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## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN ST. LUCIE COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



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**St. Lucie County, FL** - The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool released by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This study highlights the many community factors that influence health and uses established data, much of which is available from the department at [www.FLHealthCHARTS.com](http://www.FLHealthCHARTS.com).

“Through the years, the county health rankings have provided us with a tool, making certain we are on track to building a strong public health system. We work every day to bring together community partners around shared goals to collectively improve the health of our residents. As we look at successes in this year’s rankings, children in poverty is 19%, a significant improvement from last year’s 26%. High school graduation rate in 2016-17 is 91%, a significant improvement from last year’s report of 75%. Research validates that the health, safety and wellness of children impacts their ability to learn, this is a very important high point in moving the marker forward, our children, our future” said Clint Sperber, County Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie.

“The data in this report provides important insight into the needs of our students as there is a link between positive academic performance and their overall health and well-being. We know that well-nourished and healthy students are more alert and engaged in their learning” said Superintendent E. Wayne Gent – St. Lucie Public Schools.

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country, and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but a combined work in progress across all community partners. The department works in collaboration with local governments, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, business groups, schools, faith-based organizations and many other stakeholders to improve the health of all people in St. Lucie County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In St. Lucie County, our [Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and work in partnership regularly to track progress. Under the direction of Healthy St. Lucie, Inc., we have developed plans and activities that are improving the health of the county. The Billion Step Challenge is moving into the second year, to increase physical activity and reduce obesity, we continue to provide dental

sealants in public schools, starting an age-friendly community work group to improve the health and well-being of the older adults in St. Lucie, the Baby Steps Baby Friendly initiative to increase breastfeeding among new mothers giving births in our hospitals, developing next steps following the Fetal Infant Mortality Review initiative to continue to decrease infant mortality and stabilize a population, the Safety Village is on the charts - covering Fire Safety, Cyber Safety, Water Safety, Bike Safety, Gun Safety, Pedestrian Safety, Car Seat Safety, Electricity Safety, Traffic Safety, Health and Wellness program to improve injury prevention efforts, there is also the Tobacco Cessation Action Plan and Students Working Against Tobacco to continue to decrease smoking rates in St. Lucie County.

“The Board of County Commissioners continues to emphasize the importance of being healthy from our employee wellness programs to collaborating with the health department on projects for our residents like the Billion Step Challenge and our weekly guided nature hikes,” said St. Lucie County Commission Chair Linda Bartz. “Last year, the county launched a new bike share program that ties into our fixed route bus system, giving people a chance to exercise on their daily commute, while reducing their carbon footprint.”

To explore more health indicators in your county, visit [www.FLHealthCHARTS.com](http://www.FLHealthCHARTS.com).

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie, please visit [www.stluciecountyhealth.com](http://www.stluciecountyhealth.com).

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