 categories of health determinants—community and environment, policy, behavior, and clinical care. In addition, the rela-

### BACKGROUND

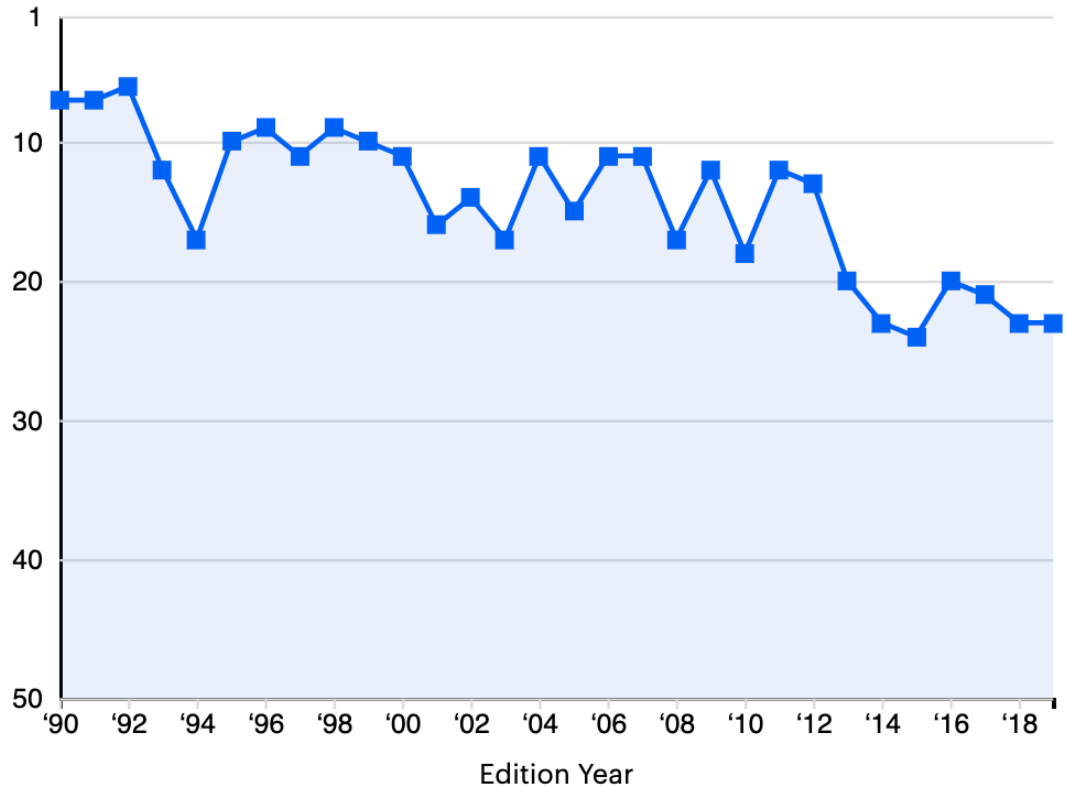
The United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings provides an annual ranking of health determinants and outcomes for all 50 states.<sup>1</sup> These health rankings use objective measures of population health to summarize performance and enable comparisons. Complex data obtained from various surveillance systems are synthesized into an easily interpretable format for widespread dissemination. From its first benchmark edition in 1990, America's Health Rankings have provided a platform for initiating a broad discourse on health among health professionals, leaders, policymakers, and the general public on the health of their communities.<sup>2</sup>

Since the first report was released in 1990, Wisconsin's overall health ranking has declined steadily from 7th healthiest in 1990 to 23rd in 2018. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the reasons for this decline.

