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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN VOLUSIA COUNTY ADDRESSES COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS



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Daytona Beach, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Volusia County (DOH-Volusia) recognizes the value in measuring health outcomes and today acknowledged the 2017 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.

Since 2016, Volusia County's rank improved in several areas but dropped overall from 40 to 42 out of 67 counties in the state. The strongest improvements were seen in the areas of health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environment. Declines were seen in health outcomes, length of life and quality of life, according to the study. The full report is online at countyhealthrankings.org.

"We are pleased with the strong gains seen in four areas," said Patricia Boswell, DOH-Volusia administrator. "We're disappointed but not surprised at the challenges we face particularly in the quality of life category. Volusia County's 2017-2019 Community Health Improvement Plan and DOH-Volusia Strategic Plan identified access to health care, having healthy babies, improving youth and adult mental health and decreasing chronic disease as priorities."

A year-to-year comparison of Volusia's health rankings, the DOH-Volusia Strategic Plan and Community Health Improvement plan are online at volusiahealth.com/planning.

Volusia demonstrated improvements over the 2016 ranking in several areas. For example:

- Sexually transmitted infections (STI) was 50 percent lower than the state rate and decreased by seven percent.
- The low birth weight rate was 11 percent lower than the state rate.
- Violent crimes decreased by 13.8 percent and was 14.8 percent lower than the state.
- Severe housing problems were 13.6 percent lower in Volusia County than those faced by state residents.
- Adult smoking rates decline 15.8 percent.
- Adult obesity rates were reduced by 7.1 percent.
- Fewer teen moms gave birth in 2017 – a decline of 8.6 percent.

These rankings are a snapshot of the health of counties across the country and they emphasize that health is not a singular effort but the result of our combined work across all community sectors. 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 Volusia County. These rankings use data related to physical environments, social and economic factors, health behaviors and clinical care.

In Volusia County, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is designed to address specific opportunities to improve 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.

In 2016, cancer became the leading cause of death in Volusia County. Although the Volusia county premature death rate decreased slightly in 2017 – nearly one percent, the county’s death rate remains considerably higher than the rates for the state and nation.

Boswell encourages health professionals, students, advocates, coalitions and the community to come together this summer to prevent cancer. On June 7, DOH-Volusia will host Prevent Cancer: The HPV Epidemic Conference in Daytona Beach. Medical professionals will discuss the human papilloma virus (HPV), current vaccines and preventing cancer.

Last week the Florida Department of Health celebrated a one year milestone as 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.

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