

# CRAIN'S Health Pulse

## **New York has fewest 'deaths of despair'**

New York's highest-ranking county in the nation's [500 healthiest communities](#) is Saratoga, at 64th. And the state took top marks in one significant mental health measure.

According to the 2019 U.S. News & World Report Healthiest Communities rankings, New York has averaged 25 per 100,000 so-called deaths of despair, which are deaths due to suicide, alcohol-related disease and drug overdoses. Nebraska, the runner-up, has averaged 26 per 100,000 population. Communities there took 16 of the top 100 spots in the mental health subcategory.

"Poor self-reported mental health has about the same negative link to life expectancy as diabetes, smoking and physical inactivity," U.S. News wrote. It added that mental health is also linked to poverty.

Overall, aside from Saratoga, only one other New York county made the top 100: Nassau, at 96th. Including Saratoga and Nassau, there were a dozen counties in the state in the top 500. New York County came in at 413th.

The top five counties nationwide were Douglas County, Colo.; Los Alamos County, N.M.; Falls Church, Va.; Loudoun County, Va.; and Broomfield County, Colo.

The rankings, compiled in collaboration with the Aetna Foundation, evaluate close to 3,000 communities nationwide across 10 categories, ranging from mental health to education and economy.