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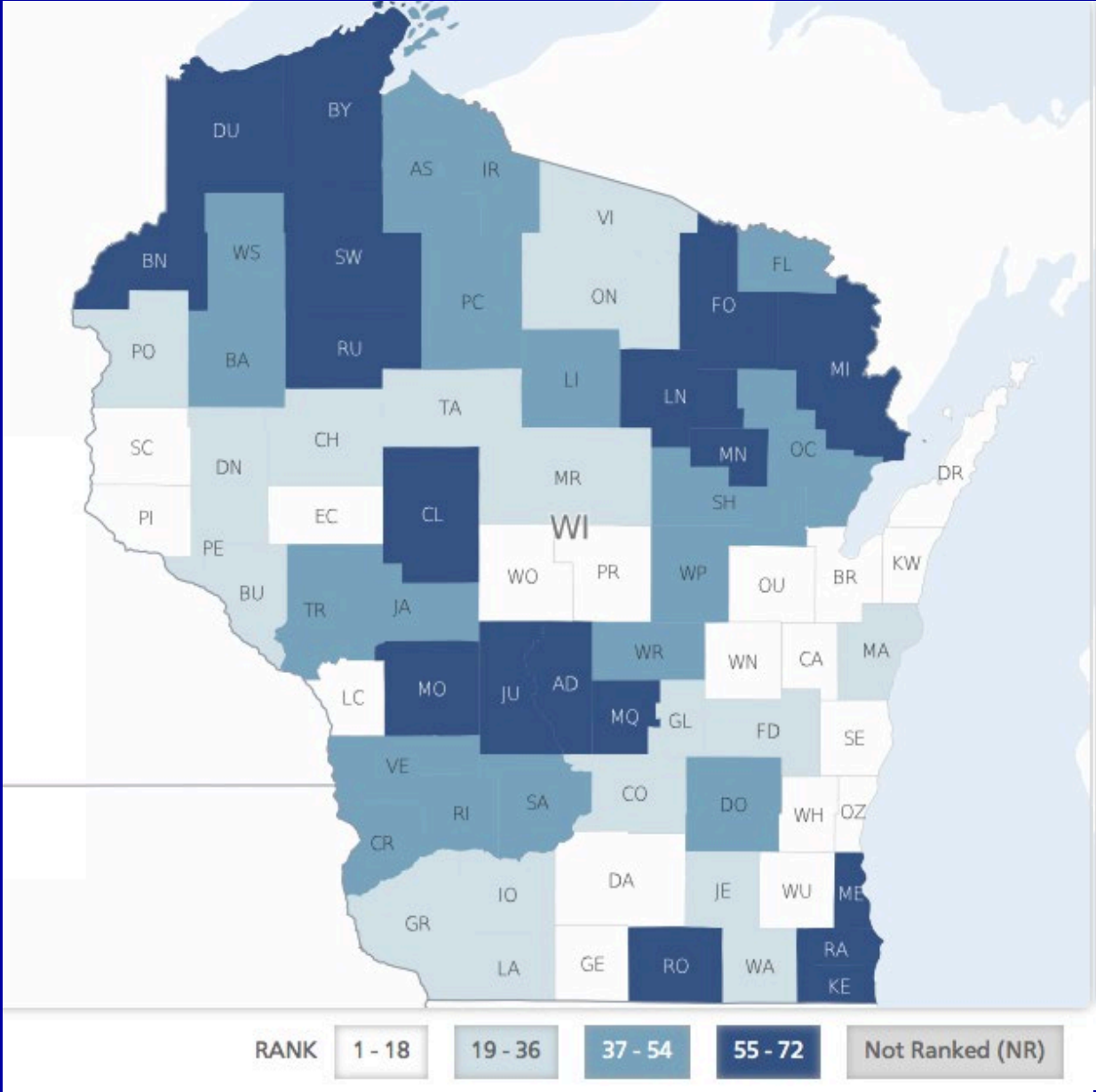
# The Time for Action is Now

- The median rank declined from –8.5 (range 6-21) in 1990 to –19 (range 9-43) in 2018
- Greatest declines for infectious diseases, infant mortality, and smoking
- Wisconsin's drop in health ranking calls for action to address the root causes.

