

March. 16, 2016

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



Arlease Hall, Public Information Officer  
[Arlease.Hall@flhealth.gov](mailto:Arlease.Hall@flhealth.gov)  
(772) 370-1391

**(ST. LUCIE, FL)** – The Florida Department of Health in St. Lucie County recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2016 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.floridacharts.com](http://www.floridacharts.com).

“Our collaborative efforts and engagement with our community partners have proven successful through the Roundtable of St. Lucie County. The shared decision-making among leaders with a stake in a problem, and then to collectively develop a joint strategy for action to accomplish a system change – has been a win-win, resulting in improved outcomes in St. Lucie,” said County Health Officer Clint Sperber.

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, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities for improved health that have been identified by the community. The department has partnered with many stakeholders to implement the CHIP and collaborates regularly to track progress. Healthy St. Lucie is one of our leading initiatives with a goal to improve eating healthy for new mothers, kids and adults; increasing physical activity for residents, and reducing chronic diseases. Safe Kids St. Lucie County helps keep kids safe. This program focuses on reducing children injuries. Teen Zone has proven to be a successful program reducing sexually transmitted disease rates and teen pregnancy since its inception in 2011.

“The data presented provides us the ability to assess our health issues locally, and it gives us the advantage needed on how we address those issues that affect us nationally. In order to effectively serve our citizens, vacationers and families – we must utilize this information as a means to help us protect and preserve a lifestyle of quality and well-being,” said St. Lucie Board of County Commissioners Chairman, Kim Johnson.

“Many organizations within our community, including businesses, faith-based organizations, nonprofit agencies, and local governmental entities are working together to ensure the best health outcomes for our children and families. The release of the county health rankings indicates that while some progress has been made, such as the decline in the rate of teen births, there is still more work to do especially around the factors that impact extreme poverty. We as a community can only be successful if we work together to address those most in need. Through the leadership and efforts of DOH-St. Lucie and its many partners, we will continue to strive for a safe and healthy St. Lucie,” said Executive Director of the Children’s Service Council of St. Lucie, Sean Boyle.

"We are pleased with our collaboration as we further our partnership, to create powerful visions and robust strategies for change in improving the health status of the residents in St. Lucie. Together we have made great strides; however, there is still work to be done," said Michael F. Gervasi, D.O., President and Chief Executive Officer, Florida Community Health Centers, Inc.

Last week, the Florida Department of Health became the first integrated department of health in the nation to achieve national accreditation through the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#). Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. The seal of accreditation signifies that the Florida Department of Health has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health.

#### **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 Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).