**Health Outcomes**



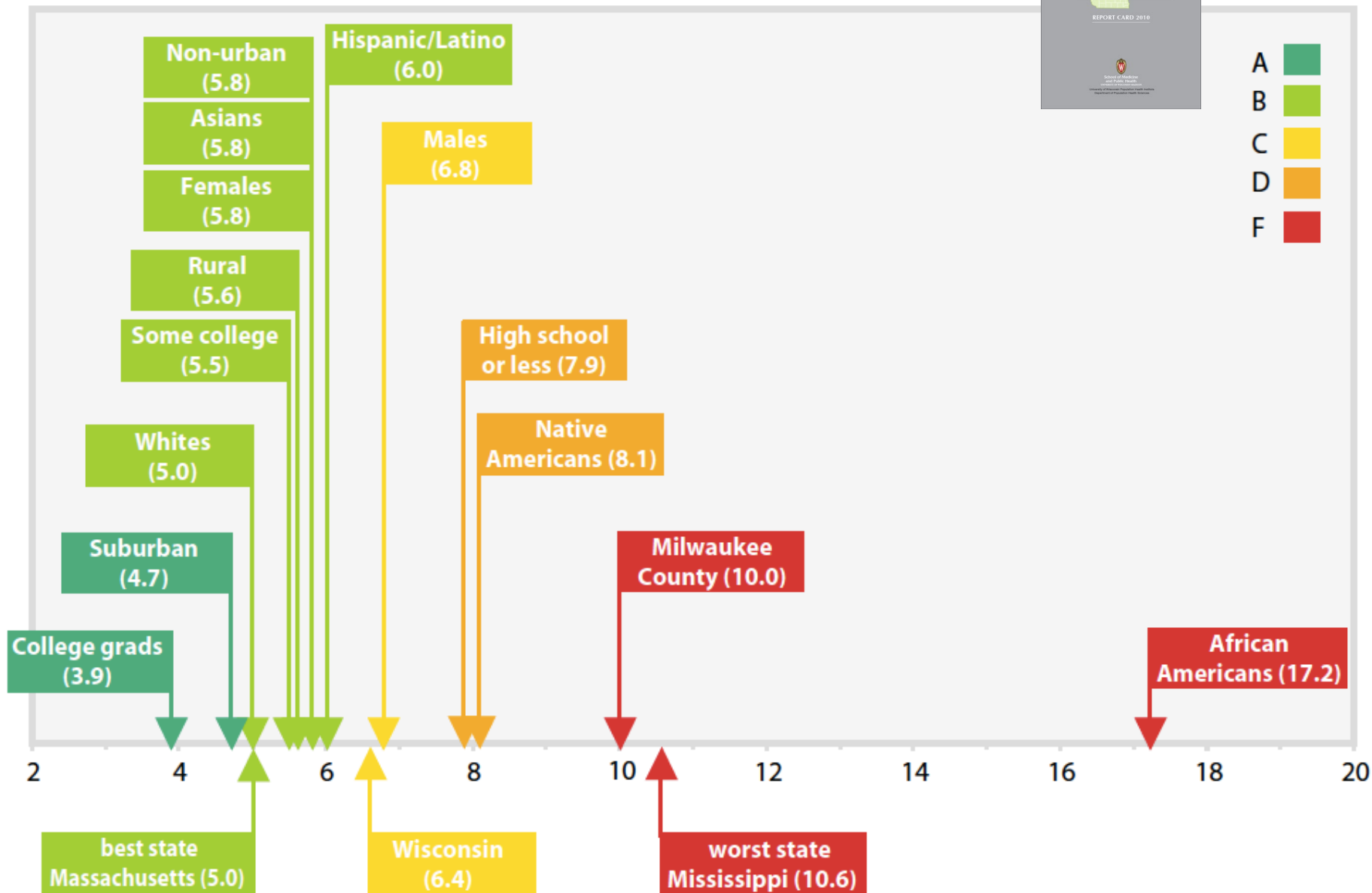
**Health Factors**



# Wisconsin Infant Death Rates (Ages <1, rates per 1,000 population)



- A ■
- B ■
- C ■
- D ■
- F ■



# Summary

- Healthy people means healthy families and vibrant communities.
- Wisconsin's health ranking has declined, relative to other states
- Significant disparities exist in health outcomes, especially by race and economic factors.
- State policymakers are key to building the foundation of health for families.

# The rest of this session:

- What are the underlying factors driving health differences? How do race and racism affect health?
- And how can we make sure that policies and programs are effective, and what their impact is on health of all populations?